



BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

December 9, 2020



BOARD UPDATE



Chair Klaassen welcomed everyone to the December Board meeting.

“We are all participating remotely today in light of current and upcoming restrictions.

While it’s only been two weeks since our last meeting, there have been significant changes to school operations and public health measures as a result of Alberta’s sharp increase in COVID-19 cases. Our thoughts are with all those who have tested positive, and all those who have suffered a loss.

As the weeks carry on, the stress and strain continues to build. At a school council meeting earlier this week it was referenced as being, *like running a marathon, but the finish line keeps moving*. People don’t know what to do, or how to adjust their pacing accordingly.

The author Jodi Picoult said, *“The human capacity for burden is like bamboo - far more flexible than you would ever believe at first glance.”* While this trial continues, so too do the examples of creativity, resiliency, and hope. There is light at the end of this long dark tunnel and when we are finally through this global challenge, I know that there will be *some relief, some returned joy and some peace of mind* for the return of the sense of normal that so quickly slipped through our fingers earlier this year.

And while that finish line is perhaps not yet in sight, there are things to look forward to. It seems as though everyone has a countdown of one sort or another these days, whether it be:

- ◆ Folks counting down to the end of an isolation period;
- ◆ Students and staff tallying the number of days until winter break;
- ◆ Advent calendars marking the days until Christmas morning;
- ◆ Daylight time (or lack thereof) indicating the near arrival of Winter Solstice;
- ◆ Star gazers eagerly awaiting to witness the aligning of Saturn and Jupiter (also known as the Christmas Star) - which hasn’t happened to this degree for nearly 800 years!
- ◆ The urgent counting of days until we ring in the new year and leave 2020 behind us;
- ◆ Or ... perhaps if not these ... there is Festivus for the rest of us!



COVID-19 UPDATE

Associate Superintendent Monty provided an update on COVID-19. Associate Superintendent Monty gave a ‘Shout Out’ to staff, principals, students and custodians. All of our schools are safe, and staff are following guidelines! Approximately 1,300 BGSD students have been or are in quarantine, and 165 staff have been or are in quarantine. There have been outbreaks at four schools. Alberta Health Services have investigated these outbreaks, and the schools are all in compliance with AHS guidelines. On the BGSD website, there is a [link to COVID-19 information](#) that shows the number of cases in our schools.



Trustee Eckert expressed thanks to Associate Superintendent Monty for the updates and keeping the Board informed.

Associate Superintendent Dargis stated that later today, all parents would receive an email with the form ‘Declaration of Choice Learning Experience’ for the second semester. All parents will need to complete the form by January 6, 2021.

DRAFT 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR FEEDBACK

Superintendent/CEO Romanchuk presented feedback from staff, school councils, students and Division Office for the 2021-2022 School Year Calendar. All comments from each group were presented to the Trustees in-camera. This year's survey resulted in some of the following comments:



- ◆ All participants liked the two-day staggered entry, with regular classes commencing on the third day to be scheduled for the commencement of the 2021-2022 school year.
- ◆ Option preference for a school start date, this depends on whether people want a November midterm break – most staff and students were in favour of having a fall break; Division Office was not in favour, more for operational reasons.
- ◆ Christmas Break – discussions were had by all groups on whether to have more time at the beginning of the break or at the end of the break. The majority of groups preferred beginning earlier.
- ◆ Option preference for when spring break should occur – All groups agreed to have the last week of March for the break instead of earlier.

Superintendent/CEO Romanchuk presented a draft calendar for the 2021-2022 school year. Teacher workdays would begin August 26 & 27, and staggered entry days would be August 30 & 31, with all students together on September 1. Christmas break would begin December 20, with students starting back on January 3.

Trustees would like more time to discuss the calendars. The calendar will be brought back for approval at the January 2021 Board meeting. Trustees appreciated all the work and feedback on the calendar information.

REVISED FALL BUDGET

Laurel Kvarnberg, Director of Finance, presented the Quarter 1 Report for the 2020-2021 Budget. The report shows the new framework as per Alberta Education, and provided some detailed information on the revenue and expenses. Also presented was the BGSD Federal Funding for Safe Report due to COVID-19 which showed how the funds had been budgeted and the related expenses to date.



DELIVERY OF SPECIALIZED SERVICES DURING COVID

Niki Gill, ECS/PUF Coordinator, gave a brief outline of changes that were made to the Program Unit Funding (PUF) by Alberta Education last year. The goal for the program is to support literacy and numeracy, and with COVID-19, there have been many changes made.



Other supports in the Student Services Department are specialized services such as Speech Language Pathology (SLP), Occupational Therapy (OT) and Physical Therapy (PT). Lori Anne Day, SLP, and Christina Flanagan, OT provided information on what they do, and what programs and strategies are available to students. Programs adjustments have been made for ECS to Grades 2 due to COVID-19, in relation to the physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of students.

On the BGSD website, there is a link for '[Engaging Students](#)' which has information on all types of resources for Black Gold OT, SLP and PT supports that parents and staff can access.

SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER

Superintendent/CEO Romanchuk sent letters to municipalities requesting help to partner with BGSD in supporting a School Resource Officer (SRO) in each community. The City of Leduc City Council declined the request to increase SRO time but will continue to support the current 1.0 SRO position. We will continue to work with the City of Leduc and hopefully, there will be room in their budget next year. Leduc County Council passed a motion to work with the RCMP to assist BGSD with their contribution to fund an SRO who will work with students and communities within Leduc County. Superintendent/CEO Romanchuk has contacted Thorsby RCMP to help support schools in the communities of Warburg, Thorsby and Calmar. The detachment is very much in favour of being part of the partnership.





ELECTION ACT & RETURNING OFFICER

Associate Superintendent Volkman gave an update on changes to the Local Authorities Election Act for the election in the fall of 2021:



- ◆ Board must submit bylaws by December 31, 2020
- ◆ When a Board appoints their returning officer by resolution, they must also appoint a substitute returning officer.
- ◆ Nomination period starts on January 1, 2021 and runs until 12:00 p.m. on nomination day.

The Board approved the appointment of Associate Superintendent Volkman as the returning officer for BGSD for the upcoming election in October 2021.

The Board approved the appointment of Laurel Kvarnberg, Director of Finance, as the substitute returning officer for BGSD for the upcoming election in October 2021.

FALL BOARD PLANNING

Trustees and Administration attended a Board Planning session on November 2 and 3 reviewing key learnings, goals and the vision for BGSD up to the year 2030. Some of the highlights from the session were:

- ◆ Financial Statements
- ◆ Three Year Education Plan
- ◆ Operational Plans
- ◆ Strategic Planning



BGSD WEBSITE INFORMATION

Superintendent/CEO Romanchuk commented that attention should be brought to the BGSD website under Board Committees where there is a new page highlighting the Board's Community Engagement & Advocacy efforts.



VIRTUAL SCHOOL VISITS

The Board has been conducting their school visits virtually. Principals and staff have shared videos and slides to showcase what is happening in their schools.



Schools are facing challenges and are doing their best to keep everyone safe. We commend our staff and students for being resilient and innovative.

CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Superintendent/CEO Romanchuk showed a PowerPoint presentation on 'School News' which included various activities during November and December at the following schools and is posted to our BGSD website:

- ◆ Covenant Christian
- ◆ East Elementary
- ◆ École Coloniale Estates
- ◆ École Corinthia Park
- ◆ École Leduc Estates
- ◆ Thorsby Junior/Senior High
- ◆ Willow Park



Students, Staff, Parents and Community Members,

We wish you a Christmas safe, well-deserved relaxing



filled with blessings and hope you enjoy a holiday season! Happy, Healthy New Year!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!