



2020 - 2021  
**STRATEGIC  
PLAN  
UPDATE**

November 2020



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**12,249 students**

**31  
schools**

**666 teachers**

**634 support staff**

**7th**  
largest  
school division  
in Alberta

**OUR CORE  
PURPOSE -  
TO INSPIRE  
SUCCESS!**

**7 Communities**  
Beaumont, Calmar,  
Devon, Leduc,  
New Sarepta, Thorsby  
and Warburg

## **CORE VALUES**

- **Student-focused Learning**
  - **Relationships**
- **Supportive Environment**
  - **Passion**
- **Managing resources responsibly**

## **Division Executive Team**

**Superintendent of Schools/CEO** - William Romanchuk

**Associate Superintendent, Business & Finance** - Chelsey Volkman

**Associate Superintendent, Human Resources & Administration** - Calvin Monty

**Associate Superintendent, Learning Services** - Norm Dargis

# A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES



## 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

Students, staff, and families are facing a multitude of challenges this year; however, after a few months into re-entry things are going better than anticipated. We therefore are pleased to share the Black Gold School Division (BGSD) 2020-2021 year-to-date Strategic Highlights.

Our strategic update showcases our recent accomplishments and outlines key focus areas across the Division. While response to the COVID-19 pandemic is a consistent theme throughout this document, taking the time to prepare this update has allowed us to pause and acknowledge all that has been accomplished.

Your Board of Trustees is dedicated to excellence in education, student well-being, and 'Inspiring Success' for all of our Black Gold family. Our

accomplishments are the combined result of the determination and hard work of our students, staff, families and community.

Decision-making occurs via a framework outlined by our core values. As this is the 25th Anniversary of BGSD, we will be dedicating some time this year to review the relevance and accuracy of our core values, and delve into strategic planning to solidify our strategic priorities. These priorities will be used to define the path of continued success for transforming the learners of today into the leaders, movers and shakers of tomorrow.

Thank-you to all our hardworking and dedicated staff for your care and commitment to finding the balance between striving to keep all of our students safe and maximizing program delivery. By doing so, you are maintaining the caring, respectful, safe and welcoming environments Black Gold families have come to know, allowing students to engage, belong, learn, grow, and discover.

We look forward to building on the strong foundation Black Gold has developed over the years for our schools, your children, and the future.

Sincerely,

Devonna Klaassen,  
Board Chair



# A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

I have been reflecting on the validity of the old English proverb, “Necessity is the mother of invention” and coupling it with the phrase often used by Barry Scheeler, our IT manager, “Never waste a good crisis!”

Now, I’m not saying I am grateful for the current global pandemic, but if anything, it has underscored just how resilient and innovative we are as educators and as a school division.

The announcement from the provincial government in late July that schools would be opening this fall under Scenario 1, at near normal conditions, began a flurry of activity that would see the Division transform its daily routines.

Each school implemented administrative and operational controls. School operations were altered and teachers modified the way they taught to conform with the public health guidelines.

We built a distance learning program from scratch. We found new ways to work remotely and conduct our business virtually. Teachers were challenged to find new ways of assessing student progress and to communicate with parents and the school community. We had to find non-traditional ways to support student learning. We found a way to do all of these things. Not all the solutions were perfect, but they worked.

En route to adapting to our circumstances, we stretched our individual and collective skill sets.

As a group we met, and continue to meet, the many challenges placed before us.

Personally, I very much disliked the phrase, “the new normal.” I really did not want our current situation to become our ‘normal’. Having said that, I have reluctantly accepted that, for the time being, this is our normal. I don’t like it, but wishing it away will not help the situation.

We need to do what we have been doing since last spring, and that is doing the very best we can for our staff and students. We will continue to apply measures that will keep each other safe and healthy, and help our students to learn regardless of the restrictions necessary to combat the pandemic. And if the conditions change, we will once again adapt and find other ways and means to do what we need to do to inspire success.

I want to thank our staff and teachers, both here at Division Office and out in the schools, for frankly going above and beyond to ensure the safety and success of our young charges.

The ongoing public health crisis has made our work oftentimes challenging and stressful, but please know that I am enormously encouraged by your professionalism and resiliency. As Sir Winston S. Churchill once said, “Difficulties mastered are opportunities won.”

Sincerely,

Bill Romanchuk,  
Superintendent of Schools/CEO



William Romanchuk  
Superintendent of Schools/CEO  
[bill.romanchuk@blackgold.ca](mailto:bill.romanchuk@blackgold.ca)

# OUR STATEMENT OF BELIEFS



1. 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.
2. Each person possesses inherent worth and dignity and is deserving of respect.
3. Each student has the right to an education which addresses individual need and individual potential.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. Effective teaching reflects the use of a variety of instructional methods and is influenced greatly by the learning needs of students.
11. 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.
12. 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 Provided Schools with extra time within the start of the calendar to prepare for re-entry.
- 2 Completed the Ward Review.
- 3 Established an Audit Committee and selected external community members.

### *Now Trending...*

- Responding to Scenario 1 re-entry.
- Navigating funding model change and related implications.

### IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS:

- Keeping students and staff physically, mentally and emotionally safe and well.
- Commemorating Black Gold's 25th Anniversary.
- Strengthening our advocacy presence.
- Engaging in the strategic planning process.





# COMMUNICATION

## PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1 Successfully planned and hosted the virtual 2020/2021 Welcome Back/Long Service Awards Ceremony.
- 2 Provided timely and relevant COVID-19 communications to audiences.
- 3 Supported advocacy and engagement efforts on a number of fronts, to advance Division goals.

### *Now Trending...*

- Increasing expectations for meaningful engagement, transparent decision-making, and convenient, timely information.

## IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS:

- Ongoing pandemic-related communications.
- Implementing and communicating the refreshed visual identity/branding guidelines.
- Continuing to support Board advocacy and stakeholder engagement/strategic planning efforts.
- Build and strengthen the Division's internal and external communications to increase trust, connection, and a sense of belonging among stakeholders.





# ADMINISTRATORS' ASSOCIATION

## PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

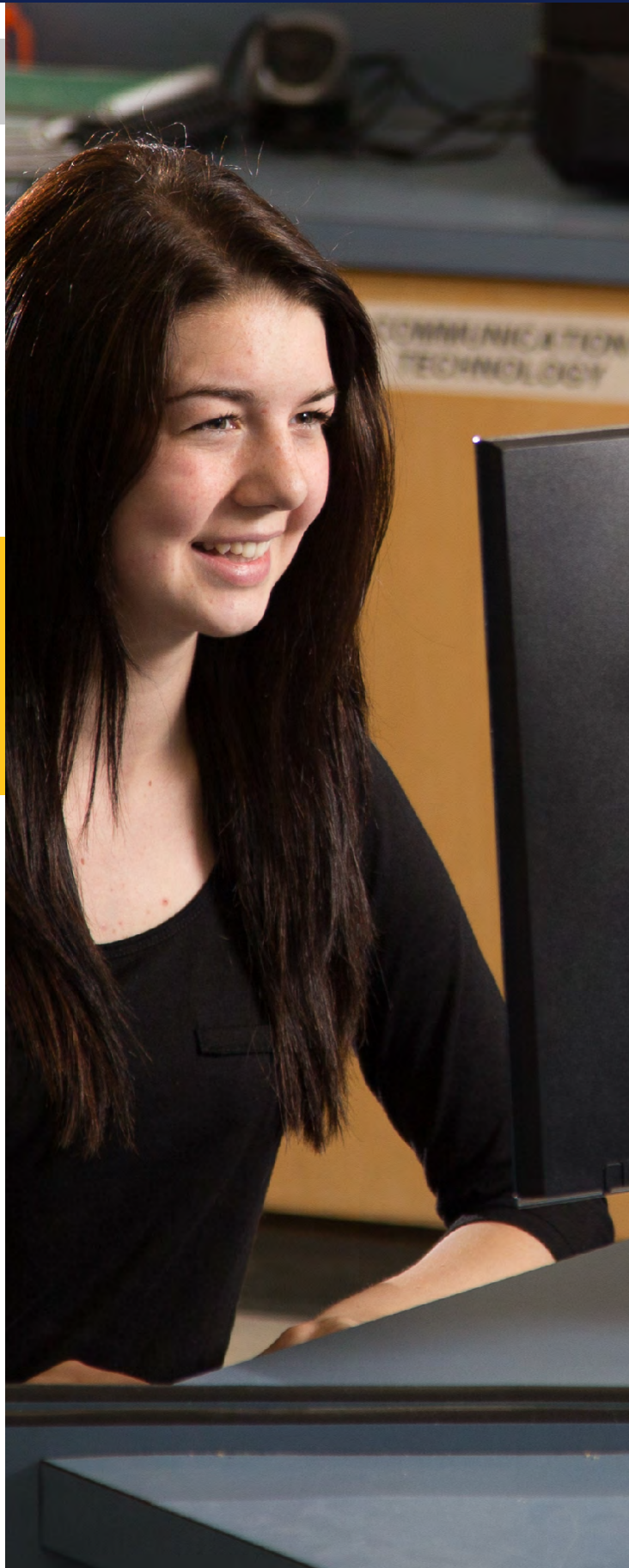
- 1 Leading a school community through Remote Learning during a global pandemic.
- 2 Planning and preparing throughout the summer to ensure our school communities had a successful return to school.
- 3 Continued collaboration with new Division Office personnel.

### *Now Trending...*

- Best practices to support our student, staff, and school community in a pandemic.
- Addressing learning needs emerging from Remote Learning.

## IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS:

- Data-informed decision making.
- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL).
- Staff, student, school community wellness.



# LEARNING SERVICES

## PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1 Development, implementation and ongoing maintenance of the BGSD School Re-entry Plan.
- 2 Development and implementation of a new Distance Learning program for students.
- 3 Created Priority Outcomes and secured instructional resources to support instruction.
- 4 Completed the development of records management software.

## *Now Trending...*

- Non-traditional learning opportunities.

## IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS:

- Supporting the continuity of learning.
- Providing professional development around different learning experiences/ modalities.
- Starting transition from the School Combined Education Plan and Annual Education Results Report to the Assurance model.
- Collaborating with school divisions to provide increased access to quality French resources.
- Explore possibilities of field testing the new curriculum.
- Refinement of assessment guidelines for Distance Learning and In-class teachers.





# STUDENT SERVICES

## PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1 Continued commitment to collaborate as community based partners in support of children/youth and families (in the absence of Regional Collaborative Service Delivery).
- 2 Mental Health Capacity Building 'virtual' presence in communities throughout the summer months.

### *Now Trending...*

- Alternative and innovative strategies for remaining connected with students, parents, staff and community during the pandemic.

## IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS:

- Working with schools to find creative/alternative ways to provide targeted and individualized interventions for students given COVID-19 health and safety measures.
- Support and encouragement for students, staff and parents.





# INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

## PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1 Vast improvements made to infrastructure to better support BYOED (Bring Your Own Device).
- 2 Improved network capacity, reliability and security.
- 3 Developed capabilities to support the technology needs of the new Distance Learning program.

## *Now Trending...*

- Substantial effort being applied to secure the @blackgold.ca email domain. This will reduce the instances of bad actors phishing our staff using what appears to be a Black Gold Email address. We are the first in the province to dive into these new measures.

## IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS:

- What are bandwidth requirements going to look like going forward we have substantially increased usage with BYOED? What will this look like when Distance Learning students begin to return to the classroom?
- What kind of supports are needed for Distance Learning if COVID keeps a large number of students out of schools for an extended period of time?
- Requests for filtering and other monitoring have been received. Should this be provided by the Division?
- With another school division being compromised by malware received via spear phishing (social engineered phishing), what do we need to do to educate staff on the risks? How do we mitigate our risk in case of an incident?



# EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY

## PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1 Utilized Technology Fee to expand the assistive technology software, creative software, security software and are expanding into areas that have not traditionally leveraged technology for the benefit of all students.
- 2 Distributing over 1200 near end-of- life Chromebooks free to families, provided administrators with Google Classroom management, and sold 300 new Chromebooks directly to families.
- 3 Inserviced staff on new software, innovated in Professional Development delivery and offerings, and assisted with the adaptation to online learning software.

## *Now Trending...*

- Access to devices and appropriate tools for all students.

## IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS:

- Preparing for potential coronavirus isolation and providing access to students in school and in distance learning.
- Providing support and encouragement for students, staff and parents.





# BUSINESS & FINANCE

## PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1 Worked with the schools and division departments to understand the changes and supports required for a successful school re-entry under COVID-19 guidelines.
- 2 Set up and organized the Board's Audit Committee.
- 3 Provided support and training to assist with the transition of new staff in the Finance department.

### *Now Trending...*

- Understanding the impact of the 2020-21 enrolments on the weighted moving average (WMA), which drives funding for future school years.

## IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS:

- Ensuring there are a sufficient number of appropriately sized school reserve sites in each municipality.
- Updating and entering into new Joint Use Agreements with municipalities.
- Long-term budget planning.
- Reviewing the Division's risk management procedures and practices.





# FACILITIES

## PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1 Substantial completion of the modular addition at Caledonia Park School.
- 2 Completed the detailed design for the new Leduc High School .
- 3 Successfully completed the Capital Maintenance and Renewal stimulus projects for the November 1, 2020, deadline.

### *Now Trending...*

- The future of Infrastructure Maintenance and Renewal funding, and how Capital Maintenance and Renewal funding will impact Facilities operations.

### IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS:

- Keeping schools clean and safe.
- Complete an internal facility audit of each school.
- Complete a full review of all of our Small Scale plans to ensure all building areas are correct.
- Complete a three year Capital Maintenance and Renewal project plan.



# FINANCE

## PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

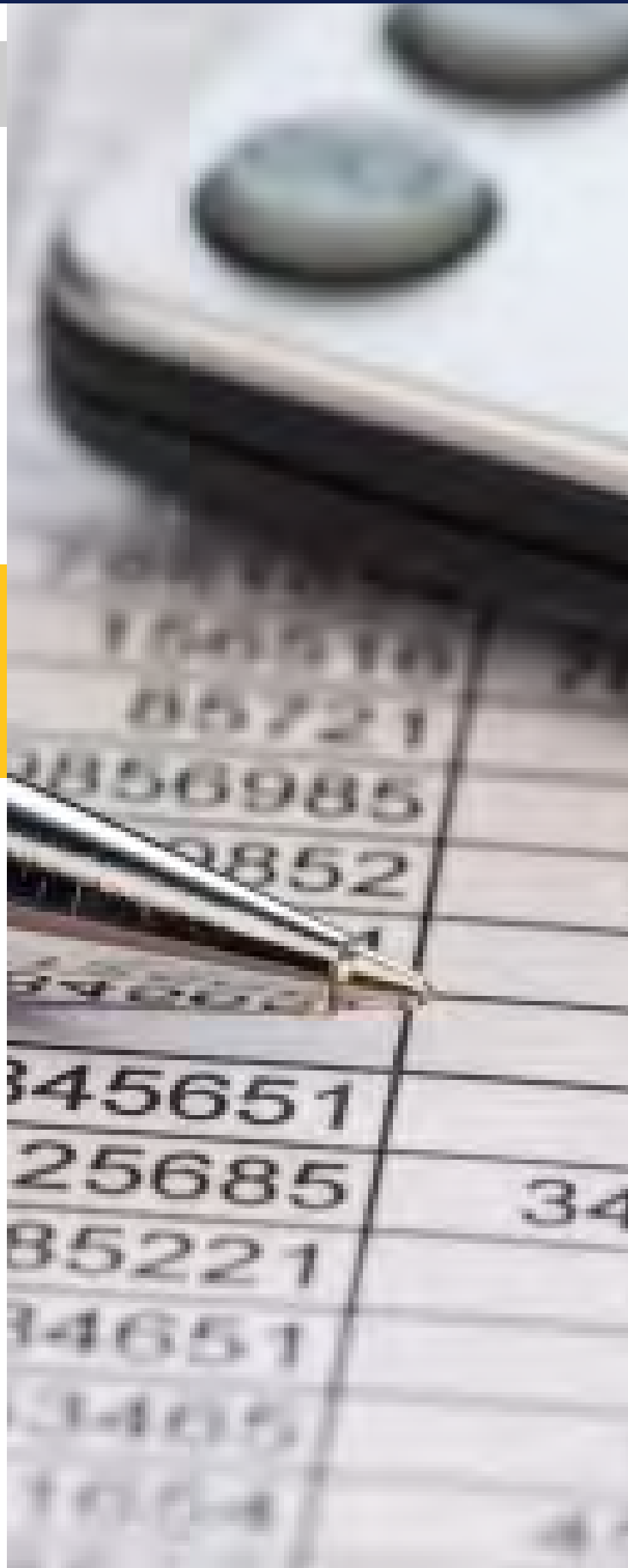
- 1 No service interruption when staff transitioned to "work from home" and back.
- 2 Carefully monitored fee revenue and refunded approximately \$400,000 in fees.
- 3 Year-end cross-training in payroll and timely processing of payroll changes due to COVID-19 using HR e-docs.

### *Now Trending...*

- Operationalizing the new funding framework.

## IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS:

- Ensuring the Audit Committee receives timely and pertinent information.
- Continued onboarding of new staff.
- Updated budgets and reporting using new funding framework requirements.



# TRANSPORTATION

## PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1 Successful training and mentoring of school bus operators during the COVID-19 pandemic, and amid a severe shortage of drivers in the province.
- 2 All school buses now have interior camera systems for student and driver safety.
- 3 Maintaining and operating the same numbers of bus routes for student ridership in urban and rural areas.

## *Now Trending...*

- Alberta has had a chronic shortage of bus drivers, and now more so during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS:

- Keep all bus routes operating by keeping drivers safe and healthy.
- Continually advertise for and train new drivers.
- Driver and bus contractor recognition.





# HUMAN RESOURCES & ADMINISTRATION

## PROUD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- 1 Successfully staffed schools, Distance Education, and substitute staff cohorts.
- 2 Development of an electronic New Hire package.
- 3 Complied with OH&S audits.

## *Now Trending...*

- Health and safety of staff and students.

## IMMEDIATE FOCUS AREAS:

- The Division's health and safety program (COVID-19 focus).
- Effective relationships.
- Staff wellness.



# NOTES



# **BLACK GOLD SCHOOL DIVISION**

## **Division Office**

3rd floor, 1101 - 5<sup>th</sup> Street

Nisku, AB T9E 7N3

Phone: 780.955.6025

Email: [bgsd@blackgold.ca](mailto:bgsd@blackgold.ca)

Website: [www.blackgold.ca](http://www.blackgold.ca)