



# Inspiring Success!

## TRUSTEE NEWSLETTER



**C**hristmas is just around the corner. This season has many faces, many meanings, and many traditions as it is celebrated in homes everywhere.

It is a season of anticipation, not only for the young, but for all. A season of love shared with family and friends, of giving to one another, or to those less fortunate. It can also be one of the busiest seasons. Take time to slow down and enjoy the simple things.

For some, however, it is a season that brings pain and memories best forgotten. It's a reminder of what was lost, rather than what was gained. May the way through the darkness lead to better and brighter days.

The end of the calendar year is also a time for celebrating our successes and acknowledging the great work done by those around us, not only in the context of school but also in life, as we cannot achieve anything completely on our own. Our Black Gold family is blessed to have talented, creative, and hard-working staff in our schools, on the road, and at the Division Office.

Without the passion and dedication of each individual, "inspiring success" would be impossible. We salute you all!

On behalf of the Black Gold's Board of Trustees, we wish you all a wonderful holiday, plenty of good things, and a chance to refresh yourself.

### Season's Greetings!

## Meeting with the Education Minister

On September 13, Superintendent Romanchuk and Chair Eckert met with Minister LaGrange at her invitation. MLAs Brad Rutherford and Mark Smith joined the meeting. The Minister was warm and welcoming, and her concern for students is genuine. She is continually researching and tweaking formulas and methods in an effort to improve how education is delivered.

We opened our meeting by thanking her for the relief provided by funding some important areas such as:

- Funding to offset the high cost of fuel through the Fuel Contingency Fund.
- Mental health.
- Learning grants to assist with COVID learning loss.
- Additional support for implementing the new curriculum.

- We appreciated that our request to use reserves for an additional year to support learning gaps due to COVID was granted.
- Funding teacher increases awarded through the bargaining process.

One of the topics of discussion was how best to support our early learners. The formula doesn't allow for some of the programming we found important under the Program Unit Funding (PUF) model. We highlighted the need for cross-ministerial cooperation and sharing of information. This would be a tremendous help to students and families, and reduce duplication of services. *We believe that school boards are funding the work that belongs to Health, Children's and Social Services - our schools cannot continue to operate as assessment centres.*

The Minister shared that re-evaluating the profiles for special needs tiers are on her radar. Points to consider:

- Need to expand knowledge and the collection of data to provide services.
- Is funding going where it is needed?
- Wraparound services are important but missing.
- The RCSD model worked well when BGSD partnered with Parkland County.
- Need creative solutions that involve large teams across disciplines that are specific to regions.

Transportation issues continue to plague school boards. We shared some of BGSD's challenges in this area. Bus driver retention is an issue with the burden of training requirements and insurance costs. The Minister acknowledged that getting the funding for transportation right is important and she is committed to reviewing the formulas.

We appreciated the time Minister LaGrange gave us, and we came away with a better understanding of the challenges Alberta Education faces. We left assured that she has a better understanding of the issues facing Black Gold and other school boards in Alberta.

- Esther Eckert, Board Chair

## Leduc school now powered by green energy



On November 28, the Board of Trustees joined West Haven Public School staff, students, and project partners to celebrate the commissioning of the school's recently completed solar photovoltaic system. The event concluded with a tour of the rooftop where the solar panels are installed.

The project will offset 75% of the school's energy consumption, and we will be able to sell energy back to the grid, which will help offset costs.

Last fall, our Facilities department submitted an application for grant funding through the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre's

Solar for Schools program - a partnership of Alberta municipalities, Rural Municipalities of Alberta, and the Government of Alberta. The Board also approved funding from the Capital Reserves to cover the remaining costs, and the solar panels were installed over the summer.

With this venture, the Black Gold School Division is taking leadership, addressing climate change, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and through the use of interactive technology in the classroom, is investing in the future.

- Esther Eckert, Chair

## Council of School Councils

On October 26, the Board of Trustees welcomed parent council chairs and administrators to the Council of School Councils session at the MacLab Theatre in Leduc. The keynote speaker was Wendy Kiever from the Alberta School Council Association (ASCA).

The ASCA offers many workshops to assist parent councils and fundraising societies. For this event, she shared an engaging workshop on running a school council meeting. Feedback from many of the attendees indicated that they found it very informative; even several tenured parent council members learned some great tips from her presentation.

The Board of Trustees pays the ASCA membership fees for all of our schools. The Association is a great resource for parents, school councils, and fundraising societies.

As this was the first in-person Council of School Councils in the last few years, it was a great opportunity for many to reconnect, with refreshments and snacks provided before the event to allow attendees to mingle and network. The Board wishes to thank all the participants for an enjoyable and informative evening.

- Trustee Robyn Steed

## ASBA Fall General Meeting

In November all 61 Public, Catholic, and Francophone Boards from across the province met for the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Fall General Meeting (FGM), which included a full day business meeting, professional development, an awards banquet, and an MLA breakfast. We also heard from Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Education, and Premier Danielle Smith, and there was opportunity for questions, discussion, and relationship-building.

During our business session, six new resolutions were passed - two of which Black Gold participated in the development and nomination of. The focus of these:

- Advocacy to bring together education partners and associated child-centred ministries, agencies, and organizations to enact the recommendations of the *December 2021 Child and Youth Wellbeing Review* report to enhance cross-ministry support.
- Advocacy to the Minister of Education to establish a cross-ministry task force to review the *Standards for Special Education*, involving key educational stakeholders, with a clear timeline for implementation.

- Trustee Devonna Klaassen



### Board Chair Eckert: Candy Cane Wreath

*"This is a fun Christmas activity that takes no more than 30 minutes to an hour to make!"*

#### Materials Needed:

- 20 large candy canes
- 2 small candy canes/ Snowflake ornament
- Hot glue gun
- String/Ribbon

#### Instructions:

I bought two packs of candy canes. I left the plastic on the candy canes and just cut off the bottom plastic if it was too long.

First you hot glue the top and bottom of the candy canes to make a heart. Then you take one of the back sides of the heart and hot glue the back side of the candy cane to it. Do this all the way around until you have a complete circle.

Once you have a circle wreath turn it over and hot glue the back of it completely so that it will not fall apart. You can use any type of candy cane - big, small, plastic or real!



*Caleb Eckert (grandson) with the finished wreath!*



## Focusing on mental health at Black Gold



MHCBC Success Coach Jenna Bosch facilitating Kimochis with kindergarteners at Calmar Elementary School.

Raising children is a difficult job. When kids hit the early years of school, parents often have many questions. Does their child appropriately socialize with others? Do they respect and listen to their teachers? Is their learning developmentally on track?

What if the answers you receive are not exactly what you had hoped for, especially as we emerge from the disruptive COVID-19 pandemic? What can you do when your child needs some extra help?

Luckily, the Black Gold School Division's Student Services is here to help! Made up of a variety of specialized professionals – speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, educational psychologists, a mental health nurse, family school liaisons, educational audiologists, a teacher of the blind/low vision, special education teachers, and mental health success coaches – they work with students and families to understand a child's abilities, identify their struggles, and create personalized strategies to support their overall growth, development and success.

They also help make referrals to outside agencies when more specialized supports are needed.

Student Services also has an innovative **Mental Health Capacity Building (MHCBC)** program, which works year round to promote positive mental health in children, youth, families, and communities. A small team of MHCBC success coaches work within schools and in community settings to facilitate incremental skill-building programs, introduce and practice coping skills and tools, and promote mental, emotional, and social well-being.

Over the last few years, the MHCBC team has focused on integrating the Mental Health Literacy program for students in Grade 9-12. "In this program, students learn the stigma and realities of mental illness," said MHCBC Program Manager Cherie Corcoran. "The literacy program also breaks down common mental health illnesses to further educate students on exactly what it means to have Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Bipolar, and other neurodevelopmental disorders."

The team's efforts have not gone unnoticed, and school staff from across the Division are lauding the MHCBC program. "Without the team's involvement at our small rural school, many students would not be receiving the much needed support and education regarding mental health literacy," said Laurel Osness, NSCHS counsellor.

You are never alone in this challenging but oh-so-rewarding journey of parenthood - the Black Gold Family is here to work with you!

For more information about the mental health services available to our students and families, please visit: [www.blackgold.ca/parents/supports-for-students](http://www.blackgold.ca/parents/supports-for-students).

- Angie Charpentier, Vice Chair  
& Trustee Michelle Martin

## Board Advocacy

This is an interesting time for advocacy. With a new premier and an anticipated election, as your school trustees we are doing our best to keep public education on the radar and ensure that the needs and realities are clear.

There is advocacy work that we engage in from our local perspective, broader advocacy that happens in partnership with other school divisions, and provincial advocacy that happens through active participation with the Alberta School Boards Association. Additionally, as Education has significant overlap with a number of other Ministries, relationship building and advocacy is no longer limited to the Ministry of Education.

Over the course of the fall, we met directly with:

- Local MLA Mark Smith - hosted Town Hall with Travis Toews; we also had breakfast with him at the ASBA MLA breakfast in November - shared local context and areas of concern.
- Travis Toews, currently Minister of Finance; however, when we met with him as a UCP leadership candidate, we shared topics of relevance to Education with local context examples for understanding and heard more about his perspective on education.
- MLA Sarah Hoffman (Official Opposition Critic for Education), and Leduc-Beaumont NDP candidate Cam Heenan joined us for a luncheon to hear more about the unique variables impacting our division and to gather insights as to their intentions and priorities.

Our current advocacy areas of focus include predictable funding - particularly for growing school divisions, mental health, wraparound supports and access to them, the curriculum, and school transportation.

Locally, we are in the process of setting up formal meetings with a number of our area municipalities. We look forward to discussing local priorities and context, and working together to support the children and youth in our communities.

- Trustee Devonna Klaassen

### A Recipe for Living

1 Cup of good thoughts  
1 Cup of good deeds  
1 Cup of Consideration for others  
2 Cups of Sacrifice  
3 Cups of forgiveness  
2 Cups of well beaten thoughts

Mix these thoroughly and add  
tears of joy, sorrow and sympathy

for others. Flavor with little gifts of  
love and kindly service. Fold in 4  
cups of each of prayer and faith to  
lighten the other ingredients and  
raise the texture to great heights  
of Christian living. After pouring all  
this into your daily life, bake well  
with the warmth of human kindness.  
Serve with a smile.

Makes enough to serve all humanity.



## Three Year Capital Plan highlights

Board Priority	Location	Project	Key Driver	Project Sub Category	Estimated Project Cost (Millions)
YEAR 1 - 2023-2024					
1	Leduc	École Corinthia Park School Modernization	Infrastructure Condition	Modernization	\$6.5
2	Beaumont	New High School in Beaumont (1,000 opening with capacity for 600 addition)	Economic Growth	New facility	\$53.2
YEAR 2 - 2024-2025					
3	Leduc	Solution for Willow Park School (New 950 capacity K-9)	Economic Growth & Infrastructure Condition	Replacement	\$34.1
YEAR 3 - 2025-2026					
4	Leduc	East Elementary School Modernization	Infrastructure Condition	Modernization & Addition	\$8.3
5	Devon	Robina Baker School Modernization	Infrastructure Condition	Modernization	\$3.4

Each year the Board of Trustees submits a Three Year Capital Plan to the Province to address infrastructure conditions at our schools and growth in our communities.

The above Capital Plan submission was approved by the Board of Trustees on March 16, 2022.

Ongoing focus areas include installing security and water-metering systems, schedule duct cleaning to ensure clean

air in schools, roof replacement, and boiler management system upgrades from pneumatic to electric to increase efficiency and reliability. To help mitigate the cost of utilities, there is a continuous retrofitting schedule.

A big shout out to our dedicated Facilities department for their responsible use of resources in bringing these projects to fruition!

- Trustee Barb Martinson



The path of learning for us trustees continued in the Board's fall planning sessions on November 14-15. Brian St. Germain, a retired teacher and ATA Indigenous education facilitator, worked with our Indigenous Lead teacher Michelle Haveron to guide trustees and senior leadership through a Blanket Exercise. This activity was followed by a discussion of the 4 Seasons course, issues around reconciliation education at Black Gold, and the road forward for us.

As reconciliation education is a focus area for the governance team, it was good to see the many moments when "the lights went on" from something newly learned.

## Residential Schools and the Legacy of Canadian Indigenous Policy

As a former Social Studies teacher, I have come to understand that there is much that the Alberta Social Studies curriculum has not taught students. One issue, in particular, that students learned little about has come to the forefront in the last few years: the relationship between Canada and the Indigenous Peoples of this land.

Reconciliation education is becoming more prevalent in schools around Alberta, including those in the Black Gold School Division (BGSD).

Keeping in mind that safe and supportive learning environments that value diversity and the success of every student, the trustees set out on our own guided

learning about these issues. It began this fall, with trustees taking an online course offered by the First Nations University of Canada.

The nine-module course, called **4 Seasons of Reconciliation**, describes the historical relationship between Canada and Indigenous Peoples; the role of governments in carrying out racist policies towards Indigenous Peoples; the role of residential schools; the making and breaking of treaties; social and economic aspects of the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples of Canada; the role of the United Nations in promoting change; and progress through reconciliation towards a better life for all.

This is the season of hope! To conclude with the words of the Honourable Justice Senator Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, as he spoke to teachers, parents and community members on the Critical Role of Education in Reconciliation: "Education has gotten us into this mess, and education will get us out."

For more information, go to: [www.kairoscanada.org/murray-sinclair-education-key-reconciliation](http://www.kairoscanada.org/murray-sinclair-education-key-reconciliation)

- Trustee Gary Hansen

"I have this incredible ability to predict what's inside a wrapped gift.."

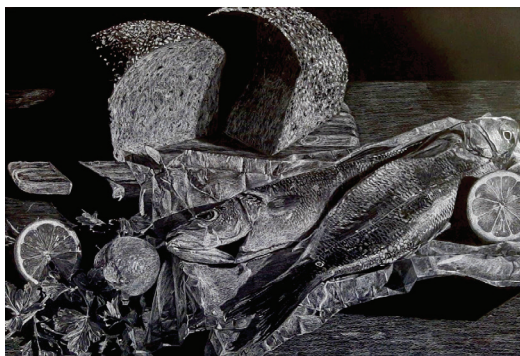


"It's a present!"

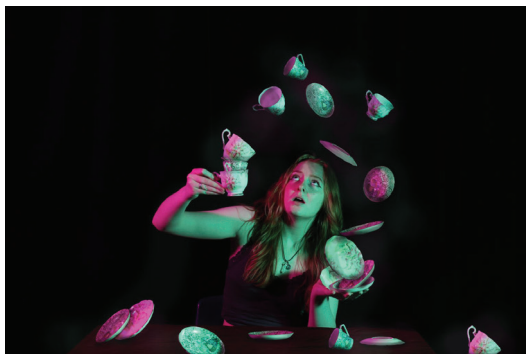




Calley Rustand "New Normal" graphite on paper, 2022



Emma Hickey "A Fresh Lunch" white charcoal on paper, 2022



Amber Hunter "Tea Party" composite photograph, 2022

## Celebrating the Arts at Black Gold!

As public school board trustees, we believe in supporting the arts at all levels. The Board recognizes the complementary nature the creative arts play in supporting academics, as well as the development of the whole child.

Art has the power to provide a much needed escape from reality, to bring people together, and form a sense of belonging - a community - whether it is art for the sake of entertainment, self-expression, inspiration, or art borne from contemplation and reflection. The experience of participating in artmaking influences motor skills, communication skills, social skills, language skills, risk taking, concentration, creativity, problem solving, concentration, mindfulness, and resilience - just to name a few.

Creating and engaging in artistic endeavour can be one of the easiest tools for opening our eyes to brand new perspectives! To outwardly show our support, the Board has begun purchasing visual art pieces created by our high school students on an annual basis. These pieces are proudly displayed at the Division Office.

Above are images of the recent acquisitions from the **2nd Annual BGSD High School Student Virtual Art Showcase** at the County Centre. Congratulations again to École Secondaire Beaumont Composite High School students Amber Hunter and Emma Hickey, as well as Leduc Composite High School student Calley Rustand.

We are proud to have their artworks in the Division's permanent art collection.

- Trustee Devonna Klaassen

## Save the Date!

This spring we are beyond excited to bring this exciting celebration back to the Winspear Centre on April 14, 2023!

This event has all the feels - a wonderful evening of joy and inspiration showcasing high school talent in theatre, music, photography, metalwork, woodwork, painting, drawing, and more! We look forward to bringing the Black Gold Family together once again to support our students in a world-class venue.



## Important Dates

- **January 25, 2023** - Regular Board Meeting (live-streamed; open session begins at 10:30 a.m.)
- **February 6, 2023** - Council of School Communities (virtual)
- **February 22, 2023** - Regular Board Meeting (live-streamed; open session begins at 10:30 a.m.)
- **March 22, 2022** - Regular Board Meeting (live-streamed; open session begins at 10:30 a.m.)
- **April 26, 2023** - Regular Board Meeting (live-streamed; open session begins at 10:30 a.m.)

## Reach out!

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

**Esther Eckert (Ward 4), Board Chair:**

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**Angie Charpentier, Vice Chair (Ward 3):**

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[BlackGoldSchoolDivision](https://www.youtube.com/BlackGoldSchoolDivision)

# Holiday Recipes



*"This is not a traditional holiday treat; however, I love my salads and I'm sure there are others who do as well. I hope you enjoy this salad as much as I do."*

## Trustee Martin: Holiday Salad

### Ingredients:

- Mixed green salad mix or a bag of kale salad mix
- Red onion, can be sliced or diced
- Strawberries, cut up
- Yellow pepper, diced up
- Feta cheese
- Walnuts
- Your choice of dressing, I prefer, Greek and feta dressing from Kraft or Balsamic vinaigrette dressing.



## Trustee Charpentier: Christmas Nibbles

### Ingredients:

- 1 box of Crispix cereal
- 2 boxes of mini ritz bits
- 1 box of snak stik
- 2 cups of pretezels
- 2 cups of Cheerios
- 2 cups of Quaker Corn Bran
- 3 pckgs of Hidden Valley ranch dressing
- 4 tbsp of dill weed
- 1 1/4 cup of olive oil

Mix and match all of your favorites in a larger roaster or very big bowl. In a smaller bowl stir the dry ingredients and sprinkle over the cereal mix.

Pour in the olive oil and stir gently every two hours for 12 hours. Leave for 24 hours before serving.

Stir ingredients as they are heated to a boil - be careful; do not set heat too high. Continue to stir boiling liquid until it becomes light in colour. Test syrup in water. If a few drops form a hard ball, then remove pot from heat. Add vanilla to the pot and stir. Pour the liquid over the popcorn and peanut mixture, then stir.

Grease your hands with butter and form the mixture into the size of popcorn balls, as desired. Place popcorn balls on the large cookie sheet\* Once cooled, the popcorn balls are ready to eat.

*\*Coloured sprinkles can be added to celebrate the season.*



*"This is a great recipe for Christmas movie night, gifts for your school, or Christmas gatherings."*

## Trustee Steed: Mom's Broccoli Casserole

### Ingredients:

- 2 lbs fresh broccoli - steamed
- 1 can cream of broccoli soup
- 250ml sour cream
- 1-2 cups shredded cheddar cheese (depends how cheesy you want it)
- 1 can French's dried onion bits.

Steam broccoli, strain and place in casserole dish, combine with soup, sour cream and cheese. Salt and pepper to taste.

Pour dried onion bits on top of casserole, cover and bake at 375°F for 30 minutes.



## Trustee Hansen: Popcorn Balls

### Ingredients:

- 12 cups popped corn
- 3 cups of peanuts
- 1.5 cups of brown sugar
- 1 cup of butter
- 0.5 cup of honey or corn syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 package of seasonal coloured sprinkles (optional)

Prepare a large cookie sheet covered with parchment paper or greased with butter. Mix together in a pot brown sugar, butter and honey or corn syrup.

*"The recipe is one of the must-have cookies on the Christmas platter. My Grandma ALWAYS makes these cookies at Christmas!"*

## Trustee Klaassen: Crème Wafers

### WAFERS:

- 1 cup soft butter
- 2 cups flour
- 1/3 cup whipping cream

### FILLING:

- 1/4 cup soft butter
- 3/4 cup icing sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- Food coloring (obviously green for us!)

Mix WAFER ingredients and chill. Roll the dough out 1/4" thick and cut into small circles. Place on ungreased pan. Sprinkle with sugar and prick with a fork.

Bake 7-9min at 375 until very light brown on the edges. Mix up the FILLING, and ice one cookie and place a second on it. Enjoy!