



NEWS RELEASE

Board of Trustees vote to close New Humble Centre School

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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April 22, 2020 - The Board of Trustees of Black Gold School Division, at its Regular Board Meeting, voted six to one in favour of permanently closing New Humble Centre school, effective June 30, 2020. As of the 2020-2021 school year, students currently residing in the New Humble Centre School attendance boundary will be designated to attend Calmar Elementary School, located 10.51 km away.

Many factors weighed into the decision including enrolment challenges, maintenance costs, a school building reaching the end of its lifespan, the close proximity of another elementary school, as well as, the financial realities the Division is being faced with that heighten the challenges associated with operating New Humble Centre School. These items were also outlined in the [Recommendation Report](#) that was presented by Senior Administration to the Board of Trustees at the Regular Board Meeting on April 8, 2020.

New Humble Centre School recently celebrated its 120 year anniversary, marking it the oldest school site in Alberta. During the meeting, Trustees recognized the New Humble Centre School for its rich and long history of providing strong programming and a quality learning environment. Trustee Eilander stated, “New Humble represents all that is good, safe and nurturing.” Trustee Eckert also commended the community by stating that “The loyalty of the New Humble community to their school and history is commendable [...]. The many unique program ideas presented to attract students, in order to revitalize the school, speak to that loyalty.” However, even with the recent historical milestone, and the suggestions surrounding alternative programs, the Board of Trustees felt that, given the mounting costs and proximity to Calmar Elementary School, the responsible course of action was to discontinue the school’s operation.

Eckert's comments addressed the alternative program suggestions by stating, “Black Gold’s Recommendation Report clearly outlines why pursuing the implementation of the various initiatives put forward, will have limited success or are even feasible.” Ultimately, the Board of Trustees felt that it had an overarching responsibility to be financially responsible and to do what is in the best interest for all 12,000 plus students in the Division.

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“This decision has been very difficult. Closing any school is not a decision that we take lightly,” stated Board Chair, Devonna Klaassen. “I cannot argue that New Humble has a beautiful story. But when it comes to New Humble, Black Gold has been pulling dollars from other schools for many years, in order to support the community [...]. We no longer have [...] this luxury, when we can do the business we are charged with - providing a quality education to *all Black Gold students* - in a more fiscally responsible manner.” The Board Chair went on to state that, “We know this will be a significant hurdle for New Humble families, but I truly believe in the resiliency of kids. The New Humble students will make up almost one quarter of the Calmar Elementary School population, with another quarter of students also being rural kids. Through the support of an extremely knowledgeable Principal, loving staff, and supportive parents, I’m confident they will find avenues to marry some of the unique elements of New Humble into Calmar Elementary School, to create a new balance and culture to support all.”

As the Division moves ahead in the process, the entire Black Gold community is committed to ensuring a smooth transition for the New Humble Centre School families impacted by the decision. Through the support of Administration and staff, the Division will engage the New Humble community on opportunities to: celebrate New Humble Centre School; say proper goodbyes; be welcomed to Calmar Elementary School; and explore ways to start incorporating cultures from both schools. Mental health and grief counselling supports are also available to all of New Humble Centre School families that may need some extra assistance with the transition.

“This process has been a heart wrenching one, and on behalf of Senior Administration and the Board of Trustees, I want to thank the New Humble community for their passion and their contributions to this process,” stated CEO/Superintendent of Schools, Bill Romanchuk. “Throughout this process, all members of the community were passionate. They should be commended for being advocates for their school and for their children. Regardless of which Black Gold School children attend, their futures are bright.”

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About Black Gold School Division

Black Gold School Division is located directly south of Edmonton, extending from the New Sarepta area in the east, to the Warburg area in the west. It includes the municipalities of Beaumont, Devon, Thorsby, Calmar, Leduc, Leduc County and Warburg. With approximately 12,000 students enrolled in 32 schools, Black Gold School Division teachers and support staff are committed to “inspiring success” in all students. For more information on Black Gold School Division and our schools, visit: www.blackgold.ca.

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