



# BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

April 14, 2021



*We rise by lifting others*

## BOARD UPDATE

Chair Klaassen welcomed everyone to the April Board meeting and provided opening comments.

“Here we are coming off the tail end of spring break - a time where our staff and students generally have the opportunity for rest and recharge before the last leg of the school year. The sun is out longer hours and that annual underlying sense of hope rides on the breeze. And yet - this spring has been turbulent. If you are losing sleep over the gravity of the proposed curriculum, or feeling beaten down by the weight of yet another wave of the pandemic ... you are not alone.

At our March meeting, less than a month ago, we were starting to transition into step 3. Here we are, having jumped back to step 1, and dealing with the addition of a sharp uptick in variant cases. We know this is another huge strain for students, families, and staff. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do to hold each other up and keep each other safe. A quote today from a lawyer/politician, Robert G. Ingersoll: “We rise by lifting others.”

## SCHOOL BUS SAFETY WINNER

Superintendent/CEO Romanchuk announced that there is one winner from Black Gold School Division in the Provincial contest for School Bus Safety Week. The winner is Grade 3 student, Kodie Corbeil from Linsford Park School.

Kodie, along with her family and Principal Oppermann attended the meeting virtually to have the award presented. Mrs. Oppermann presented Kodie with a \$25 Chapters/Indigo gift card and a plaque with her framed print. In addition, Kodie also receives a \$100 cheque payable to her school for a class activity. Kodie’s teacher, Ms. Messner, has always been a part of the school bus safety poster contest, and has had numerous students win prizes.



## COVID-19 UPDATE



Associate Superintendent Monty provided a COVID update. To date, this year, we have had 3,845 students and 378 staff that have had to isolate/quarantine. As of now, Black Gold has four schools with outbreak status. BGSD continues to work with Alberta Health Services (AHS) and the Alberta government to follow their lead in the practices and restrictions. Associate Superintendent Monty gave a shout out to Principals, Assistant Principals, and Secretaries for all the information they provide to AHS.

## DISTANCE LEARNING UPDATE

Associate Superintendent Dargis provided an update on the Distance Learning (DL) Program. The recent increase in COVID cases has increased the number of parent requests to move students into DL. The Choice of Learning Declaration forms for the fall semester were open from March 31 until April 8. We are still waiting on declarations for approximately 1500 students. Schools are working with families to finalize their declarations. Of the declarations received, 500 K — Grade 12 students chose to continue in DL. Currently, BGSD DL program has approximately 1600 students. Parents/guardians will have an opportunity to confirm their choices in August, prior to the start of the school year.



## ELECTION AGREEMENT—CITY OF LEDUC

The election agreement with the City of Leduc was updated to outline the new ward structure, and to state that the BGSD Returning Officer will declare the election results. There are three trustees to be elected into the City of Leduc.

The Board approved the updated Election Agreement with the City of Leduc.



## DRAFT CURRICULUM



BGSD is looking at the new draft curriculum and will look at the big picture to make a final decision on whether or not to pilot the new curriculum. BGSD wants the best curriculum for students and taking care of students and staff is their highest priority.

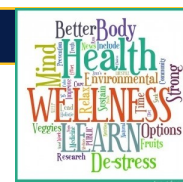
BGSD has received feedback from parents and teachers, and their input will be part of the decision making process. Superintendent/CEO Romanchuk stated that Administration will work collaboratively with the Board to make the decision. BGSD is using a measured approach and currently, there is a working committee of 30 teacher volunteers who are reviewing the curriculum line by line. The teachers are looking at the outcomes to determine if they are strong, weak or need improvement. The group will complete their review on April 16 and share it with the Board and Administration.

Trustees commented on the appreciated feedback they've received and confirmed they are listening to everyone.

The Board will prioritize a meeting to discuss the results and recommendation and will make their decision on whether to pilot the curriculum program by April 28th. Superintendent/CEO Romanchuk, on behalf of Administration, thanked the Board for listening, and stated BGSD will provide the best report.

## WELLNESS PRESENTATION

Eric Larson, Assistant Principal, École Bellevue School, Brian Torrance, Director at EverActive Schools and Matthew Mischke from the Healthy School Wellness Team at Alberta Health Services attended the meeting to provide information on Wellness in Black Gold.



Mr. Larson shared some information on the Wellness Program for Black Gold. A few key points outlined were:

- ◆ To develop shared understanding of wellness and well-being for our Division and schools.
- ◆ Organize a steering committee to help develop plans. This will allow multiple perspectives, shared understanding, and greater uptake. Members would include Administration, Board representation, teachers and members of our unionized and non-unionized support staff.
- ◆ Hire a Division lead(s) to coordinate and promote all initiatives and plans to work with schools and administration.
- ◆ Provide professional development for all staff on the various components of wellness, which include: social emotional learning, regulation, importance of physical activity, healthy eating and creating positive social environments.
- ◆ We want to see wellness and healthy living modelled by our staff and students in our welcoming, safe, healthy, respectful and celebrate diversity schools.



Wellness needs to be a top priority. COVID has accelerated a lot of key issues with wellness right now. The physical and mental health of our students is critical now.

Mr. Larson stated that wellness is a living model by our students and staff, and we all want to work together as a team with a shared vision and opportunities to mentorship. Trustees commented that BGSD wants to have a comprehensive healthy school approach so that it becomes part of the culture in the schools.

Superintendent/CEO Romanchuk commended Erik and the leaders behind him for their passion and work to date in helping students and staff within their schools. Whatever BGSD's next steps, they will be positive ones. Partnering with EverActive Schools and Alberta Health Services makes our initiatives even more powerful.

## SCHOOL FEES

The Board approved the recommendation from Administration that Division student fees remain the same for the 2021-2022 school year, and to approve a maximum annual fee of \$1,000 (\$100/month) for Non-Funded Children attending the Pre-Kindergarten pilot program at Robina Baker Elementary School.



Schools will be strongly encouraged to not increase school-based fees (enhanced course fees, activity fees and extracurricular fees) unless absolutely necessary and supported by School Councils, parents and financial documentation. Any proposed increases must be reviewed and approved by the Finance Department.



## ADDRESSING THE COVID GAP

Superintendent/CEO Romanchuk addressed COVID and the COVID Gap in Education. Students are showing gaps in their learning, and this is evident in classrooms. BGSD has a plan to address the COVID gap in numeracy and literacy, which includes tools to augment what we already have in Math and Writing.



BGSD will focus on the hiring of lead teachers in numeracy and literacy. BGSD will hire a 0.1 FTE teacher for instructional support for each school to promote literacy, a 0.1 FTE teacher for instructional support for each school to promote numeracy, and also, a 1.0 FTE numeracy coordinator and 1.0 FTE literacy coordinator at Division Office. There will also be a 0.1 FTE at each school to coordinate the comprehensive wellness plan at each school and a 0.4 FTE wellness lead hired to coordinate wellness initiatives across the Division. BGSD is requesting funding from our reserves to provide the personnel and tools to implement these programs.

The Board approved the plan and the allocation of resources, both financial and human, to address the COVID Gap and wellness initiatives as presented.

## FUNDING MANUAL OVERVIEW / BUDGET UPDATE



On March 31st, Alberta Education released the 2021-2022 funding manual and funding profiles for school authorities. As stated by Alberta Education when the Provincial budget was announced in February, school authorities will not experience reduced operational funding in 2021-2022 due to lower-than-anticipated enrolments that occurred in the 2020-2021 school year.

Two new grants were introduced in the 2021-2022 funding manual:



- ◆ Specialized Learning Support (SLS) Kindergarten Severe Grant – supports Kindergarten children with a severe disability or severe language delay who require supports beyond that offered in a regular Kindergarten classroom.
- ◆ Moderate Language Delay Grant – supports Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten children with moderate language delays diagnosed through specialized assessments.

Some grants were also reduced – a portion of the Specialized Learning Support (SLS) grant was reallocated to support the SLS Kindergarten Severe Grant. The Operation and Maintenance Grants has also been reduced.

The Infrastructure and Maintenance Renewal (IMR) grant will be split between operational funding (IMR) and capital funding (Capital and Maintenance Renewal (CMR)). CMR funding must be spent on projects identified by the school authority and approved in accordance with the Government of Alberta’s Treasury Board and Finance criteria.

BGSD will continue to work on the budget and provide updates as we move forward.

## CELEBRATING SUCCESS

‘School News’ was presented which included various activities at the following schools during March and April. It is posted on our BGSD website, Board Highlights—April.

- ◆ John Maland High
- ◆ Robina Baker Elementary
- ◆ East Elementary
- ◆ Willow Park
- ◆ École Champs Vallée
- ◆ École Beau Meadow
- ◆ École Leduc Estates
- ◆ Distance Learning Program
- ◆ West Haven Public
- ◆ Thorsby Elementary



## EDWIN PARR NOMINEE

Chair Klaassen announced that Kate Myszkowski, Kindergarten teacher at Thorsby Elementary School, is the 2021 Edwin Parr Teacher Award nominee for BGSD.



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