



BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
April 22, 2021



DRAFT CURRICULUM



Chair Klaassen comments excerpt:

"Thanks everyone for accommodating this scheduling change. After receiving the last major piece of the puzzle for our analysis, we felt for the sake of our staff and families that we wanted to move the meeting to this week, to prevent a weekend of potential angst over the unknown.

We set the goal or intention to focus not only on the specific question of whether to pilot or not to pilot, but on the curriculum itself, and what our role is in terms of getting the best curriculum possible in front of our children - for their education and for the future of this province. We believe engagement and consultation is key to fulfilling our roles as elected officials. As many of the decisions we've made over the course of this past pandemic year have shown, we also feel very strongly about supporting our staff. While we felt teacher input was essential, we were also very conscious of burden. We have all had the opportunity to sift through a tremendous amount of information."

Superintendent/CEO Romanchuk comments excerpt:

"Thank you Madam Chair and Trustees for the opportunity to provide you with our recommendations.

I want to thank the Trustees on behalf of the Administration for giving us the gift of time to review the draft curriculum. I am pleased to say that a very diverse group of 52 teachers and administrators volunteered to participate in the Review Teams to complete a detailed, line-by-line review. As a result, we have compiled a detailed report with reasonable suggestions for improvement that will be forwarded to the curriculum people at Alberta Education. We will post a summary report on our website, and provide it to the Honourable Minister and to our MLAs.



I feel that by going through this process we, as Black Gold educators, have fulfilled our duty to provide rich feedback to Alberta Education on behalf of our students, teachers and parents."

I also want to express our sincerest thanks to the parents and community members who reached out to us to share their concerns and misgivings. Know that we not only heard you, but we share many of your concerns. Like you, we want the best education possible for all students.

I recommend that Black Gold School Division NOT pilot the new draft curriculum in the 2021 - 2022 school year.

I further recommend that the Board of Trustees lobby the Minister of Education to delay the validation/pilot by at least one year, and take that time to consider the reasoned feedback provided by the teachers and administrators of Black Gold School Division and others, and to rewrite and strengthen each of the subject areas of the Alberta draft curriculum before relaunching the validation process."



Learning Services Coordinator, Terri Reid comments excerpt:



"Thank you to the Board and Black Gold Administration, on behalf of our teachers, for considering teachers' voices before making your decision. We had twice as many teachers volunteer to participate than we needed on our Review Teams. They expressed how valued and respected they felt to know that their feedback would help to inform the decision that will be made tonight.

Our Review Teams identified strengths in the draft curriculum as well as challenges. The challenges range from minor refinements that can easily be addressed through piloting to entire subjects being developmentally inappropriate, namely Social Studies. A significant challenge identified by all Review Teams is that there is too much content in every subject and every grade.

The Summary Report provides a brief overview of the Review Team's findings and includes examples from each of the draft curriculum of some of the strengths and challenges that were identified. It does not include all of the feedback from our team but they have confirmed that it accurately captures the essence of their work. In working through the draft curriculum line by line, Review Teams created a detailed response that will be shared with the Ministry."



DRAFT CURRICULUM

The Board of Trustees supported the recommendation of Administration to NOT participate in the pilot of the proposed draft curriculum.

The Board of Trustees will lobby the Minister of Education to delay the pilot by at least one year, and take that time to consider the reasoned feedback provided by the teachers and administrators of Black Gold School Division and others, and to rewrite and strengthen each of the subject areas of the Alberta Draft Curriculum before relaunching the validation pilot process.

Chair Klaassen provided the following closing comments:



“Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to reach out. I have had so *many* conversations on the phone, on zoom, social media, direct message, email ... there were many overlapping statements, and quite a number of opposing ideas. Hearing these opinions and engaging in discussion was instrumental in analyzing this from every angle. The one thread that was absolutely common to every discussion was the absolute passion and commitment to the wellbeing of all our kids. However, these conversations also made me feel hope. I believe I can speak on behalf of the board when I say that this hope will be what spurs us as we continue forward.”

Refer to April 22, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes for complete record of the meeting.

**Bus Driver,
You drive us safely everyday,
You always wear a smile;
So here's the Thanks you so deserve,
For each and every mile!**



**School Bus Driver
Appreciation Day
in Alberta
May 3, 2021**



Covid Thoughts & Observations

- ◆ This morning I saw a neighbor talking to her dog. It was obvious she thought her dog understood her. I came into the house and told my cat. We laughed a lot.
- ◆ I never thought the comment, “I wouldn’t touch him/her with a 6-foot pole” would become a national policy, but here we are!
- ◆ Does anyone know if we can take showers yet or should we just keep washing our hands?
- ◆ I need to practice social-distancing from the refrigerator.
- ◆ The virus has done what no woman has been able to do: cancel sports, shut down all bars and keep men at home!
- ◆ I hope the weather is good tomorrow for my trip to the backyard. I’m getting tired of the living room.

