



# BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

February 17, 2021



HD 2021-2022



## BOARD UPDATE

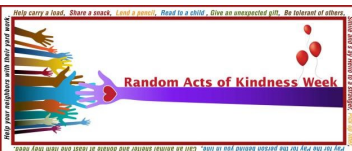
Chair Klaassen welcomed everyone to the February Board meeting and provided opening comments.

February may be the shortest month of the year, but it is not short on events. The month began with the groundhog *not* seeing his shadow which is welcomed news by many, despite the mild winter. Thank you Mother Nature for ensuring we still had a proper Alberta winter cold snap to truly appreciate impending spring all the more.

A number of notable dates during the month focus on promoting kindness and connection:

- ♦ Valentine's Day and Family Day create opportunities to pause, reflect, and show appreciation for those we may sometimes take for granted.
- ♦ Those who celebrated Lunar New Year had the opportunity to extend the practice of reflection and connection as well.
- ♦ Next week we have Pink Shirt Day, in recognition of anti-bullying, setting the stage for working together to treat others with dignity and respect.

February is also devoted to recognizing the history, contributions, and legacy of past and present Black Canadians, and their roles in shaping this country. This is an opportunity to learn about rich and notable cultural attributes, and highlight key concepts that expand our understanding and educational practices toward equity and unity.



To continue this month of kindness, love, compassion and celebration, today is Random Acts of Kindness day! I hope each of you are able to take the opportunity to do an intentional random act of kindness, and perhaps make a plan for doing so throughout the year.

## COVID-19 UPDATE

Associate Superintendent Monty announced that since the start of COVID-19, approximately 2,000 students and 250 staff have had to quarantine. At the moment, two schools are on alert. The cases were related to close contacts of family members. We currently have a total of five active cases.



## MULTI-USE FIELD AT ESBCHS

Superintendent/CEO Romanchuk shared a concept design from the City of Beaumont. The design is a proposal to build a multi-use sports field for soccer, football, and other activities. The project will be done in stages. The sports field will be located directly south of ESBCHS within the Four Seasons Park.



While working for an organization that delivers lunches to elderly shut-ins, I frequently took my 4 year old daughter on my afternoon rounds. She was unfailingly intrigued by the various appliances of old age, particularly, the canes, walkers and wheelchairs. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely turned and whispered, "The tooth fairy is never going to believe this!"

## DISTANCE LEARNING UPDATE

Associate Superintendent Dargis expressed thanks to the Distance Learning (DL) staff, the communities, Data team and Learning Services team, and thanked the parents who have understood the processes and commitment to the programs.



Moving forward, the DL team is looking at plans as the program will continue in the fall in some form. The DL team will meet with school-based teams to discuss any adjustments, changes and considerations on what has worked or not worked for the program. To facilitate planning for DL, BGSD will engage parents after Spring Break to obtain preliminary data on what parents intend to do this fall.

Trustees and Administration discussed the staffing process that was developed for the DL program. Trustees appreciate the forward approach and look forward to seeing the results of the survey.

## GIRLS IN STEM

Black Gold School Division (BGSD) remotely brought together approximately 85 students from grades 7-10 for its 3rd Annual Girls in STEM Day on January 29, 2021. The day's theme was "Pushing the Limits", and featured a keynote address by Canadian aquanaut and astronaut candidate Dr. Shawna Pandya. The students spent the day learning about STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) and the vast career opportunities available in these fields through fun hands-on and interactive sessions. Activities included a lunar lander challenge, learning to code using Micro-Bits and a structural building challenge.



Tarynne Cable, Girls in Stem Day organizer and BGSD Assistant Principal, said that such events are important in exposing young women to the unique and exciting possibilities available in the science, technology, and engineering sectors, and to send the message that girls should not shy away because of perceived gender roles or stereotypes. BGSD teacher and events presenter Amanda Green, said that 'It's a day filled with inspiring speakers and engaging activities, and as teachers we get to see STEM bring a spark to the girl's eyes, ignite their imagination, and open a world of possibilities. It's so exciting!'

Dr. Shawna Pandya's inspiring presentation was live-streamed on the Divisions social media channels, and a recap of the presentation is available here: [BGSD Girls in Stem 2021](#).



Due to the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions and the increased cost of providing enough materials for students to participate remotely, the number of participants was reduced this year by almost half. To help offset costs, the event received sponsorship support from the Leduc Lions Club and the American Welding Society as well as an allocation from the BGSD Board of Trustees. Their generosity meant that each participant was able to keep and continue practicing their coding skills on the Micro-Bits provided.

Superintendent/CEO Romanchuk and the Board thanked the organizers, presenters, facilitators, volunteers, sponsors and everyone who brought this day together for the students. The event was a great success!

## FEDERAL FUNDING UPDATE



Associate Superintendent Volkman provided an update on the Federal Funding for a Safe Return to Class. The Division has now received the second payment as well as an additional \$800,000 to support the significant enrolment shift to online and at-home learning. The Federal Funding must be used to support additional COVID-19 related costs. A report was presented showing where the funds were allocated and the amount spent to date. The Division is very thankful the federal government provided this extra funding.

## ASCA CONFERENCE

Associate Superintendent Volkman stated each year the Board allocates funds for School Council members to attend the ASCA conference. This year, the registration fees are much lower as the conference will be held virtually. The Division does pay for all of our schools to have membership to ASCA. Due to the conference being virtual this year, the Board discussed whether to increase the number of attendees. In the past, the budget has allowed for three to four members to attend.



Trustees agreed that there should be an increase in the number of attendees since the registration costs are lower. This gives parents an opportunity to get involved more and support their School Councils.

The Board supports the allocation of the \$1600 budget line for the registration of as many School Council members as possible to attend the 2021 ASCA conference.

## SCHOOL VISITS

Trustees stated the Board has been doing virtual visits with the following schools:

January – Robina Baker Elementary, Riverview Middle, École Coloniale Estates, École J.E. Lapointe, École Leduc Estates, Linsford Park, École Beau Meadow, École Champs Vallée



February – École Leduc Junior High, West Haven Public, New Sarepta Elementary, John Maland High, Black Gold Outreach-Beaumont, École Bellevue, Warburg Hutterite Colony, Black Gold Home-Based

Trustees are thoroughly enjoying the virtual school visits, but miss actually visiting the schools. The staff are creating unique ways of connecting and sharing with the Board. Through this connection, Trustees are able to still see learning in action. Trustees are impressed with the creativity, resilience and motivation demonstrated by teachers, administrators and all of the school staff.

Superintendent/CEO Romanchuk stated that through feedback from the Principals, the schools miss the Board visits as well. The schools are finding that getting their direct opportunity to speak to the Board is important. The format has worked very well, and it gives the schools an opportunity to articulate their silver linings, what lessons they have learned and practices they may adopt in the post pandemic stage.

## CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Superintendent/CEO Romanchuk showed a PowerPoint presentation on 'School News' which included various activities during December and January at the following schools and is posted on our BGSD website under Board Highlights—February.

Trustees are enjoying seeing the recognition that has been sent in.

- ◆ École Corinthia Park
- ◆ École Dansereau Meadows
- ◆ Warburg
- ◆ BGSD Mental Health Capacity Team
- ◆ École J.E. Lapointe
- ◆ École Leduc Estates
- ◆ Caledonia Park
- ◆ Riverview Middle
- ◆ Covenant Christian
- ◆ East Elementary
- ◆ Willow Park

