

Black Gold School Division



2019 - 2020 STRATEGIC UPDATE

www.blackgold.ca



12,334 students

**32
schools**

666 teachers

634 support staff

**7th
largest
school division
in Alberta**

CORE VALUES

student-focused learning
relationships
supportive environment
passion
managing resources responsibly

7 communities
Beaumont, Calmar,
Devon, Leduc,
New Sarepta, Thorsby
and Warburg

BLACK GOLD SCHOOL DIVISION

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CORE PURPOSE = TO INSPIRE SUCCESS

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Board of Trustees

Beaumont - Robyn Steed
County Central - Rebecca Eilander
County East - Esther Eckert
County West - Shawna Ofstie
Devon - Devonna Klaassen - Board Chair
Leduc - Sarah O'Gorman - Vice-Chair
Leduc - Barb Martinson

Division Executive Team

Superintendent of Schools/CEO - William Romanchuk
Associate Superintendent, Business & Finance - Ruth Andres
Associate Superintendent, Human Resources & Administration - Calvin Monty
Associate Superintendent, Learning Services - Norm Dargis

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF BLACK GOLD SCHOOL DIVISION

This has been an unprecedented year for Black Gold, our community and the world. As we continue on this journey, the Board of Trustees of Black Gold School Division remains dedicated to excellence in education, student well-being, and "Inspiring Success" for all of our Black Gold family.

Despite the challenges a global Pandemic and an economic recession provides, our accomplishments are still plentiful. This is a direct result of the combined determination and hard work of our students, staff, volunteers, families and community.

As a dynamic organization, we use our core values as a guide for our decision making. The Board of Trustees and its employees are committed to joint decision making and a collaborative approach to system operation and policy development.

Our strategic priorities light the path to "**Inspire Success**"; transforming the learners of today into the leaders of tomorrow.

Thank you to all for your commitment to creating a **supportive environment** where **student-focused learning** is fostered by welcoming, caring, and **respectful relationships**. We strive to lead with passion, and inspire passion. By managing resources responsibly, we will continue to build on the strong foundation Black Gold has developed for our schools, your children, and the future.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Beaumont

Robyn Steed

County Central

Rebecca Eilander

County East

Esther Eckert

County West

Shawna Ofstie

Devon

Devonna Klaassen - Board Chair

Leduc

Sarah O'Gorman - Vice-Chair

Barb Martinson

WHO WE ARE

Black Gold School Division (BGSD) is the seventh largest public school division in Alberta with approximately 12,000 students in 32 schools. Formed in 1995, BGSD has 25 years of experience in "inspiring success" in our communities of Beaumont, Calmar, Devon, Leduc, New Sarepta, Thorsby and Warburg.

As a Division, we provide the highest possible standard of educational opportunities including a full inclusive education program, second language instruction, extensive Career and Technology Studies (CTS) programs, as well as specialized support and disabilities services to Grades 1 - 12, along with Kindergarten and Pre-kindergarten.

Every day our staff, composed of approximately 666 teachers and 634 support staff work to "Inspire Success" in our schools, your children and the future. For more information on the Division and our schools, visit: www.blackgold.ca.

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

“The comeback is always stronger than the setback” is a quote attributed to Catherine Plano. It would be appropriate for Black Gold to adopt it as the theme of the upcoming school year.

2019 - 2020 was a year of unprecedented adversity for students, teachers, parents and school communities. As a Division, our ability to adapt, to overcome and to endure was tested several times. We found new ways to communicate with each other, to deliver and receive content and to collaborate. Through it all, we proved our resilience. By reading through the *Strategic Update*, you will see that not only did we survive but, we made some major accomplishments and we are aiming for even greater successes.

Despite the trying conditions placed upon us by a new funding framework that reflects current provincial economic conditions; being asked to provide data for a national copyright litigation that required staff to put in over 4,000 additional hours on top of our staff's regular duties; and oh yes, a global pandemic, Black Gold School Division provided students with excellent programming, in safe and caring conditions and well maintained schools.

As we look forward to the next school year, challenges as always will remain. Teachers will need to evaluate the effects of the disruption to traditional classes at the end of the year on student learning and once again adapt to the new ‘new normal’. In addition to academics, we will need to be conscious of the mental, emotional and social toll that the pandemic has taken on families and be prepared to address these concerns.

However, we will continue to bring equity of opportunity to all students as a way to “Inspire Success”. The transition back to regular classes will be exciting. Teachers and students are looking forward to being reunited. As a Division, we look forward to renewing old partnerships and forging new ones.

We look forward to engaging our students, teachers and school communities to help us develop creative solutions as we move forward. Through adversity, we discovered new ways of doing things. We developed new skill sets. If anything, our staff is better now than they ever were at providing innovative and meaningful lessons. As a Division we are stronger than we have ever been.



William Romanchuk
Superintendent of Schools/CEO
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OUR CORE PURPOSE

To Inspire Success.

OUR CORE VALUES

- Student-Focused Learning
- Relationships
- Supportive Environment
- Passion
- Managing Resources Responsibly

**Our core values help to
define our Division,
guide our behaviour,
structure our operations,
and shape the strategies
we use as we face
opportunities and challenges.**

STATEMENT OF BELIEFS

1. It is important to state goals and expectations for the Division.
2. It is important to foster a spirit of cooperation between and among schools and a willingness to work for the common good.
3. Programs, resources and facilities will be in accordance with the Division's philosophy and policies and the principle of equity.
4. Staff members will exercise autonomy and flexibility in determining the means by which requirements set by the Board can be best met.
5. Our main task is to help provide the highest possible standard of educational opportunities for students within the Division through the use of available resources.
6. Each person possesses inherent worth and dignity and is deserving of respect.
7. Each student has the right to an education which addresses individual need and individual potential.
8. Along with the right to an education, each student has a responsibility to attend school regularly and to abide by expectations for student conduct identified in the Education Act, Board Policies, Administrative Procedures and school regulations.
9. It is essential to help promote the existence of school environments which instill a love of life-long learning, a striving for excellence, the development of a healthy life style, and a positive self-image.
10. The development of inter-personal relationships deserves purposeful attention in schools. Qualities such as honesty, acceptance of others, cooperation and trustworthiness help foster harmonious relationships within the school and the community.
11. Schools perform a vital function in society as they serve to transmit important social and cultural values, and to assist students in becoming responsible and productive citizens.
12. The degree of individual achievement depends to a large extent upon student ability and motivation, as positive support from the home and other important sources of influences.
13. Student learning opportunities are enhanced when the efforts and expectations of all agencies affecting children complement one another and when the agencies communicate effectively with one another.
14. Effective teaching reflects the use of a variety of instructional methods and is influenced greatly by the learning needs of students.
15. Successful schools maintain a strong sense of community and provide a safe and orderly environment for learning. They communicate a clearly stated, simply understood statement of purpose. They encourage parents and local community members to become active and supportive participants in the life of the school through the provision of opportunities for formal and informal involvement.
16. Student learning and staff engagement are maximized in a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe environment where bullying and harassment are prohibited.



GOVERNANCE

BOARD OF TRUSTEES & SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS/CEO

PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1 Increased opportunities for engagement and opened the lines of communication (Council of School Communities, Trustee Newsletter, Municipal Meetings, etc.) in order to: better understand the interests of all stakeholders; build stronger relationships with the school community; and advocate for public education at all levels of government.
- 2 Created efficiencies within the organization that allowed teachers and support staff to remain in front of students despite severe budget challenges.
- 3 Supported and acknowledged the resourcefulness of Black Gold teachers and support staff in keeping students engaged during COVID-19 class closures.

Now Trending...

RESPONDING TO PROVINCIAL FUNDING FRAMEWORK CHANGES.
DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING
RE-ENTRY STRATEGIES FOR THE 2020 - 2021 SCHOOL YEAR.

IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS

- Keep Teachers and Education Assistants working with students.
- Mental wellness for students and staff.
- Deliver engagement opportunities for students, staff and school communities.
- Complete ongoing reviews (the West End Schools Programming Review and the Electoral Boundary Review).
- Activate the newly-formed Audit Committee.
- Strengthen working relationships with newly-appointed Associate Superintendent.
- Support excellent pedagogy by providing targeted professional development opportunities.



COMMUNICATION

PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1

Showcased safety culture and preparedness by executing a Division-wide parent emergency notification test.

2

Updated Council of School Communities format to engage parents and community as valued stakeholders.

3

Supported timely and relevant COVID-19 communication and created #BGSDLearningAtHome social media campaign to highlight continuity of learning.

Now Trending...

COVID-19 .

INCREASING EXPECTATIONS FOR MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT,
TRANSPARENT DECISION MAKING AND
CONVENIENT YET TIMELY IMPACTFUL INFORMATION.

IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS

- Communication strategies to support continuity of learning, re-entry into schools, community connection and trust in public education.
- Implementing and communicating refreshed visual identity/brand guidelines.
- Stakeholder engagement.



ADMINISTRATORS' ASSOCIATION

PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1

Development of *Parents as Partners in Education Guidelines*.

2

Completion of the Fair Dealing Copyright Litigation Project.

3

Achieved continuity of student learning during COVID-19 pandemic by implementing at-home learning opportunities for all Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 students either online or through alternative accommodations.

4

Delivery of professional development focused on social and emotional learning to help further support a foundation for safe and positive learning.

Now Trending...

VIRTUAL LEARNING AND SUPPORT.
NEW GOVERNMENT FUNDING FRAMEWORK MODEL.

IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS

- Continue work on Social and emotional learning.
- Supporting students through crisis and trauma.
- Black Gold School Division wellness.



LEARNING SERVICES

PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1 Completion of Fair Dealing Copyright Litigation Project.
- 2 The demonstration of flexibility and adaptability by the entire Learning Services team.
- 3 The quick transition to Remote Learning by students and staff.

Now Trending...

REDEFINING THE SUPPORTS THAT LEARNING SERVICES PROVIDES AMID THE COVID-19 REALITY AND THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE PLANNING PROCESS FOR NEXT YEAR.

IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS

- Supporting teachers in their transition to provide student remote learning opportunities.
- Creating and supporting the implementation of instruction and assessment continuity plans.
- Work with schools to identify and remediate gaps in student learning caused by the cancellations of schools.
- Work in collaboration with school communities, Division Office and the Government of Alberta to develop a school reopening strategy.
- Exploring a variety of models for Professional Development to support remote learning and face to face instruction.
- Review *School Combined Education Plans and Annual Education Results Report* goals with school-based Administrators.



STUDENT SERVICES

PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1** Pre-Kindergarten Programs: The staff are skilled, kind, professional and demonstrating best practice in early childhood intervention on a daily basis.
- 2** How staff have stepped up to the plate to support our most vulnerable children, youth and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3** Increased attendance with every hosted Mental Health Capacity Building Team Family Night Event throughout the school year. Administrators and families were incredibly grateful for the opportunity to focus on mental health and building relationships.

Now Trending...

ADJUSTING SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL TO BEST SERVE CHILDREN/STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES GIVEN THE CHANGES IN FUNDING MODELS FOR 2020 - 2021 AND EXPECTED INSTRUCTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS RELATED TO THE CURRENT COVID-19 REALITY.

IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS

- Supporting a smooth transition for students, staff and families into the 2020 - 2021 school year.
- MHCS team is preparing for eight weeks of Summer Camp to meet the mental health needs of students throughout Black Gold and providing 500 families with a *A Bag of Hope* that focuses on mental health activities and access to community support through COVID-19.



EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY

PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1 Utilized Technology Fee revenue to deploy read and write assistive technology, Lucid tools and student security for all students.
- 2 Quickly adjusted to the Coronavirus implications by distributing over 1200 Chromebooks to families, added school administrators to Google Classroom management and in serviced staff on digital applications.
- 3 Successfully integrated quick and easy Professional Development offerings (20 @3:20, posters, restaurant technology menu, etc.).

Now Trending...

MAINTAINING EQUITY OF ACCESS TO DIGITAL RESOURCES.

IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS

- Coordinate with other departments to help create a smooth fall startup.
- Support schools and families with a structured BYOED and Division supplied Chromebook plan.



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1 Built in-house ability to self maintain equipment. Now able to do the Division's own warranty work.
- 2 Effectively and efficiently maintained a high level of service.
- 3 Reduced power and cooling costs using high density server solutions.

Now Trending...

PROVIDING AN IMPROVED BRING YOUR OWN EDUCATIONAL DEVICE (BYOED) EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS WHEN THEY RETURN TO IN CLASS LEARNING.
PREPARE FOR LARGE UPTAKE OF PERSONAL LEARNING DEVICES WITHIN SCHOOLS.

IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS

- Cross training for increased capacity and service coverage for employees during absences and high demand situations to protect their wellness.
- Examine the service provided and ensure we are able to align expectations with the departments capacity to provide them.
- Work with staff improve cyber-awareness during this time of remote learning.
- Evergreening of aging infrastructure to provide a more engaging experience with online learning.



BUSINESS & FINANCE

PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1 The announcement of construction funding for a new high school in the City of Leduc.
- 2 Successfully navigating through the Fall budget announcement and the new Funding Framework for 2020 - 2021.
- 3 Continued to successfully collaborate with municipalities, Alberta Education and Alberta Infrastructure regarding new schools, modernizations and school reserve sites.

Now Trending...

IDENTIFYING NEW PROCEDURES WHICH NEED TO BE IMPLEMENTED WHEN THE SCHOOLS OPEN IN THE FALL UNDER COVID-19 GUIDELINES.

IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS

- Addressing the challenges regarding the reopening of schools.
- Updating and entering into new Joint Use Agreements with municipalities.
- Ensuring there are appropriately sized and a sufficient number of school reserve sites in each municipality.
- Long-term budget planning.



FACILITIES

PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1 Received construction funding announcement for the new high school in the City of Leduc, which is currently in the design phase.
- 2 École Secondaire Beaumont Composite High School addition and modernization was awarded with construction funding and is starting in May.
- 3 Completion of École J.E. Lapointe School modernization.

Now Trending...

ADJUSTING FACILITY OPERATIONS TO THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19.

IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS

- Design of new high school located in the City of Leduc.
- Modernization and expansion of École Secondaire Beaumont Composite High School.
- Closing out the École J.E. Lapointe School modernization.
- Reducing utility costs.



FINANCE

PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1 Increased capacity within Accounts Payable through cross-training, both between employees and within the Department.
- 2 Expanded and utilized internal cross-training within the Payroll Department.
- 3 Working with Alberta Education to build understanding and awareness of the impacts of the new funding model.

Now Trending...

UNDERSTANDING FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND ECONOMIC REALITIES OF COVID-19 AND UNCERTAINTY RELATED TO EDUCATION.

IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS

- Ensure cutoff procedures are followed given the cancellation of classes on March 16.
- Complete pre-audit work in July and August to prepare for year end with new staff in finance positions.
- Create detailed, structured transition plans for staff within the Finance Department.
- Understand and support the work of the Audit Committee.
- Operationalize the funding framework.



TRANSPORTATION

PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1 Black Gold bus contractors continue to recruit and retain school bus operators in times of transition and growth.
- 2 Conducted a successful Professional Development Day for all Black Gold bus operators with onsite bus inspection training, student management and virtual driving.
- 3 Maintained a positive relationship with school bus contractors despite difficult COVID-19 times.

4,000 students are transported on **78 bus routes** that travel **6560 km/day** or **1,193,920 km/annually** on regular school bus routes.

School Bus Safety Week is the 3rd week in October annually.

School Bus Driver Appreciation Day is the first Monday in May.

Alberta Education provides **transportation funding** for students who reside 2.4 km and greater from home to their designated school, only.

Now Trending...

COVID-19 IMPLICATIONS ON BUSING AND THE MANAGEMENT OF STUDENT SAFETY.

IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS

- COVID-19 management for busing.
- Installation of interior camera systems for all school buses for student management.
- Driver recruitment and safety in times of transition.



HUMAN RESOURCES & ADMINISTRATION

PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1 Staff Retirement Transition Program.
- 2 Continued Reduction in Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) surcharges.
- 3 Successfully nominated the recipient of the Council for School Leadership (CSL) Distinguished Leadership Award.

Now Trending...

INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP.

IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS

- Solidify and strengthen the Division's Health & Safety Program.
- Meaningful employee experiences.
- Staff/Board Advisory meetings.
- Collective bargaining.







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