



Inspiring Success!

TRUSTEE NEWSLETTER

Summer 2023



Congratulations to the Class of 2023!

Black Gold high school staff, students, parents and guardians were very busy over the past few months planning numerous graduation ceremonies and banquets.

Approximately 825 grade 12 students across the Division received their diplomas this year.

“Thank you to all that planned the events, and a hearty congratulations to all the students receiving their diploma certificates - well earned!” said Ward 3 Trustee Barb Martinson. “We are so proud of your hard work and perseverance. As you continue your life-long journey of learning - through travel, work, or post-secondary education, please remember to take care of yourself and be kind to one another.”

“And remember to follow your heart,” she added. “It knows the way.”

Board Chair’s Message



June is a busy time for our schools, with numerous celebrations - concerts, graduations, field trips, athletic meets, and much more!

This has been a year of accomplishments for the Division and achievements for our students. These include announcements of a new joint school site in Beaumont and the addition of a skilled trades collegiate school in Calmar.

We introduced an International Students Program this year and will expand it further next year. We engaged our communities through our annual engagement sessions and supported the establishment of a Council of School Councils to help inform the Board’s decision-making.

The Board also supported Tom’s Walk to heighten awareness of mental illness. The Trustees also met personally with the Minister of Education, MLAs, and municipal leaders. We made sure to provide information to constituents and candidates on educational issues.

Students struggling due to the pandemic or other factors are receiving additional attention. The Board’s ongoing priority of Success for every student resulted in a significant investment of time, personnel, and resources to promote the foundational skills of literacy, numeracy and Wellness in each school to aid in closing learning gaps.

I am proud to say that our staff are working hard to provide meaningful learning experiences for each of our more than 13,000 students - to help them acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to be resilient, responsible, healthy, caring and contributing members of society.

We also appreciate that our parents and guardians are deeply involved in the educational experience of their children. As a Board, we value the confidence and trust you have placed in us.

I hope you all have a safe and restful summer. Take time to reconnect, relax and recharge for the upcoming school year. I look forward to seeing you all in the fall.

- Esther Eckert, Chair

New skilled trades collegiate school coming to Calmar



Black Gold recently received notification from the Province of funding approval for an addition to Calmar Secondary School to house the a new skilled trades collegiate school.

Constuction on the Calmar Secondary Collegiate School is expected to begin next spring.

The primary focus of the collegiate school will be to provide students with the opportunity to complete their first period apprenticeship training and related work as part of their high school graduation.

“Engaging students in authentic work that gives them experience at a business or job site is a key factor in supporting successful transitions from school to work,” said Trustee Devonna Klaassen.

The school will continue to offer a full range of academic programming. Students who choose not to pursue the skilled trades pathway can take courses in business, finance, management and entrepreneurship; fine arts and design studies; sports; technology, and more. They will also play a central role in marketing the projects made in-house.

Leduc Schools Boundary & Grade Configuration Review



A big thank you to all Leduc residents who attended the in-person Leduc Schools Boundary and Grade Configuration Review Open House at the Leduc Composite High School on May 24, and to everyone who provided their comments in the second online public feedback opportunity.

“We were happy to hear from many engaged parents,” said Vice Chair Angie Charpentier. “The last few months there have been some great comments and questions, and the Board looks forward to some big decisions in the fall.”



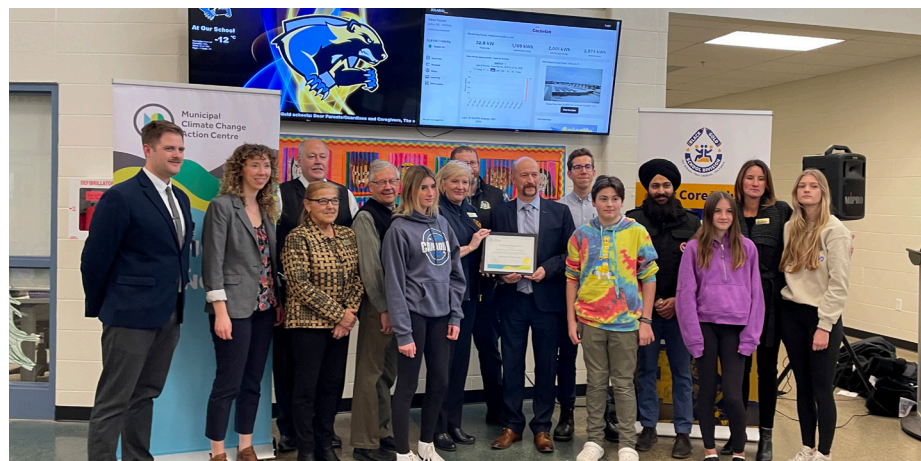
Over 190 responses were received through the second feedback opportunity. All feedback will be collected and included in the final recommendation report, which will shared with the the Board of Trustees for consideration as it works to make the final decision on the new Leduc schools boundary and grade configuration.

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

Resources

Board Agendas and Minutes: <https://blackgold.civicweb.net/Portal/>

Board Member Profiles & Contacts: <https://www.blackgold.ca/about-bgsd/board/board-member-profiles/>



Solar power at WHPS

On November 28, 2022, the Board of Trustees joined West Haven Public School staff, students, project partners, and special guests to celebrate the commissioning of the school’s recently completed rooftop solar photovoltaic system.

The 251 kilowatt solar-powered system will provide the school with a

sustainable source of power and help offset energy consumption by approximately 75 per cent annually. The project is also expected to reduce around 150 tonnes of annual greenhouse gas emissions, which is equivalent to removing 41 passenger vehicles from the road.

The rooftop-mounted solar panels are relatively maintenance free, and are expected to generate power for the solar system’s entire 25-plus year lifecycle.



The Board of Trustees met with Leduc City Council on February 15, 2022.

Engaging with partners

One of the Board's priorities is engagement and partnerships, with the goal of enhancing public education, and understanding the role of school boards and how we can work together as elected officials.

On April 6, 2022, the Board met with the three locally elected MLA's whose jurisdictions fall within the boundaries of Black Gold: Mr. Mark Smith, Mr. Brad Rutherford, and Minister of Indigenous Relations Rick Wilson.

Education Minister Adriana LaGrange invited Superintendent Romanchuk and the Board Chair to meet with her on September 13. She was excited learn about the plan for a Collegiate school in Calmar. "Meeting with her opened the door for discussions on a variety of topics," said Board Chair Eckert. "We appreciated the time Minister LaGrange gave us and came away with a better understanding of the challenges the Education Ministry faces, and we were assured that she too has a better understanding of the issues facing our school division."

On November 2, the Board hosted the Official Opposition Critic for Education, MLA Sarah Hoffman. She also introduced



The Board met Opposition MLA Hoffman.

Cam Heenan, the NDP candidate for Leduc-Beaumont running in the May 2023 election.

The Board was also pleased to host Thorsby Town Council and CEO Donna Tona on January 18, 2023, and the City of Leduc's elected officials on February 15. Both municipal councils attended dinners hosted by the trustees to build relationships and discuss matters related to public education.

"We had wide-ranging and positive discussions around mental health and wellness, school bus transportation, trades and career development, and closing the learning gaps and increasing early supports for students," said Chair Eckert. "These were important meetings where we shared our visions and discussed ways to collaborate with one another."



The Board of Trustees met with Thorsby Town Council.

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.

Ward 1 - Michelle Martin

michelle.martin@blackgold.ca

Ward 2 - Devonna Klaassen

devonna.klaassen@blackgold.ca

Ward 3 - Angie Charpentier, Vice Chair

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Ward 3 - Gary Hansen

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Ward 3 - Barb Martinson

barb.martinson@blackgold.ca

Ward 4 - Esther Eckert, Chair

esther.eckert@blackgold.ca

Ward 4 - Robyn Steed

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Engaging with Schools

The Black Gold School Division held its Annual Community Engagement (ACE) evening on February 6, 2023.

"School Council chairs from across Black Gold helped provide the Board of Trustees and Administration with valuable insights and suggestions as we work collaboratively to provide the best educational experience for students," said Ward 3 Trustee Gary Hansen.

The evening revolved around two themes: Citizenship and Transitions. Several hundred comments were collected at the session. "We gathered all the comments and did our best to categorize and summarize them," said Hansen. "These have since been shared with all school administrators and trustees."



The Colombian students get a curling lesson at the Calmar Curling Club.

International Students Program pilot a success

Last November, Black Gold collaborated with the Palliser School Division to bring seven Colombian students, along with a teacher chaperone, to three schools in Calmar, Thorsby, and New Sarepta. The students stayed with local host families and experienced different aspects of the region's life and culture.

The Colombian visitors were excited to try new things and experiences, like playing in the snow, taking in a hockey game, trying poutine, watching the winter lights at Luminaria festival, horseback riding, and getting an introduction to curling in Calmar.

The pilot went very well, and we received a lot of positive feedback from the school communities - principals, teachers, students, and the host families.

"It is truly a privilege to have visiting students from around the world join us," said Ward 1 Trustee Michelle Martin. "We not only share our culture with them, we also learn about their cultures. What a fantastic way to learn about other parts of the world without leaving your home town!"

Next year we will be hosting students from Columbia and Japan. Additionally, we are exploring the possibility of reciprocal exchanges in the near future.



New art partnership

This year, we were proud to partner with the Leduc Art Club for the 2023 Aspiring Young Artists' Competition, to present a broad range of art created by our talented grade students.

The Aspiring Young Artists' Competition is for students in Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12. Students had their work adjudicat-

ed by professional artists on June 3 to have an opportunity to win monetary prizes at the Awards Ceremony later that night, hosted by the Leduc Art Club and the Black Gold School Division. They also had a chance of having their works included in the Division's Permanent Student Art Collection.

The winning students are showing their artworks in the Leduc Arts Foundry Gallery for the month of June.

Trustee school visits



Visiting our schools and engaging with staff and students to learn more about their school communities, provides trustees with valuable information as we make governance decisions.

"Walking the hallways, seeing the displays and visiting classrooms to interact with students (when possible) offers a "front row seat" to experiencing the culture of each school," said Board Chair Eckert. "Virtual visits give us opportunities for in-depth conversations about programming, challenges and successes."

The schedule rotates yearly between in-person and virtual visits. Trustees always feel privileged and grateful to be welcomed into the schools.



Focus on mental health

Did you know? Our Student Services department has an innovative Mental Health Capacity Building (MHCb) program, which works year round to promote positive mental health in children, youth, families, and communities?

A team of three success coaches work within schools and in community settings to facilitate incremental skill-building programs, introduce and practice coping skills and tools, and promote mental, emotional, and social well-being to help students cope with the challenges we all face. They will be offering summer activities in the community as well.



Supporting Tom's Walk

Trustee Devonna Klassen joined staff and community members on Saturday, May 27 for the sixth annual Tom's Walk - a memorial walk and fundraiser for mental health. Tom's Walk is organized by former Black Gold Teacher Kelly Maxwell in honour of her son Tom, who was also part of the Black Gold family.

Approximately 100 people gathered to walk from the Devon Alliance Church to Voyageur Park, where there was a gathering and celebration with music, food trucks, and vendors.

"I was honoured to represent the Board of Trustees at this event, where I participated along with my family in this inspiring journey of reflection and hope to support the importance of mental health and wellbeing," said Klassen. "Not only is the Division proud to be an annual sponsor of Tom's Walk, our schools held their own Tom's Walk event, creating opportunity for mental health awareness, community connection, philanthropy, citizenship, and inspiring hope."

Watch the video: <https://youtu.be/6llb-4lwJ5uQ>

Advocacy through the ASBA



As part of *Budget 2023*, Alberta Education allocated \$47 million for learning and teaching resources for students and teachers to support September 2023 curriculum implementation.

The Funding Manual details that school authorities will be funded on a per-student basis at \$45 per student, to purchase additional curriculum resources (textbooks, digital resource licenses, books, other materials, etc.) to support implementation, **regardless of how many subjects are being implemented in 2023-2024.**

As subjects are implemented, there is a need for effective learning and teaching resources for successful implementation. The current model results in inequities for school jurisdictions trying to ensure high quality learning and teaching resources, **especially when the same funding may have to support student resources for more than two subjects. School jurisdictions who offer French Immersion or Francophone education, experience an even greater impact.**

In response, your Board of Trustees recently put forward a position statement to the Alberta School Board Association (ASBA) to advocate for the Government of Alberta to shift to per-student per-subject funding for Curriculum Implementation Resource funding - **based on actual student enrollments beginning in September 2023, and moving forward, for teaching and learning resources required to implement the new Curriculum, thereby ensuring equity of resource funding for all students and encouraging more optional implementation.**

We are pleased to share that the ASBA has adopted our resolution, and has incorporated into its ongoing advocacy efforts with the Province.

New Beaumont high school closer to reality



(l-r) Trustee Steed, Chair Eckert, Beaumont Mayor Daneluik and STAR Catholic trustees

The Black Gold School Division and our partners at the City of Beaumont and STAR Catholic School Division are excited to confirm a joint site has been secured for a new high school in the community.

The City has committed land south of the West Recreation Site and will construct site services, including utilities, to the location.

"We are delighted with this announcement and the letter of commitment received from the City of Beaumont," said Board Chair Eckert. "We are grateful to the City of Beaumont and STAR Catholic for their determination in working with us to secure a suitable site for our schools, and we hope the Province will soon allocate the funding necessary to advance this important project."



Pre-K & ESL Junior Kindergarten intake - now open!

All applicable Black Gold schools are now open for the 2023-2024 Pre-Kindergarten and English as a Second Language Junior Kindergarten intake. **Space is limited, so be sure to sign up today!**

Do you have a pre-school-age child who struggles with following directions, communication, separation anxiety, temper tantrums, changes in schedule or other developmental milestones? Or is another language, other than English, spoken at home? Consider having an intake screening and find out if your child can qualify for free* programming with us.

For more info about Pre-Kindergarten, go to:
www.blackgold.ca/schools/programs/pre-kindergarten

For more info, about ESL Junior Kindergarten go to:
www.blackgold.ca/esl-junior-kindergarten



2023-2024 Kindergarten Registration NOW OPEN!

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



2023-2024 School Bus Registration Now Open!

To apply for school bus transportation, please go to:
www.blackgold.ca/schools/transportation/apply



We're hiring! From teachers to education assistants, secretaries to custodians, and everything in between!

We have multiple postings open! To find out more, or to apply, go to:
www.blackgold.ca/careers

