



DECEMBER 2021

*Merry Christmas & Happy New Year!*

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Black Gold School Division, we wish you a wonderful and safe holiday season filled with peace, happiness, and good health. May the magic of the holidays carry you into the New Year with joy and purpose.

The holidays are often a time of reflection and gratitude. The benefits of gratitude are manifold, and we invite you to join us in practicing gratitude throughout the year to support connection, positive mental health, and appreciation.

From the Board of Trustees, know you are all so greatly appreciated. Thank you for all you do to support the school division on an ongoing basis. Supporting and protecting the students of Black Gold is our number one priority, and we know this is best achieved when we all work together.

With the winter break at our doorstep, I hope you have enjoyed the snapshots that have been circulated of all the school events and festivities in preparation for the Holidays! While concerts and activities may have been altered due to the pandemic, students have continued to celebrate their talents, share the gift of music, and engage in the spirit of the season.

However you choose to celebrate the joy and spirit of the Holiday Season, we wish the best to you and all your loved ones. May your holidays sparkle with moments of love, laughter, and goodwill, and may the year ahead be full of contentment and joy. Stay safe and be well!

## Calendar

Many thanks (and thanks-in-advance) to staff and school councils for taking the time to provide feedback on the draft 2022-2023 Calendar. Your feedback is being reviewed, and the final calendar will be approved at the January 26, 2022, Regular Board Meeting.

## Curriculum

As you may know, there has been an update to the implementation plan for the draft K-6 Curriculum. As a result of ongoing feedback, only three subjects (English Language Arts and Literature, Mathematics, and Physical Education and Wellness) will be implemented in September 2022, rather than the full curriculum.

An Implementation Task Force will be established by early January that will take the lead on advising on the specific implementation details with respect to grades/subjects, etc.

Updated drafts of all subject areas will be released for feedback by January 2022 on the [new. learnal-  
berta](#) web- site. As well, the

Social Studies curriculum is

going back to the drawing board; a design blueprint (scope and sequence) will be released for feedback along with the other revised drafts. Parents who wish to provide feedback on the draft curriculum will have opportunity via upcoming engagement sessions. For more details, go to [alberta.ca/curriculum-have-your-say](https://alberta.ca/curriculum-have-your-say).

The Division will review all ongoing updates carefully and provide input to the Implementation Task Force. **We remain committed to advocating for nothing less than the very best curriculum for our students, and for implementation that respects the well-being of our students and staff.**

## A New Year with new goals



How does your Christmas card read this year? Do you like your Christmas card to represent meaning of the last year, or do you like your Christmas card to bring hope for next year? Maybe you want your Christmas card to include faith, love, cheer, or humour. Whatever you decide, it creates the mood for how you feel the past year has gone and what you want the new year to look like.

This year I want my card to speak the truth, and focus on the positives in the many challenges that we all faced this year.

These past 12 months have brought many of us unexpected changes. We have all had to walk through difficult personal transitions, embrace our fears, and overcome challenges and hurdles big and small. I believe that the challenges we face make life more interesting, and overcoming them makes life more meaningful.

On a personal note, the last few months as a new trustee have been challenging because this role is all new for me, and so to overcome this challenge I need to embrace what is new - it's my mantra now.

I now have the honour and privilege to represent the Leduc community as your school trustee. I have joined a dynamic and diverse team with different backgrounds, strengths, and skills. To the community we are just a team, but to each other we are building a family.

My new Black Gold family is like my own family. We have differences, similarities, our own opinions, and have learned how to respectfully disagree/agree.

When you are with your family this holiday season, think of the things that make you a family and then look at how your individual puzzle piece completes the picture. I like to think of our division family like the quote, "Families are like branches on a tree, we grow in different directions, yet our roots remain as one".

Over the last few months, I have learned to appreciate the value of goals. Why do we need goals? Without goals, many people go about life without purpose. Specific and realistic goals give us a focus and we become more future-thinking. When you set well defined and measurable goals, you become motivated to achieve them.

I am proud to say that our Division has set excellent goals and we have set high standard to strive for best for our students, teachers, and the community. The BGSD website offers great information on our mission, values, and strategic direction; regarding success, wellness, and engagement/partnerships.

Bringing in the New Year is about looking at how your personal story played out over the past year, and then drafting a new story for the upcoming year.

Based on last year's challenges, my Christmas card will look a little different this year. I have seen some wonderful cards, but I am drawn to this one: "A Christmas miracle is when your family doesn't get into a single disagreement all day". I know I probably should have a Christmas card with a fluffy message, but I have teenagers, and I want a card that speaks to the truth of a growing family with unique and dynamic personalities.

Wishing all the best to our Black Gold families in the New Year, as you uncover and celebrate your truth!

- Trustee Angie Charpentier, Ward 3

## COVID-19 Mental Health Supports

For those experiencing stress, anxiety or depression due to the COVID-19, remember you are not alone. Below are some important resources and phone numbers that can help to support you.

- Local Distress Line – 780-482-HELP (4357) or toll free 1-800-232-7288 or [online crisis chat](#)
- Community Resources – [211 Alberta](#)
- Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line – 1-866-925-4419
- Brite Line (2SLGBTQIA+ support line) – 1-844-702-7483
- Family Violence – Find Supports – 310-1818
- Addictions Helpline - 1-866-332-2322
- Mental Health Help Line – 1-877-303-2642
- Health Link – 811
- Kids Help Phone – 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868

## For Your Information

**Trustee Profiles:** Meet your new Board of Trustees: <https://www.blackgold.ca/about-bgsd/board/18229-2/>

**Advocacy:** Board advocacy letters to increase awareness of our advocacy efforts and priorities: <https://www.blackgold.ca/about-bgsd/board/board-committees/community-engagement-advocacy/>

**Board Highlights:** Find the highlights from Board Meetings: <https://www.blackgold.ca/about-bgsd/board/board-highlights/>

**Mental Health:** Resources and wellness information: <https://sites.google.com/gshare.blackgold.ca/mental-health/>

## Wishes for the New Year



The end of December is always cause for celebration, reflection, and planning for a brand new year.

2021 has been a year like no other – COVID-19, home learning, safe and healthy schools, school curriculum changes, and education funding. This list does not even include all the other issues in Canada, or in other parts of the world that affect us.

But there have also been successes that we have all helped to achieve. While we have not conquered COVID, we are much more informed as to how to successfully deal with it. We've had more and more people vaccinated, and hopefully the rates of infection, hospitalizations and ICU admissions will continue trending going down.

And more people are becoming aware and informed regarding the issues with the Draft Curriculum. School trustees continue to raise the issue with the Government through the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) and through contact with their MLAs. The Minister of Education has indicated that a new draft will be forthcoming.

Black Gold School Division (BGSD) continues to grow in student enrolment. There is on-going planning to deal with the influx of new students. Staff have been working very hard to ensure the best possible education for students as they moved back and forth between online and in-person learning.

A new high school has been approved, and is scheduled to open in Leduc in 2024. Sites for new schools are being sought in both Beaumont and Leduc.

I am the “eternal optimist.” At the time of writing, it has been less than six weeks since I was sworn into office as a trustee, and wow, the learning curve has been steep!

Last week, trustees began virtual tours of our 31 schools. The insights we've gained into the amazing learning going on in each of these buildings was most inspiring. We have amazing staff who work tirelessly to provide the best learning opportunities possible to students in our jurisdiction. In some schools, trustees had the opportunity to meet students in the schools. The enthusiasm expressed by the students for their curricular and extra-curricular programs told, time and again, the stories of a quality education.

Trustees also had the opportunity to attend the Fall Annual General Meeting of the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA). The work of the ASBA was profiled in regard to provincial education issues, curriculum, internet for all, and education financing resolutions were passed. This gave me hope that the voice of 61 democratically elected, Alberta school boards, speaking as one on these important education issues, may be heard by our provincial government.

As we prepare for the Christmas season, to celebrate our traditions in whatever fashion COVID-19 rules allow, I wish everyone a safe, restful, peaceful, and enjoyable time with family and friends. May you return to work afterwards, refreshed and ready to take on the inevitable challenges that will be there for us to tackle - together. From my family to yours: Season's Greetings!

- Trustee Gary Hansen, Ward 3



## Important Dates

- **January 26, 2022** - Regular Board Meeting (live-streamed; open session begins at 10:30 a.m.)
- **February 15, 2022** - Council of School Communities (virtual)
- **February 23, 2022** - Regular Board Meeting (live-streamed; open session begins at 10:30 a.m.)
- **March 16, 2022** - Regular Board Meeting (live-streamed; open session begins at 10:30 a.m.)

## Reach out!

Your voice is important - we value hearing from you! You can reach out directly to your Board of Trustees with your questions, concerns, and suggestions.

**Devonna Klaassen (Ward 2),**  
**Board Chair:** [devonna.klaassen@blackgold.ca](mailto:devonna.klaassen@blackgold.ca)

**Esther Eckert (Ward 4), Vice-Chair:**  
[esther.eckert@blackgold.ca](mailto:esther.eckert@blackgold.ca)

**Michelle Martin (Ward 1):**  
[michelle.martin@blackgold.ca](mailto:michelle.martin@blackgold.ca)

**Angie Charpentier (Ward 3):**  
[angie.charpentier@blackgold.ca](mailto:angie.charpentier@blackgold.ca)

**Gary Hansen (Ward 3):**  
[gary.hansen@blackgold.ca](mailto:gary.hansen@blackgold.ca)

**Barb Martinson (Ward 3):**  
[barb.martinson@blackgold.ca](mailto:barb.martinson@blackgold.ca)

**Robyn Steed (Ward 4):**  
[robyn.steed@blackgold.ca](mailto:robyn.steed@blackgold.ca)

## Follow Us:

BGSD Facebook Page:  
<https://www.facebook.com/BlackGoldSchoolDivision>

BGSD Twitter Page:  
<https://twitter.com/BlackGldSchools>

BGSD YouTube Channel:  
<https://www.youtube.com/BlackGoldSchoolDivision>



## It's up to all of us to make it a Happy New Year



It's been just over six weeks since the residents of Thorsby and Warburg elected me as their school trustee, and what a great time it has been! Tons of meetings, meeting new people, having new experiences, and making new memories.

As we move into the New Year, I would like to continue focusing on the "new". I believe that when we try new things and learn new material we are never stagnant.

Public education is always changing, through new technologies, new ideas, ever-evolving cultures and curriculums. Let's continue growing and take hold of new opportunities. Carpe Diem, I say - let's seize the day!

The holiday season is not about the gifts given or received, but about the care, compassion, and the communities which we are all a part of. I urge everyone to find a way to express your own personal touch to during this special time; whether it be decorating for the season, volunteering, organizing donations for your local food bank or for those among us who have fallen on hard times.

Before you know it, the New Year will be upon us quickly, and it is up to us, through our individual acts of kindness and compassion, to help make it a happy one. With that on mind, I wish everyone a Safe and Happy Holidays, and all the best in the New Year!

- Trustee Michelle Martin, Ward 1



## Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

To our amazing staff, students and families,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and Division Office staff, may you and yours experience beauty and richness through the sights and sounds (and smells and tastes) of this Holiday Season.

Please celebrate safely with those you love. Best wishes and good health for 2022!

Division Office will be **CLOSED** on Friday, December 24, 2021, and will re-open on Monday, January 3, 2022.

