



Inspiring Success!

TRUSTEE NEWSLETTER

Summer 2022



School Trustees (L-R): Michelle Martin, Devonna Klaassen, Angie Charpentier (Vice Chair), Gary Hansen, Barb Martinson, Esther Eckert (Chair), and Robyn Steed.

June! A busy month with numerous celebratory events and activities interspersed around completing the final tasks of the school year. Schools are abuzz with band concerts, track meets, awards nights, field trips, graduation ceremonies (and associated shenanigans), year-end celebrations ... all hopefully creating a little balance to any year end stress. Bring on SUMMER!

June also sets the stage to celebrate diversity and inclusion at Black Gold - critical components of our healthy and vibrant school communities.

This is **National Indigenous History Month** - a time for all Canadians - Indigenous, non-Indigenous - to reflect upon and learn the rich history, heritage, contributions, and resilience of First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples across Canada.

National Indigenous Peoples Day, marked on summer solstice (June 21), celebrates Indigenous culture and diversity. Intentional learning is a foundational step toward reconciliation - one that has been identified as a priority for this Board for the coming year.

It is also **Pride Month** - a time to celebrate the forward strides toward

acceptance and equality. We are committed to raising awareness of LGBTQ2S+, working to reduce stigma through education, embracing GSAs in our schools, and providing students and staff with welcoming, caring, respectful, safe, healthy and inclusive learning and working environments that respect diversity, promote equity, and foster a sense of belonging.

There have been many inspirational examples across Black Gold in acknowledgement of all of these events - recognizing, celebrating, and fostering increased support, compassion, and understanding. BGSD values diversity and is committed to fostering a sense of belonging by promoting equity of opportunity, dignity, and respect.

And of course, on behalf of the Board - **congratulations and best wishes to all of the Black Gold graduates, from Kindergarten grads through to High School!** We're so proud of your hard work and perseverance!

Board Evaluation Summary

Annually, the Board dedicates time to review, reflect on, and validate our work. Reflecting on leader effectiveness and

areas for growth is a well recognized best practice for professionals, boards and any organization that requires accountability. We have a formal review process by which we do an overarching evaluation of the work of the board as a whole, including our conduct and communication as a team, as well as a self-review of our individual contributions and effectiveness.

The review of our overall work addresses our effectiveness in the areas of:

- Accountability to the Government
- Role in the Community
- Political Advocacy
- Strategic Planning
- Superintendent/Board Relations
- Policy Development
- Fiduciary Role
- Board and Trustee Development
- Board and Division Governance
- Board Conduct

Themes, trends, and variances from the review are discussed in depth in order to highlight what we feel are our areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. These growth opportunities fed into the development of our Board Development Plan (professional development we engage in as a team), plans for individual

(Continued overleaf)

New Board of Trustees Leadership



At their annual Board Organizational Meeting on June 22, the Board unanimously selected Ward 4 Trustee Esther Eckert as Board Chair for the 2022-2023 school year. Eckert previously held the position of Vice Chair.

"I am excited to be continuing the work of governance with this Board and Senior Administration in my new role," said Chair Eckert. "As we work together to provide the best educational opportunities for our students in Black Gold, I will do my utmost to provide trustworthy leadership. I would like to thank Past Chair Devonna Klasseen for nominating me, and my fellow board members for their strong support."

The Board of Trustees also selected first-term Ward 3 Trustee Angie Charpentier as Board Vice Chair.

Charpentier was nominated by Ward 1 Trustee Michelle Martin, and she was also elected by unanimous consent.

"I am beyond thrilled to be able to provide additional support and work with a strong board and leadership team," said Vice Chair Angie Charpentier. "This is an amazing opportunity, and I will dedicate my time to ensure that we work together in meeting the needs of all students in Black Gold. I am thankful that we have a board that works together and has the same passion and dedication to public education."



"On behalf of the Black Gold family, I am pleased to congratulate both Chair Eckert and Vice Chair Charpentier on their new roles, and I look forward to working collaboratively with them over the next school year," said Superintendent of Schools Bill Romanchuk. "I would also like to thank Past Chair Klaassen for her courageous and diligent leadership as we navigated the COVID-19 pandemic."



Earlier this year, École Champs Vallée School in Beaumont achieved the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Canada Silver Rating for the facility's innovative open-space design, construction, and ongoing operation. Recently, the Board of Trustees were joined by MLA Rutherford and Beaumont Mayor Daneluik to celebrate this achievement.

Board Evaluation Summary (cont.)

professional development activities, and Board goals for the 2022-2023 school year.

Components of our Board/Superintendent relationship continue to be an area of strength, leading to consistency in messaging and direction from the Board and Administration. Staff appreciation and setting a guiding tone by modeling respect, integrity, grace, continuous improvement and lifelong learning were identified as both strengths and areas for continual focus.

Our main areas of focus are continuing to strengthen our advocacy efforts, outlining an intentional community engagement strategy to increase and solidify our community connections, and to be intentional about growth and development through PD - all of which have been integrated into our board strategic priorities.

The Board evaluation is meant as a transparent process to reflect on the previous year. It demonstrates insightfulness and brings forth enlightening conversations. Holding each other accountable is an invaluable tool that will serve us well into the future. Across all areas, the common theme was around how far we've come, while recognizing that we can continue to strive to develop skills, knowledge, and communication. As Trustee Eckert positively stated: "We're not done yet!"

Supports

If you find yourself struggling, the following support services and resources are available:

Community Resources – 211 Alberta
Local Distress Line – 780-482-HELP (4357)
Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line – 1-866-925-4419
Brite Line (2SLGBTQIA+ support line) – 1-844-702-7483
Family Violence – Find Supports – 310-1818
Health Link – 811
Kids Help Phone – 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868
MyHealth.Alberta.ca: List of Important Numbers
Physician & Family Support Program – 1-877-767-4637

2022-2023 Economic Outlook

The [2022-2023 budget](#) of \$149.25M, including a projected deficit of \$2.68M, was submitted to Alberta Education at the end of May. As required, the projected deficit is planned to be covered through Reserve funds, which are like an organization's savings account (school board reserves are capped by the government, and require approval to access).

Development of the school budget is a comprehensive process that engages input directly from school level administrators and Division leaders. Our [strategic priorities](#) were used as a guide, with every intention to maintain our level of service despite funding restrictions. The planned \$2.68 million deficit is to allow for increased instructional supports for numeracy and literacy, as well as support a comprehensive wellness plan at each school and maintain class sizes.

As enrolment continues to grow at a rate of 3+% in our thriving corridor along the QE2, and we work within the parameters of a funding mode that does not fully fund this growth, our ability as a school division to subsidize these financial shortfalls through our savings is quickly diminishing. Our reserves are at a point we already consider to be low, knowing the expected costs on the horizon that our reserves traditionally fund. However, new reserve cap restrictions from the government require us to reduce further.

In an effort to maximize the impact of this spending, we have requested an extension to hold back an additional \$1.1M from our reserves to extend our Covid Gap Recovery Strategy for an additional year (2023-2024) This will allow us to continue rolling out our division-wide wellness plan, provide increased literacy and numeracy specific support, and build capacity within our schools through these supports.

Council of School Communities

Another thank-you to all who attended this year's Council of School Communities back on February 15, 2022.

The goal of the evening was to converse and consult with students, staff, parents and community leaders about educational issues in order to contribute to the success of Black Gold School Division. Trustees and the Division's Leadership Team reviewed the rich comments and feedback that participants provided that evening. The [Summary Report](#) provided was utilized in strategic planning discussions for the 2022 – 2023 school year, and will be a resource in the development of our Community Engagement Strategy.

In the coming year, we look forward to providing more opportunities to engage. Thank you again to all those that gave their time and commitment to Black Gold School Division. Thank you to each school council, the parents and friends of our schools for your involvement over the year in this very important volunteer role! We are so grateful for your commitment to students and all your efforts to help Inspire Success!

ASCA Survey

The [Alberta School Councils Association](#) (ASCA) is conducting a parent survey on [Education and the Impact of Covid-19 Survey](#).

This survey is targeted to parents or primary caregivers of K-12 students in Alberta to examine the perceived impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their child's education and social/emotional wellbeing. The survey closes at 9 a.m. on July 11, 2022.

Important Dates

- **August 29** - First day of school
- **September 7** - Regular Board Meeting (livestreamed)
- **October 19** - Regular Board Meeting (livestreamed)
- **Please note:** BGSD Division Office will be closed to the public on Fridays during the summer months

Resources

Board Agendas and Minutes:

<https://blackgold.civicweb.net/Portal/>

Board Member Profiles & Contacts:

<https://www.blackgold.ca/about-bgisd/board/board-member-profiles/>

Reach Out!

Your voice is important - we want to hear from you! You can reach out to your Board of Trustees directly with your questions, concerns, or suggestions.

Please know that all trustees represent the voice of the entire division, please always feel free to reach out to any trustee to address any concerns or feedback:

Ward 1 - Michelle Martin
michelle.martin@blackgold.ca

Ward 2 - Devonna Klaassen
devonna.klaassen@blackgold.ca

Ward 3 - Angie Charpentier, Vice Chair
angie.charpentier@blackgold.ca

Ward 3 - Gary Hansen
gary.hansen@blackgold.ca

Ward 3 - Barb Martinson
barb.martinson@blackgold.ca

Ward 4 - Esther Eckert, Chair
esther.eckert@blackgold.ca

Ward 4 - Robyn Steed
robyn.steed@blackgold.ca



Breaking ground on Ohpaho Secondary School

On May 25, the Division Board of Trustees were joined by Samson Cree Nation representative Brian Lightning, City of Leduc Mayor Bob Young, MLA Brad Rutherford, project partners and special guests for a groundbreaking ceremony to celebrate the start of construction of Ohpaho Secondary School in Southwest Leduc.

The school will feature new and increased programming options for Leduc-area students, including an industrial/commercial kitchen for

a culinary arts program, an art kiln for the ceramics program, dedicated spaces for robotics, 3D printing and design/merchandising, video broadcasting and production, horticultural/agricultural studies, and an outdoor classroom. Onsite amenities will include new student and staff parking lots, drop-off spaces, bicycle racks, and a front entrance plaza for student “hangout” space.

Construction on the new high school is expected to cost around \$33 Million, and it is scheduled for completion in September 2024. It will initially serve 1,121 students, with an ability to expand to a future capacity of 1,600 students.

LCHS teachers develop inclusive welding programs



In Alberta, the skilled trades are traditionally seen as male-dominated occupations, but Leduc Composite High School CTS teacher Jessica Chisholm and welding technician Tracey Meaver are developing new ways to encourage female students to get involved.

This year, with the help of Women Building Futures and a generous donation from PCL, Jessica and Tracey introduced a very successful lunch-hour program – Girls Try Welding. The goal for this program is to build the confidence of the girls who were interested in registering for the welding program, but felt intimidated by its perceived macho ethos. They also want to raise awareness of the career opportunities in the skilled trades for women.

“We had much more interest than we initially expected, with 14 girls signing up,” said Tracey. “We taught the group welding techniques and safety.”

“Offering this program ensured that female students from our school community had a chance to learn a little about welding in a safe environment and build up their confidence with the tools,” said Jessica. “Since we received such great feedback about this program, we will be offering it again in the fall.”



On June 22, Ward 4 trustees Esther Eckert and Robyn Steed were joined by MLA Brad Rutherford, City of Beaumont Mayor Bill Daneluik and special guests for a pandemic-delayed plaque dedication ceremony at École J. E. Lapointe School.

The ceremony marked the successful completion in 2019 of the \$19.5 Million modernization and additions to the grades 7-9 school, which began two and a half years prior, to better accommodate the current and anticipated student population in the existing school catchment area.



New Curriculum Update

September 2022 will see changes in our elementary school classrooms as new the new curriculum for the Kindergarten to Grade 3 Mathematics, English Language Arts & Literature, as well as the Kindergarten to Grade 6 Physical Education & Wellness is implemented throughout the province.

In addition, a few Black Gold classrooms will pilot the Kindergarten to Grade 6 French Immersion Language Arts & Literature and/or Science curriculum. While piloting the new curriculum, teachers will provide feedback to Alberta Education, and changes may be considered before the province-wide implementation of these subjects in September of 2023. The teachers who are piloting are excited to be able to contribute to creating a curriculum that meets the needs of all students in Alberta.

The Black Gold Curriculum Team has been working with teachers throughout this school year to prepare them for the new curriculum, to ensure their strong

and effective classroom practices will continue to provide students with optimal learning experiences.

In response to the learning disruptions caused by the pandemic, students completed short screening assessments to identify any potential gaps in their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers have worked with students to reduce any learning gaps, and careful planning was done to ensure this work would dovetail with new curriculum to leverage best instructional practices for students.

Through the spring months, our Kindergarten to Grade 6 teachers received professional learning on the new curriculum and access to teaching and learning resources to support implementation.

Black Gold has excellent teachers who are committed to providing excellent learning experiences to all children and students. We believe in our teachers and will continue to support them in their work with the new curriculum. Their caring, skills, and professionalism will ensure that our students – your children – are set up for success.

École Coloniale Estates School principal receives ATA's Distinguished Leadership Award



The Black Gold School Division is excited to share that long-serving school principal Dr. Matthew Kierstead has been selected as a recipient of the 2021-2022 Distinguished Leadership Award, presented by the Council for School Leadership (CSL) of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

With this award, Dr. Kierstead joins a learning community of outstanding principals and assistant principals throughout Alberta who are seen as role models in a vibrant network of educational leaders with the confidence and capabilities to lead innovative change for 21st century learning.

"I was honoured and flattered when I was informed of the news," said Dr. Kierstead. "The award in itself is a very nice acknowledgement, but the part that really speaks to me, that I truly appreciate, is my colleagues who took the time out of their busy lives to support the nomination. That means a lot to me."

"I'm excited and looking forward to sharing my experiences with the CSL learning community and continuing as a mentor to new colleagues," he added. "At this point in my career I find it very fulfilling to be passing on my experiences and knowledge gained over the years to others."

Dr. Kierstead will be presented with the Distinguished Leadership Award at a special celebration event on Friday, September 16, 2022, at the Faculty Club in Edmonton.

Have a wonderful final day of school!

Thank you to our educators, support staff, students and parents for all of your hard work and perseverance this school year.

Enjoy your summer break – you've more than earned it!

