



Inspiring Success!

TRUSTEE NEWSLETTER

Spring 2023



Ohpaho Secondary School update

Construction on the 1,121 student capacity Ohpaho Secondary School in SW Leduc is well underway, with the structural steel installation nearing completion. The structural masonry is also near completion, except in the smaller gym.

Framing, sheathing, glazing and roofing installation has started and is ongoing. A large portion of the building is already closed in with mechanical and electrical rough-ins ready to commence shortly.

“The Ohpaho project has gone very well to this point, and is on schedule to be complete and open for the fall of 2024,” said Robert Krahn, Director of Facilities.

Once complete, the school will feature new and increased programming options for students, including an industrial/commercial kitchen for a culinary arts program, dedicated spaces for robotics, 3D printing and design/merchandising, video broadcasting and production, and horticultural/agricultural studies.

“As part of our staffing process we will be selecting a new school principal, who will take up their post in February 2024,” said Superintendent Bill Romanchuk.

Board Chair’s Message



I never tire of welcoming Spring each year. The days are getting longer, the sunshine begins to warm the earth and our souls, and there is the promise of new life and new hope.

In March we recognized Black Gold’s valuable substitute teachers. This group of dedicated employees often are woken to the ring of their telephone with an assignment for the day. We appreciate their willingness to support our schools when regular classroom teachers are absent. Thank you all for your service to our staff and students.

We also recognized those with Down’s Syndrome. Trustee Charpentier’s oldest son has Down Syndrome and with her permission, I’m sharing what she wrote

recently on social media for World Down Syndrome Day: “This boy has changed my life and the way I see things in life.” Black Gold is committed to meeting the needs of all our students, regardless of their abilities.

The Board of Trustees is pleased to let our community know that in the recent externally-conducted superintendent’s evaluation, Superintendent Romanchuk received many accolades and affirmations of the excellent leadership he provides to the Division.

Our consultant conducted 26 interviews with trustees and Division staff in the course of the evaluation process. She commented that Black Gold has an amazing leader; however, on the heels of this wonderful review, the trustees accepted a letter from Superintendent Romanchuk announcing his retirement effective July 31, 2023. After 37 years of exemplary service, he simply writes, “It’s time.” We will deeply miss his wit, wisdom and inspiring leadership, and we all wish him nothing but blue skies.

I hope you all had a safe and restful Spring Break, and it allowed you to reconnect, relax and recharge for the final sprint to the end of year finish line.

- Esther Eckert, Chair

Be an informed voter!

With the provincial election coming up on May 29, your Board of Trustees believes that government has a responsibility to continually improve Alberta's K-12 public education system.

We encourage you to reach out to your electoral candidates via social media, email, letters and/or in-person to find out how they will support:

Funding for Students

The current funding formula does not fund student enrolment growth. The Weighted Moving Average (WMA) funding allocations are based on enrolment from previous years. We are always lagging behind when trying to meet the needs of current students.

Allow school boards the autonomy to accumulate and maintain reasonable operating reserves to mitigate potential emergencies and deal with student growth, and the power to address these concerns.

ASK YOUR CANDIDATE: *Should your party form government, how will you ensure that annual funding meets the needs of our growing school communities, and the Division's ability to address unforeseen events.*

Spaces for Students

Many schools in the community of Beaumont, including the current high school, are at or exceeding capacity. While the City of Beaumont has provided a letter of commitment

to provide serviced land for a new school, the Province must announce a new school for Beaumont.

Several of our modular classrooms are at their end-of-life. We need to replace these classrooms to ensure students have clean and safe areas to learn.

Operations and Maintenance funding must be adequate to ensure that the physical and mechanical structures in existing schools remain safe for student learning.

ASK YOUR CANDIDATE: *How will your administration work to ensure that schools are built or replaced in a timely fashion and that funding adequately meets the needs to keep schools operating?*

Support for Students

Teachers are not psychologists, social workers, therapists or counselors but we work hand-in-hand with community-based social service agencies to address students' mental health and well being.

Cross-ministerial support at the provincial level can ensure students' mental and physical health needs are supported. We believe it is critical to properly fund the community-based social service agencies that assist schools to provide the wraparound services to students and families.

ASK YOUR CANDIDATE: *How will you ensure that community-based social service agencies that partner with schools to provide the wraparound services to students and families receive equitable and sustainable funding?*

We need your informed vote to help protect and improve our first-class public education system in Alberta. Please reach out to your trustee if you need more information.

Leduc Schools Boundary & Grade Configuration Review

The Black Gold School Division is undertaking a reconfiguration process – inclusive of public consultation – on the proposed school boundary and grade configuration review for schools within Leduc (excluding Covenant Christian School and the Leduc Outreach School).

Why are we doing this?

With the anticipated opening in September 2024 of Ohpaho Secondary School there is a need to establish attendance boundaries and grade configuration for the new school, and conduct a review of the impact of these additional student spaces on other Leduc schools as the community is growing at a significant rate.

Over the last two years, East Elementary School, Caledonia Park School, Leduc Composite High School, École Leduc Junior High School and West Haven Public School have experienced their highest enrolments, leading to very high utilization rates. In fact, four of our nine schools in Leduc are above the 100 percent utilization rate, which creates an urgent need for extra student spaces across the community.

What are our project objectives?

The Division's overall goals are to ensure continued quality programming for all students through equitable school utilization. In addition, we're seeking to:

- Maximize the boundary and grade configuration effectiveness and minimize the amount of disruption to achieve this.
- Enable viable enrolments at all schools.
- Permit Division programs (e.g. French Immersion) and services at the appropriate schools.
- Continue to accommodate Inclusive Education.
- Respect the City of Leduc residential neighbourhood boundaries as closely as possible.
- Consider transportation efficiencies

For more information, please go to: <https://www.blackgold.ca/leduc-schools-boundary-and-grade-configuration-review/>



2023 Girls in STEM Day a great success!

On March 16, 2023, 126 young female students participated in the Black Gold School Division's fourth Girls in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) Day at West Haven Public School.

This very successful event exposed young women to the unique and exciting possibilities available in the science, technology and engineering sectors, and sent the message that girls should not shy away because of perceived gender roles or stereotypes.

"The Girls in STEM events give us unique opportunities to bring in special guests as well as local specialists, including Black Gold alumni, to serve as positive female role models while leading our girls through various interactive sessions," said event organizer Tarynne Cable. "Each session includes career connections and a reflection of the learning."



Board Chair Eckert presents a special labcoat to keynote speaker Natalie Panek.

The keynote speaker at this year's event was Canadian rocket scientist Natalie Panek, who has worked on a Mars space rover for the European Space Agency. She spoke about her career journey and the emotional resilience she required to make it in this field, explaining her drive and her motivation to achieve her passion as she achieved her mechanical and aerospace engineering degrees.

The students also heard from civil, chemical and materials engineers, and worked in teams to build solar-powered lanterns, learn air quality testing techniques, code tools to pump water with electronic sensors, and took part in a pneumatics design challenge where they lifted heavy objects using air pressure and syringes.



Students working on a science experiment.

There were representatives present from post-secondary institutions and groups like SHAD Canada and Women in Scholarship, Engineering, Science and Technology (WISEST), who informed the students of opportunities for grants, internships, summer jobs, etc. The overall message for the day is to share the vast opportunities available to these young women.

Girls in STEM is not only an education sponsored event, it also has the support of the school community and local and regional businesses. "We want to again thank all of our wonderful sponsors for their support in helping to make the day fun and inspiring for our students," said Cable.

Upcoming Board Meetings

- **April 26, 2023** - Regular Board Meeting (live-streamed; open session begins at 10:30 a.m.)
- **May 31, 2023** - Regular Board Meeting (live-streamed; open session begins at 10:30 a.m.)
- **June 21, 2023** - Organizational Board Meeting (live-streamed; open session begins at 10:30 a.m.)

Resources

Board Agendas and Minutes:

<https://blackgold.civicweb.net/Portal/>

Board Member Profiles & Contacts:

<https://www.blackgold.ca/about-bgsd/board/board-member-profiles/>

Reach Out!

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

Please know that all trustees represent the voice of the entire division, please always feel free to reach out to any trustee to address any concerns or feedback:

Ward 1 - Michelle Martin

michelle.martin@blackgold.ca

Ward 2 - Devonna Klaassen

devonna.klaassen@blackgold.ca

Ward 3 - Angie Charpentier, Vice Chair

angie.charpentier@blackgold.ca

Ward 3 - Gary Hansen

gary.hansen@blackgold.ca

Ward 3 - Barb Martinson

barb.martinson@blackgold.ca

Ward 4 - Esther Eckert, Chair

esther.eckert@blackgold.ca

Ward 4 - Robyn Steed

robyn.steed@blackgold.ca

Meet our 2023 Edwin Parr Teacher Award Nominee!



The Board of Trustees is pleased to announce that Kendra Fedor, a first year Grade One English teacher at Ecole Bellevue School in Beaumont, is the Division's nominee for the 2023 Edwin Parr Teacher Award.

"Kendra fosters strong, healthy and professional relationships with students, parents, staff and community members," said Board Chair Esther Eckert. "She does an excellent job developing rapport with her students, and has worked to establish a true community of learners in her classroom. We are fortunate to have Kendra, along with so many other great teachers, in our Black Gold family."

"Being the start of her teaching career, it was incredible to see and hear the excitement from both students and parents when they found out Kendra was going to be their teacher this year," said École Bellevue School Principal Jennifer El-Khatib. "Kendra was both a volunteer for several years and then a student teacher in our kindergarten last year, so she is known to our community. Students truly enjoy being in her class, and our families cherish her and the classroom experience she offers."

Kendra has embraced École Bellevue School's mission of "we will provide the best possible education for all École Bellevue School students." According to her colleagues, it is evident when observing Kendra teach that she cares deeply for her students, and she always greets them with a smile.

Kendra's routines and procedures are well established; her classroom management techniques are inclusive, positive and maintain the dignity of all students. She has excelled in this area, which is very complex and challenging to even the most seasoned teacher.

"Kendra has a number of students with complex/moderate needs in her classroom this year," said Principal El-Khatib. "Kendra fully understands how to tailor her programming to these students while ensuring they are included in the classroom. Not only is the learning completely individualized, Kendra allows opportunities for her students to play and interact with her in the classroom setting."

Kendra is amazing at collaborating with her colleagues and administrators. She has a great personality and is always willing to spend time with staff and students. Kendra models good citizenship, community values, and attitudes.

She is always open to constructive feedback and fully cooperates with the direction of the school administration. Although Kendra's craft is well refined, she continually strives to change or improve practices to keep current and fresh for students. She has demonstrated reflection and improvement in her lessons and is most often her toughest critique.

"It is evident that Kendra strives to her best and is continually finding ways to improve, especially when it comes to improving student success," said El-Khatib.

Learning French opens up possibilities for students



Did you know? Our French Immersion program engages students with the French language and culture. Students work to become fluent by learning to read, write and speak in French in an engaging, supportive and student-centered environment.

From kindergarten through grade 12, there are many opportunities for students to grow and become functional in French.

According to Caitlin Pedersen, French Immersion Curriculum Lead Teacher, the program is designed for children whose first language is something other than French. "French immersion is for students with a background in any language; families do not need to have any French language skills before entering the program," said Pedersen. "We also accept French Immersion students transferring in from other school divisions. They can access the same programming in our schools."

The Division is proud to offer French Immersion at 11 schools in the cities of Beaumont and Leduc. In both communities, students are able to access the French Immersion program from kindergarten through grade 12. Families can register for the French Immersion program for their children entering kindergarten or grade one. "We look forward to welcoming new families to our French Immersion schools," said Pedersen. "Learning a new language is an exciting endeavor that has so many positive benefits and career possibilities."

For more information about the French Immersion program, and to register, please visit: www.blackgold.ca/schools/programs/early-french-immersion



2023 Celebration of the Arts wows!

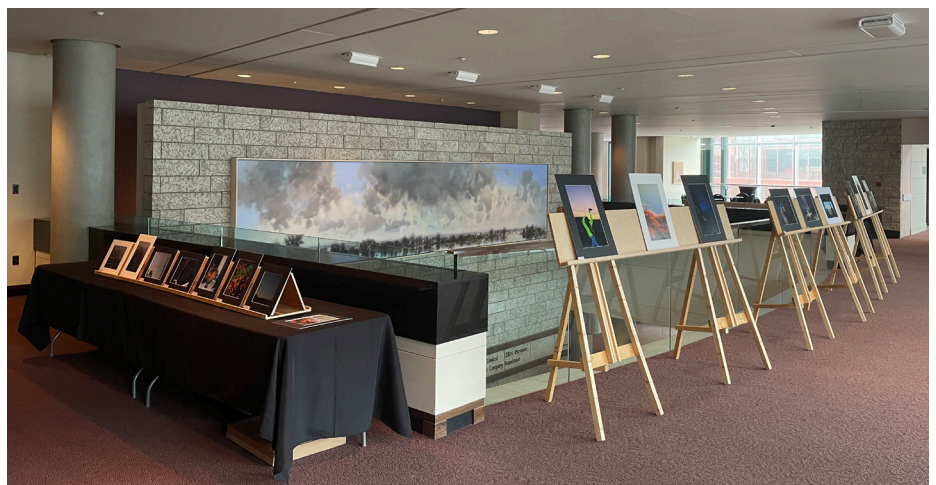
On Friday, April 14 the Winspear Centre in downtown Edmonton came alive as high school students from across the Black Gold School Division showcased their music, theatre, film, photography, visual and performing arts on the big stage at the Celebration of the Arts!

More than 120 students participated in the event, and over 500 people were in attendance for the wonderful evening.

There were band performances from École Secondaire Beaumont Composite High School, John Maland High School, Leduc Composite High School and New Sarepta Community High School; choral performances from Leduc Composite High School; guitar performances from Calmar Secondary School and Leduc Composite High School.

There were also dramatic performances from Calmar Secondary School, École Secondaire Beaumont Composite High School, and New Sarepta Community High School

Fine art displays from Calmar Secondary School, École Secondaire Beaumont Composite High School, John Maland High School, Leduc Composite High School, New Sarepta Community High School and Thorsby Junior Senior High School graced the hallways.





SCHOOL BUS DRIVER Recruitment Event

Have you ever wondered what it is like to drive a school bus? Here's your chance to try it out!

DATE: April 28, 2023
TIME: 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.
LOCATION: West Haven Public School
 325 W Haven Dr, Leduc

Our bus contractors from Warburg, Thorsby, Devon, Calmar, Leduc, Beaumont and New Sarepta will be on-site to assist you and answer questions about being a school bus driver.

For more info call (780)955-6034 or (780)955-6048




2023-2024 Kindergarten Registration NOW OPEN!

For more information, please visit:
www.blackgold.ca/schools/programs/kindergarten





SUMMER SCHOOL

Registration Opens April 29, 2023

Today's Choice. Tomorrow's Success!

Black Gold Summer School registration opens April 29, 2023. Information is now posted at www.bgss.blackgold.ca. Follow the link to view the available programming and registration information.

Please text or email any questions you may have to:
summer.bgsd@blackgold.ca



NOW OPEN!

All applicable Black Gold schools are open for 2023-2024 Pre-Kindergarten intake.

For more information, please visit:
www.blackgold.ca/schools/programs/pre-kindergarten





EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT

A REWARDING CAREER

- Be a **vital** part of the education team
- Assist teachers in **implementing programs**
- Make a **meaningful difference** in the lives of students
- Help students **learn & find success** both **educationally and socially**

Call your local school and speak with the principal

Pursue this **free course** by scanning the QR code to get an idea of what is required to work with children.

