



GOLDEN HILLS

SCHOOL DIVISION

AGENDA

TYPE: Regular Board Meeting

DATE: 9/23/2025 **TIME:** 9:30 AM

LOCATION: Boardroom of the Golden Hills School Division

DETAILS:

"Powering Hope and Possibilities" Vision: Inspiring confident, connected, caring citizens of the world

Mission: Intentionally maximizing learning for all

1.0 Attendance

2.0 Call to Order

3.0 Acknowledgment

4.0 In Camera

4.1 In Camera Action

4.2 Out of In Camera Action

5.0 Approval of Agenda

5.1 Approval of Agenda Action

6.0 Welcome Public, Vision and Mission Statements

7.0 Presentation of Minutes

7.1 Regular Minutes of August 19, 2025 Action

8.0 REPORTS

A) Chair's Report

B) Board Committees

C) Board Representatives to External Organizations

D) Administration Reports

9.0 NEW BUSINESS

A) Information Items

9.1 Preliminary Enrolment Monitoring Report (T. Sabir) Info

9.2 System Enhancement (J. Grimsdale) Info

9.3 Family School Community Resource Program (J. Grimsdale) Info

9.4 Administrative Procedure - 206 Teaching About Human Sexuality and Related Topics (J. Grimsdale) Info

9.5 Elections Summary - Nominations Update (T. Sabir) Info

B) Action Items

10.0 Round Table Discussion

11.0 School Monitoring Report Visit

12.0 ADJOURNMENT

12.1 Adjournment

Action



MINUTES

Golden Hills School Division

Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Location: Acme Community Centre

Tuesday, August 19, 2025 (9:30 AM)

1.0 Attendance

Present:

- a) Chair
 - Laurie Huntley
- b) Vice Chair
 - Jen Mertz
- c) Trustees
 - Rob Pirie
 - Jim Northcott
 - Barry Kletke
 - Justin Bolin
- d) Superintendent
 - Jeff Grimsdale
- f) Secretary Treasurer
 - Tahra Sabir
- g) Recording Secretary
 - Kristy Polet

Absent:

- e) Deputy Superintendent
 - Wes Miskiman

2.0 Call to Order

Chair Huntley called the meeting to order at 9:36 AM.

3.0 Acknowledgment

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge that we live, work and play on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Stoney Nakoda Nations, the Métis Nation (District 3 and 4), and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.

4.0 In Camera

4.1 In Camera

Recommendation: BD#20250819.1001

MOVED by Trustee Northcott that the Board of Trustees go In Camera at 9:37 AM.

Carried

4.2 Out of In Camera

Recommendation: BD#20250819.1002

MOVED by Trustee Pirie that the Board of Trustees rise from In Camera at 10:26 AM.

Carried

Recessed at 10:26 AM

Reconvened at 11:30AM

- During this time, the Board of Trustees, Superintendent and Secretary Treasurer toured the Acme School build.

4.3 In Camera

Recommendation: BD#20250819.1003

MOVED by Trustee Mertz that the Board of Trustees go In Camera at 11:30 AM.

Carried

4.4 Out of In Camera

Recommendation: BD#20250819.1004

MOVED by Trustee Pirie that the Board of Trustees rise from In Camera at 11:38 AM.

Carried

5.0 Approval of Agenda

5.1 Approval of Agenda

Recommendation: BD#20250819.1005

MOVED by Trustee Kletke that the Board of Trustees approve the agenda as presented.

Carried

6.0 Welcome Public, Vision and Mission Statements

7.0 Presentation of Minutes

7.1 Regular Minutes of June 24, 2025

Recommendation: BD#20250819.1006

MOVED by Trustee Northcott that the Board of Trustees approve the Regular Minutes of June 24, 2025, as presented.

Carried

8.0 REPORTS

A) Chair's Report

Chair Huntley presented information on the following topics: Meetings and correspondence:

- All correspondence has been forwarded as it was received.

B) Board Committees

No information to report on at this time.

C) Board Representatives to External Organizations

Trustee Kletke presented information on the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta (PSBAA) PSBC Meeting that was hosted in Red Deer by the Red Deer and Wolf Creek Public Schools, August 6-8, 2025.

- Trustees Bolin and Northcott attended the conference as well.
- 2026 Budget was passed; it will be presented at the Annual General Meeting held November 2025.
- Angela Sommers (Trustee), guest speaker from Red Deer Public Schools, presented on Public vs Charter/Private schools, Alberta's Education Act and constitutional rights. Discussion revolved around the implications for school boards.
- Associate Membership - discussion around lowering the cost for associate members to attend events as they may have financial limitations, they already pay lower fees, these fees help to cover standard operational costs.
- Toured the three following facilities:
 - Iron Ridge Secondary in Blackfalds, AB
 - Ecole Secondaire Lacombe Composite High in Lacombe, AB
 - Sheldon Kennedy Centre of Excellence in Red Deer, AB.
 - Hunting Hills High School in Red Deer, AB

Trustee Pirie had no new information to present regarding the Teachers Employer Bargaining Association (TEBA).

Trustee Northcott presented information on the Rural School Board Caucus (RSBC).

- Next meeting will be held in November, date to be determined.

D) Administration Reports

Secretary Treasurer Sabir presented information on the following topics:

Facilities Update:

- Strathmore Maintenance Shop – working with the neighboring business regarding encroachment.
- PowerPoint presentation:
 - Wheatland Elementary - Exterior Insulation and Finish System (EIFS) Armour is being installed to combat the woodpecker problem.
 - Strathmore High School Modular Addition - final building inspection will occur after all inspections are completed and passed.
 - Ecole Brentwood Garbage enclosure concrete pad to be completed for the start of school.

Finance Update:

- 2024/2025 year end audit has started.

Chair Initials_____ Secretary Treasurer Initials_____

Superintendent Grimsdale presented information on the following topics:

- CASS/ASBOA Conference was held in Edmonton from August 13-15, 2025, attended by Senior Admin.
- August 28, 2025 - Collaboration Day via Zoom with Principals and Vice Principals.
- September 17, 2025 - New Teacher Orientation being held at Division Office.
- Administrative Procedures (AP) start reviewing drafts of Library materials and Human Sexuality.
- New Responsible Technology Use Form will go home with student registration forms.
- Strathmore High School - Digital Arts and Esports Program - received funding, recruiting students and setting up the classroom.

9.0 NEW BUSINESS

A) Information Items

9.1 Monthly Enrolment Monitoring Report - June 2025 (T. Sabir)

Secretary Treasurer Sabir presented information on the Monthly Enrolment Monitoring Report for June 2025 to the Board of Trustees as information and for the record.

B) Action Items

9.2 Board Annual Leadership Plan 2025/2026 (J. Grimsdale)

Recommendation: BD#20250819.1007

MOVED by Trustee Mertz that the Board of Trustees approves the Board's Annual Leadership Plan subject to the necessity for ongoing changes as a result of internal and external influences.

Carried

10.0 Round Table Discussion

No discussion at this time.

11.0 School Monitoring Report Visit

11.1 New School - Acme School Tour

Superintendent Grimsdale, Chair Huntley, Trustees and Secretary Treasurer Sabir had a guided tour of the new Acme School site lead by Bevan Daverne of Daverne Consulting.

12.0 ADJOURNMENT

12.1 Adjournment

Recommendation: BD#20250819.1008

Adjourned at 12:07 PM.

Carried

Chair

Secretary Treasurer

Chair Initials _____ Secretary Treasurer Initials _____



PRELIMINARY ENROLMENT BACKGROUNDER

"Inspiring confident, connected, caring citizens of the world"

September 23, 2025

Background:

The Board of Trustees regularly monitors enrolment and notes trends over time. Funding is primarily enrolment-driven, and monitoring and projecting enrolment trends informs the board's budgeting processes.

As per the attached monitoring report, information is provided on the preliminary enrolment of provincially funded students, Siksika funded students and International funded students. These are preliminary numbers and changes may occur prior to September 29, 2025.

A new funding model came into effect September 1, 2020, and with this, there was a new approach to enrolment. The annual student count is the basis for the majority of the grants. A shift was made to the Weighted Moving Average (WMA) that captures the number of students across three school years.

Another shift was made for this year.

For the 2025-2026 funding year, the WMA was replaced with the Adjusted Enrolment Method (AEM). Funding provided through the base instruction component does not allocate funding for specific students or schools. Rather, AEM enrolment is used to allocate funding for the Early Childhood Services - Grade 12 instructional activities of the entire school authority.

The two-year AEM FTE enrolment is calculated as follows:

School Year	Enrolment Count (FTE)	Weighted Factor
2024/25	Estimate	30%
2025/26	Projection	70%

- Preliminary enrolment numbers will be presented at the Board meeting.

Recommendation:

That the Board of Trustees receives the Enrolment Monitoring Report for information and for the record.

Jeff Grimsdale
Superintendent

Tahra Sabir
Secretary Treasurer



SYSTEM ENHANCEMENT BACKGROUNDER

"Inspiring confident, connected, caring citizens of the world"

September 23, 2025

Background:

As a school division, we are committed to constant improvement. We know that teacher effectiveness has a critical impact on student success and, as such, we ensure educators have regular opportunities to learn and enhance their practice.

Ongoing professional development to learn about and utilize best research-based practices within education is facilitated for educators and educational leaders. This includes individual, school-based, and division-wide opportunities.

The System Enhancement Monitoring Report outlines the main PD activities of the 2024-2025 school year.

Recommendation:

That the Board of Trustees receives the System Enhancement Monitoring Report for information and for the record.

Jeff Grimsdale
Superintendent of Schools



System Enhancement
Presented to Board of Trustees by Jeff Grimsdale
Superintendent of Schools
Resource Persons: Sue Humphry, Jamie Keet

September 23, 2025

Overview

Golden Hills School Division has continued to focus on system improvement by offering teachers and administrators access to high quality professional learning opportunities aimed to optimize achievement for all students. This work is supported through a variety of strategies. In 2024-2025, teachers and administrators were provided a variety of in person and virtual professional learning experiences both within and external to our division.

The following, highlights the learning experiences offered:

Collaborative Days

Teachers participated in four *System Collaborative Days* that focused on the implementation of Powerful Learning, designed to improve student achievement. Teachers worked collaboratively to enhance the learning experiences for all students. These days encourage teachers to have a shared purpose and belief about their impact. Teachers tried out evidence-based strategies and reflected upon their impact. The work is goal driven leading to purposeful and intentional practices. Collaborative groups flourish when they feel safe to take risks and critically analyze practices.

Teachers explored the following questions in their collaborative groups.

- What are the desired outcomes for each of our learners?
- What assessments and powerful instructional practices will lead to these outcomes?
- What barriers exist and how might we remove these barriers to learning?
- What approaches can we take to address the needs in our classrooms?

New Teacher Orientation

New teachers were provided three training days as well as visits from Instructional Coaches who continued to support teacher learning within their classrooms.

New Administrator Orientation

New administrators were provided with two days to connect with other new administration and hone leadership practices. Additionally, each new administrator had a mentor to connect with throughout the year.

Implementation of New Curriculum:

Instructional Coaches provided training and support for K-6 teachers in the implementation of the new curriculum. There were a total of 12 new curriculum implementation days. The focus was on implementing Social Studies (pilot), Mathematics, and Science.

Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) Development

The transition to Individualized Learning Plans supported the goal to create support plans that had a positive, measurable impact on student success. Instructional Coaches worked with members of the Student Services team to create support documents for the ILP implementation. A significant component of the ILP implementation involved a collaborative effort, through creating changes, with Intellimedia (Dossier) to enhance the usability and relevance of the ILP template. This partnership focused on redesigning the existing format to reflect the recent changes from previous Individualized Support Plans (ISPs) and Individualized Program Plans (IPPs) to the new ILP structure. The objective was to produce a more intuitive and streamlined template. Throughout the development and refinement phases, continuous engagement with stakeholders was prioritized. Presentations were conducted at various forums, including administrative meetings, Collaborative Days, and staff meetings. The feedback gathered from these sessions was instrumental in guiding the ongoing improvements to the ILP template and its overall formatting, ensuring that the final product was practical and well-received by our teaching staff. To facilitate a smooth transition and effective utilization of the new resources, a full day training session was offered to administrators and their ILP lead.

School-Based Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Teachers participated in professional learning communities as well as participating in various on-line webinars and learning opportunities.

Leadership Training

GHSD administrators and their school leadership teams attended two leadership days led by Dr. David Tranter. This work was a continuation of the sessions offered by Dr. Tranter the previous year. The focus was on understanding and working to implement the conditions that foster student well-being and achievement. The conditions include safety, regulation, belonging, identity, engagement, positivity, mastery and meaning. Administrators decided upon what conditions they wanted to focus on in their buildings, depending upon need and then implemented a plan of action. These two days were offered through a partnership with Calgary Regional Consortium. In addition to the leadership days, some school teams worked 1-to-1 with Dr. Tranter to examine and develop the essential conditions in their building. As well, administrators engaged in a year long book study of Dr. Tranter's book with a focus on taking activities and learning back to their schools.

New Curriculum Implementation

GHSD provided K-6 teachers with 12 full-day curriculum sessions to collaboratively build a shared understanding of the new curriculum and create powerful lessons, assessments and resources. K-3 teachers were invited to work on the new science curriculum. High impact pedagogical practices were explored in science and teachers created shared lesson plans for teaching each outcome. As well, teachers developed parent communication tools to help parents understand the new curriculum.

Educational Consultants and Resource Counsellors

Teachers were supported by Educational Consultants and Family School Community Resource Counsellors to build their capacity in adapting to stress and build their capacity in fostering positive mental health in their classroom. These individuals were available in schools to respond to staff needs in a timely manner.

Powerful Learning

System improvement work in GHSD continued to focus on **Powerful Learning**, which incorporates Alberta Education's vision of preparing students for the future world of work. Through the thoughtful and

intentional use of research-based strategies, and best practices, teachers design powerful learning experiences for their students. The importance of providing relevant, real-world experiences with an authentic audience is encouraged. As part of Powerful Learning, assessment strategies are used that intentionally move learning forward.

Competencies

Powerful Learning helps students acquire essential competencies that include being able to design and manage their own work, communicate effectively, and collaborate with others. It helps students to research ideas - collect, synthesize, and analyze information, develop new products/ideas, and apply bodies of knowledge to novel problems that arise.

Deep Understanding

Through a cycle of continuous improvement that focuses on Powerful Learning, teachers affirm, revise, and aspire towards instruction that engages students and fosters thinking. Teachers consolidate what they know to be effective, test it, and continuously add to what they know and do. The intention of the high-quality professional learning opportunities offered in GHSD is to help teachers create rich meaningful tasks that intentionally fosters collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking. The goal is to help students achieve a deep understanding of the curriculum enabling them to become innovators, connectors and collaborators who can solve real world problems.

Powerful Learning continues to be at the forefront when teachers design and implement rich tasks and engaging learning experiences to achieve deep understanding of the curriculum. The importance of intentionally creating cultures of thinking in GHSD classrooms is recognized as an essential component of Powerful Learning.

Teachers continue to infuse critical thinking into their instruction. The Critical Thinking Consortia team encourages “teachers to activate learning about a topic by involving students in shaping questions to guide their study, giving them ownership over the direction of these investigations and requiring that students critically analyze and not merely retrieve information.” (Gini-Newman & Gini-Newman, p. 35). A shift occurs from covering curriculum, to students uncovering the curriculum. When the content of the curriculum is “problematized” it leads to an investigation and discovery connected to the real world. Through this type of investigation students draw conclusions, make decisions, and solve problems, all essential competencies for the work force. Instructional practices that support a thinking classroom are encouraged in classrooms across GHSD.

Students are invited by teachers to think critically or reason using clear success criteria this is shared with students or, when appropriate, co-created with students. Increased engagement and deep understanding can be achieved when students are offered a critical challenge and encouraged to engage in critical inquiry.

A shared understanding of Powerful Learning continues to be developed through the [“Powerful Learning” Website](#). This website provides articles, video clips and tools to build teacher capacity in supporting Powerful Learning in their classrooms.

Foundational Frameworks

An emphasis was placed on helping teachers to become familiar with the **Foundational Frameworks (Literacy, Numeracy, Technology and Wellness)**. These frameworks identify key strategies and beliefs that help all students acquire foundational skills and effectively use technology to create new ideas. Early interventions and targeted programs were implemented to reach our goal of increasing literacy and

numeracy skills ensuring success for all.

Teachers (K-3 and 6) worked on understanding the new Social Studies curriculum, with the intention to implement in fall 2025. Teacher representation from K-6 participated in a pilot of the new Social Studies curriculum and provided feedback to Alberta Education. Teachers focused on building a shared understanding of the outcomes and designing learning experiences for students. Teachers were intentional about triangulating the data through observation, conversation and product in order to provide reliable assessment data.

More information about curriculum implementation can be found on the Alberta Education website: <https://curriculum.learnalberta.ca/home/en>

Instructional Coaches

Instructional Coaches continued to offer one-to-one, in-classroom support by co-planning and modeling lessons, connecting teachers to each other and resources, and helping teachers to implement research-based practices in their classrooms. Our Instructional Coaches work alongside staff to model new teaching practices, provide real-time feedback and help implement new initiatives and curriculum. This approach moves professional learning from a one-time event to an ongoing, collaborative process, directly enhancing instruction.

Teachers have access to “How-to Tips” posted on the **Powerful Learning website**, designed to strengthen teacher capacity. In addition, the coaching team and student services consultants regularly contribute articles, blogs, and powerful stories on topics that reflect the real needs of teachers. To further support classroom practice, video clips featuring evidence-based strategies and practical ideas have also been created.

GHSD Instructional Coaches provided support to teachers and administrators in the implementation of Powerful Learning. During the 2024-2025 school year instructional coaches have been engaged in the following work:

- Instructional Coaches continued to oversee and support the implementation of system initiatives through one-on-one individual coaching, school-based PLCs, focus groups, and professional development days on specific topics. Supporting new curriculum implementation continued to be a priority area of focus for K-6 teachers.
- Instructional Coaches used a variety of methods to provide support including shoulder-to-shoulder coaching, professional development opportunities both virtual and in-person, small groups, PLCs, residencies and Collaborative Days.
- Instructional Coaches created templates, presentations, and processes to help prepare teachers for the implementation of new curriculum. Instructional Coaches hosted 12 new curriculum days throughout the year.
- Instructional Coaches supported Collaborative Days, as well as other professional learning opportunities within schools and at a system level.
- Instructional Coaches supported administrators by developing activities to deepen understanding of Powerful Learning at administrator meetings.
- Instructional Coaches continued to support teachers in the integration of high impact instructional strategies and effective assessment practices in classrooms.
- Three New Teacher Orientation days were offered in addition to ongoing one-on-one new teacher support throughout the year. Instructional Coaches spent time in new teachers’ classrooms and

worked alongside new teachers to plan lessons, develop resources and enhance classroom management strategies.

- Instructional Coaches offered a three-day Numeracy series to improve numeracy practices in Grades 4-6. The Instructional Coaches collaborated with the CRC team to plan and deliver this PD. Between day two and three, the Instructional Coaches and CRC member visited classrooms to model new strategies.
- Instructional Coaches assisted in the development and implementation of the new Individual Learning Plan. A coach developed a website to guide teachers in the creation of an ILP. This website is a centralized hub for teachers, which has also been integrated into the GHSD Hub website for easy access. This platform provides support documents, instructional videos, and all necessary information required to complete each section of the ILP effectively.
- Instructional Coaches continued to develop articles for the Powerful Learning website to highlight examples of powerful instruction.
- Instructional Coaches developed a "Instructional Coaches Corner" on the HUB to feature resources and strategies. Each resource is designed to offer quick takeaways that are easily implemented in the classroom.
- Members of the coaching team helped to offer Professional Development on Artificial Intelligence, Indigenous learning and English as an Additional Language.
- A member of the coaching team supports the distribution of assistive technology. GHSD's technology lending library includes 130 Chromebooks and 150 iPads, all of which have been utilized to support students' learning needs. Assistive technology devices have been crucial in ensuring access to tools like Immersive Reader, Read & Write for Google, Proloquo (a communication app), and translation programs. These tools have been particularly beneficial for students with language and speech delays or learning disabilities.
- Administrators reported that instructional coaches supported their schools most in the areas of differentiated instruction, designing and facilitating staff professional development, English as an Additional Language, literacy and numeracy.
- The percentage of administrators reporting that the work of the Instructional Coaches had a "Very Effective" impact within their buildings was 99%.
- During the 2024-2025 school year, 73% of administrators reported they worked with Instructional Coaches on a more regular basis. This is an increase from 2 years ago when only 40% of administrators indicated this.
- Feedback from teachers on the value and impact of the Instructional Coaching team in 2024-2025 is very positive. Most of the coach's time was spent working directly with teachers and administrators. Most of the support was in the areas of Powerful Learning, critical thinking, new curriculum and technology integration.
- 98% of teachers reported a moderate to significant impact of Instructional Coaches on their teaching practices and 98% of teachers reported a moderate to significant impact of Instructional Coaches on their student learning. The choice of ratings included: "No Impact, Minimal Impact, Neutral Impact, Moderate Impact and Significant Impact"
- 100% of teachers rated the overall effectiveness of their work with a coach was what they expected, was more than what they expected or greatly exceeded what they expected. This is consistent with feedback from last year.
- Teacher feedback on the value of coaching support is extremely positive, and teachers indicated that they appreciated the impact that Instructional Coaches have on improving student learning. Overall, feedback gathered from teachers and administrators indicated that, through effective collaboration, reflection and communication, the coaching team had a positive impact on building

teacher capacity as well as improved student learning. It is through constant reflection and refinement of practice that enabled this success.

Teacher Quotes

“The Instructional Coaches helped me to better my practice as a teacher by providing me with new strategies to use for assessments. They also helped me to recognize the inherent curiosity of the students and how they can excel at their learning by utilizing the right guiding assessment strategies and giving students more autonomy over their learning.”

“I always have confidence that the learning Instructional Coaches will find a way to help support me in my teaching when I reach out to them. Even as a seasoned teacher I find they are a valuable resource.”

“I knew it would be great to have a new idea demonstrated with my class, but I was not expecting my kids to be so engaged. I also knew I was going to see math teaching strategies, but I also got behavior management tips and assessment strategies.”

“Each coach listened to what I needed and collaborated well with me. They all brought a sound lesson plan and the resources necessary to teach/ achieve it. The Instructional Coaches all deserve an E for their cooperative efforts in my classroom. Students loved it!”

Administrators Quotes

“We have appreciated the work of instructional coaches very much this year!! I think we had more Instructional Coaches out than every before! Our teachers are requesting to work with Instructional Coaches more frequently and to out staff, Instructional Coaches have become a valuable asset to be accessed!”

“I'm consistently impressed by how the Instructional Coaches collaborate as a team to address any concerns or needs our teachers have. They are truly an invaluable resource for both our teaching staff and myself as an administrator.”

“We are looking forward to continuing to work with the coaching team to continue to grow teacher and student skill in the area of STEAM with a focus of linking projects to curriculum next year.”

Powerful Learning Website and HUB

- Instructional Coaches helped teachers develop a deeper understanding of Powerful Learning through the Powerful Learning website and other social media platforms. The Powerful Learning website captures what Powerful Learning looks like in the classroom through stories, pictures, and videos. When possible, the coach worked with teachers to summarize the story to be shared with others on the website. The purpose of the website is for teachers and administrators to deepen their understanding of Powerful Learning and practical ways to implement it.
- The GHSD Powerful Learning website saw outstanding growth in terms of how many people accessed the website this year with an increase in users from 11,000 two years ago to 21,000 this past year. This speaks to the power and impact of this website.
- The HUB landing page profiled new Powerful Learning stories as they were created. These focused on instructional “How to” videos, Canvas, and inspirational stories within the classroom.
- Powerful Learning strategies and ideas were highlighted for teachers, with the goal of building common vocabulary and further growing Powerful Learning practices in Golden Hills. The articles

promoted through the HUB were created by Instructional Coaches and included research-based videos, websites, and articles for teachers to build teacher practice. They also highlighted upcoming professional development opportunities and new, recommended resources in the Instructional Media Centre.

- The purpose of the HUB is a sharing space for teachers and administrators in GHSD to collaborate and build resources based on research and best practices. It was also created as a central location for forms, documents and support materials.
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Intervention Programs

Literacy Intervention

Literacy is the key to unlocking personal potential and driving societal advancement, thereby influencing every aspect of our lives and communities. It shapes the way we communicate, learn and grow, equipping individuals with the skills to navigate an increasingly complex world. Beyond just reading and writing, literacy is defined by Alberta Education as “...the ability, confidence, and willingness to engage with language to acquire, construct and communicate meaning in all aspects of daily living” (Alberta Education, 2015). By recognizing the power of literacy, GHSD continues to invest in the Early Literacy Intervention program, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to succeed.

Literacy Intervention Programs

During the 2024-2025 school year, GHSD continued to support the literacy needs of students through **Early Literacy Intervention, Literacy Support** and **school-based support programs**. The power of literacy intervention is clearly recognized. When a child understands how to read, they do not just gain a skill—they gain a belief in themselves. This confidence spills over into all areas of their life, from academics to social interactions. By providing targeted support early on, GHSD is not just teaching children to read; we are giving them the tools to shape their own futures. We are preventing academic failure before it starts and fostering a generation of confident, capable individuals.

- In May and June 2025, GHSD implemented, for the ninth year, a **Kindergarten initiative** to help parents learn how to work with their child at home to improve literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers identified Kindergarten students they expected to be “At Risk” entering Grade 1. A total of 69 “at-risk” Kindergarten students were assessed, which represents approximately 20% of the Kindergarten students in our district. Parents of students who were identified as “at-risk” were provided literacy/numeracy packages to help them prepare their child for Grade 1 and develop basic literacy and numeracy skills. Nineteen students that were identified through the literacy screener in January 2025 were also given packages. The packages were explained to parents through Zoom meetings and parents were given the opportunity to talk to the key teacher hired to run these meetings. Forty percent of these parents participated in the Zoom meetings to help them understand the importance of the summer work and how to implement the learning activities. An email was sent at the end of July to remind parents about the value of the time they spend engaging in play, which will help their child be ready for Grade 1.
- Pre-post data on the **Kindergarten initiative** offered in 2024 indicated that between 50-60% of the students benefited from the phonemic awareness and letter sound recognition summer work supported by their families. This helps set these students up for success in school.
- **Early Literacy Intervention (ELI)** was offered to struggling readers in Grades 1 and 2. Students were provided approximately 50-65 intervention sessions.

- The Early Intervention Team of four teachers served 176 students in Grades 1 and 2. This represents 26% of our Grade 1 students and 26% of our Grade 2 students. Intervention sessions were offered over four months.
- On average, Grade 1 students improved 1.4 grade levels (in 4 months) as measured through the Schonell word list- which measures word decoding/recognition. On average, Grade 2 students improved approximately 1.1 grade levels (as measured through the Schonell word list).
- On average, Grade 1 students improved 0.81 years of growth in the Diagnostic Reading Assessment. This measures comprehension of text. On average, Grade 2 students improved 0.9 years of growth.
- ELI Satisfaction Surveys indicated that 100% of parents reported that the program helped their child and that they saw improvement in reading. Parents reported that the strategy bookmarks made it easy for them to be helpful at home. 93% of teachers surveyed stated that their student significantly benefited from the program.
- The ELI website was provided to teach parents how to assist their child in literacy practice at home.
- The ELI team also created content for the HUB, offering teachers instructional tips and detailed descriptions of the ELI program.

ELI Parent Quote

“We really appreciated the ongoing support and consistency of the program. The regular reading activities and encouragement helped our child grow more confident and engaged.”

“I love how much more confident and how much better my child is at reading, she is enjoying reading to me nightly and seeing her progress as well.”

“I've seen lots of progress with my daughter's reading since she started this program. To see how confident and comfortable she feels now with books, reading is AMAZING to me because she would get so upset, frustrated with books, reading prior to starting this program. ”

“I appreciated the positive approach and personalized attention so that my son’s reading could improve quickly.”

Leveled Literacy Intervention

GHSD implemented a **Literacy Support Program** in all schools in order to provide small group support to struggling students in Grades 1-5. During the 2024-2025 school year, 298 students received support through this program. Educational Assistants delivered the program under the direction of a lead literacy teacher in each school.

Literacy Support is a powerful, short-term intervention that provides daily intensive small-group instruction designed to supplement literacy instruction in the classroom. Lessons and resources were implemented three times a week using literacy kits. On the other two days, an intensive phonics/phonemic awareness component was implemented. Training and regular meetings were held throughout the school year in order to ensure effective implementation and ongoing support.

The two days per week focused on developing decoding skills varied depending upon the Grade. Grade 1 and 2 students were provided the University of Florida Literacy Institute (UFLI) program and Grades 3-5 were offered a program to develop their vocabulary and decoding skills through word parts. The program used was the Word Connections Program.

The data shows that the Literacy Support program is a successful and impactful initiative. The observed student growth and the number of students served demonstrates its value in supporting the literacy needs of our student population. The feedback from school teams and the assessment results indicated that students provided the intervention made excellent progress. The Literacy Support program is a critical component of GHSD's commitment to literacy excellence, and the results from this initiative underscore its importance to our students' academic success.

The average growth for Grade 1 students in the program was 4.2 levels, Grade 2 was 4.7, Grade 3 was 4.6, Grade 4 was 4.6, and Grade 5 was 4.8. For example, a Grade 5 student with a 4.8 level of growth would be progressing at a rate that is at or above the expected annual growth for students. It demonstrates that the students are successfully moving into more complex and challenging texts, which is a key goal of literacy instruction at that level. In short, the 4.8 growth is a strong indicator of substantial progress.

Early Numeracy

Numeracy goes beyond simple arithmetic and encompasses the skills to acquire, create, connect, understand and communicate quantitative and spatial information effectively. Being numerate means going beyond the acquisition of basic skills and solving simple arithmetic problems. Alberta Education defines Numeracy as "the ability, confidence and willingness to engage with quantitative or spatial information to make informed decisions in all aspects of daily living."

The GHSD Early Numeracy Intervention (ENI) provides targeted numeracy intervention to small groups of two to four students in grades 1 and 2. The intervention incorporates research-based strategies that help students think, reason, and apply mathematical concepts to solve problems. Students are actively engaged in discovering the relationships between numbers.

A large component of this program is using manipulatives which help students make sense of the concepts and skills they are working on. The focus of the intervention is to develop a strong understanding of number sense and operations. The learning goals for each session are made clear, and students are supported with a 'Tools and Strategies' bookmark as well as a variety of manipulatives. After a concrete understanding of math concepts and number sense has been established, efficient strategies follow. Students are expected to develop strategies for addition and subtraction to help with automaticity of basic facts. Lessons are designed to help students understand and identify the relationships between numbers. A pre and post assessment measures the growth during the duration of the program and regular communication of progress is shared with parents and classroom teachers. Formative assessment is ongoing, and progress is monitored through observations and questions that probe thinking and justification of answers.

- The 2024-2025 school year was the tenth year of offering Early Numeracy Intervention in order to establish a strong numeracy foundation for Grade 1 and 2 students who needed more time to build numeracy competencies. By intervening early, students are set up on a trajectory of success.
- The Early Numeracy Intervention team of three teachers served 159 students in Grades 1 and 2 with direct intervention. This represents 22% of our Grade 1 students, and 22% of our Grade 2 students. Intervention sessions were offered in two terms.
- Comparing pre and post results from the Early Numeracy Assessment determined a percentage increase for each individual student. Results indicated that struggling Grade 1 students achieved, on average, 98% accuracy on the Kindergarten outcomes, and 63% on the Grade 1 outcomes tested in the post assessment. This represents a 27% increase in the Kindergarten outcomes and a 43% increase in the Grade 1 outcomes.

- Grade 2 students achieved on average 84% on the Grade 1 outcomes and 48% on the Grade 2 outcomes tested in the post assessment. This represents 35% increase in Grade 1 outcomes and a 29% increase in Grade 2 outcomes.
- ENI satisfaction surveys indicate that 100% of parents reported that the program helped improve their child's math/numeracy understanding, and 100% reported that their child's attitude towards math had improved. 100% of teachers surveyed stated that their students enjoyed the program and 100% of the teachers felt that their students significantly benefited from the program.

Quotes:

Teacher: "I believe this individualized support, coupled with the consistent communication between the intervention teacher and the classroom teacher, should definitely be continued to maximize student growth and maintain alignment with classroom objectives."

Parent: "I like that my child was able to spend extra time working on math in a fun and interesting way that didn't make her feel bad. The program does not focus on the child being "bad" at math and therefore doesn't create any negativity towards math or themselves. I really appreciate this approach."

Technology

Building Teacher Capacity: Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Digital Tools in GHSD

In the 2024-2025 academic year, GHSD focused on building teacher capacity by integrating cutting-edge tools like Gemini AI and other powerful digital platforms directly into classrooms. We believe in modeling effective use with teachers and students learning together, ensuring educators gain practical, in-context skills.

Gemini is central to our strategy. Through professional development days that demonstrated its application in real classroom scenarios, fostered discussions on responsible use and policy development, a greater understanding of AI in education was fostered. This hands-on approach empowered teachers to leverage AI to enhance learning, while proactively addressing concerns about ethical misuse.

Empowering Learning with Practical Digital Skills

Beyond Artificial Intelligence, we are dedicated to building teacher capacity with various software and hands-on practices. Our approach involves modeling how to use WeVideo, Adobe Podcast, Tinkercad, and Canva directly in classrooms, with both teachers and students learning side-by-side. This ensures educators are confident in utilizing these tools to foster creativity, critical thinking, and practical skills.

The GHSD HUB, powered by SharePoint, is our centralized resource for teachers. This user-friendly platform provides easy access to valuable materials and fosters collaboration, and it will continue to evolve to meet our educators' changing needs.

Cultivating Communication and Design Through Classroom Modeling

We are strengthening communication and design skills by modeling digital media tools in classrooms. We show teachers how to facilitate collaborative video projects with WeVideo and demonstrate using Adobe Podcast with classes to simplify audio production. This direct approach equips teachers to guide students in creating high-quality content, enhancing research, communication, and public speaking.

Innovating Instruction with 3D Design and Digital Creation Modeling

To further build teacher capacity in innovative instruction, we are modeling Tinkercad and Canva directly in classrooms. We guide students through 3D design and printing with Tinkercad, enhancing problem-solving and STEM skills. Concurrently, we model leveraging Canva to create engaging educational materials

and visually compelling student projects. These tools help to foster a culture of innovation, bringing complex concepts to life and expanding avenues for creative expression

Recommendation: That the Board of Trustees receives the System Enhancement report for information and the record.



FAMILY SCHOOL COMMUNITY RESOURCE PROGRAM

"Inspiring confident, connected, caring citizens of the world"

September 23, 2025

Background:

Golden Hills School Division continues to partner with other agencies to support and provide services to ensure optimal functioning of children and their families in the social-emotional/behavioural domain, in order that students can fully benefit from the learning opportunities afforded to them.

Recommendation:

That the Board of Trustees receives the Family School Community Resource Program Report for information and for the record.

Jeff Grimsdale
Superintendent of Schools



Family School Community Resource Program (Drumheller/Wheatland/Strathmore)
and Family Wellness Program (Kneehill)
Presented to Board of Trustees by Jeff Grimsdale
Superintendent of Schools
Resource Person: Deborah Hinds-Nunziata

September 23, 2025

History

The Family School Community Resource (FSCR) Program/Family Wellness programs have been available in Drumheller (1985), Kneehill County (1987) and Wheatland Country (1990) for over three decades and continue to provide invaluable support to students and their families.

Historically, key funding partners have included Golden Hills School Division, Drumheller, Kneehill & Wheatland Regional Family and Community Support Services, Calgary and Central Region Children's Services, and the Central East Regional Collaborative Service Delivery Initiative. Currently, these programs are financially supported by Golden Hills School Division and FCSS within each region. Despite some operational differences, all three programs strive to support the well-being of children and their families so that students arrive at school ready to benefit from the learning opportunities afforded to them in Golden Hills School Division.

2024–2025 Service Highlights

During the 2024–2025 school year, the FSCRC program provided significant support across the division:

- 480+ students and families received ongoing counselling and support, addressing concerns such as anxiety, depression, peer relationships, grief, trauma, and family transitions.
- 250+ students accessed single-session consultations, offering immediate support and strategies for presenting concerns.
- 2000+ students were reached through classroom presentations and small group programming on:
 - Anxiety and stress management
 - Emotional regulation
 - Interpersonal skill development
 - Mental health literacy
- Staff consultation was provided to teachers and school teams, equipping them with strategies to address mental health and social-emotional learning (SEL) needs in their classrooms.

Systems Approach: The Whole Child

Our model emphasizes the interconnectedness of student success, family well-being, and community partnerships. By adopting a systems approach, FSCRC ensures that each child's social, emotional, and academic needs are addressed within the context of their broader environment. This method promotes sustainable change and creates stronger, healthier school communities.

Counselling services are essential for helping students build resilience, develop coping skills, and

strengthen their social-emotional learning. FSCRC counsellors work collaboratively with teachers, administrators, and families to ensure that supports are tailored, timely, and effective. Early intervention reduces barriers to learning, prevents escalation of mental health concerns, and fosters positive lifelong outcomes.

Student Survey Comments

Peer Relationships

“My time with her has helped me understand friendships and how not to get involved in stuff that is not mine to attend to. My friendships are healthier.”

“My counsellor taught me strategies to deal with girl drama-how not to get involved if it has nothing to do with me but the others continue to try to pull me in.”

“My time with the counsellor helped me to understand how I always got myself involved in other’s peoples business.”

“My counsellor helped me understand what a good friend is.”

Emotional Regulation

“My counselor helped me learn ways to cope with my anxiety.”

“I learned about anxiety and how it affected my academics. I can manage my thought better so I can listen and understand the teacher”

“It was very helpful to have a FWW. Having support is very helpful and comfortable.”

“I felt very heard and seen and I feel like I can figure out me emotions and handle them in a calm way.”

“I now realize how the way I dealt with my anger just made things worse. Now I use the strategies she taught me to calm down and then respond”

“Absolutely amazing counselor and most understanding person I have ever met in my life. She really helped me problem solve and manage my feelings.”

“It really helped talking to the FWW about everything that I needed to share.”

Healthy Lifestyle

“I learned ideas for making good healthy choices for my wellness.”

“Thank you FWW for helping me improve my actions without it I don’t know what I would do.”

General

“My counsellor is very understanding and kind, she helps me with everything on my mind to solve my problems and focus on the things I need to.”

“Counseling was a great experience. It helped me become a better individual-strong and more resilient.”

“The counselors helped me feel more comfortable and welcome at school and I can manage how I feel better.”

“It was important to have someone in my life who listens to me.”

Caregiver and Staff Consultation

The FSCRC program recognizes that both caregivers and school staff are central to student well-being.

- Caregivers receive consultation, education, and resources to help strengthen family relationships and reinforce skills outside of school.

Caregiver Survey Comments

Emotional Regulation

“The FSCRC is another trusted adult who my son can talk to and receive help to manage his emotions”

“The counsellor was amazing to work with. My son can express his emotions, feels less anxious and is not refusing to come to school or running away anymore.”

“It was great to be able to bounce ideas back and forth with the counsellor and have a new way to look at things and new strategies to support my child’s emotional regulation.”

“I have a much better understanding of how anxiety affects my child.”

“I appreciated how quickly the counsellor was able to find helpful resources and send them home. I better understand my child’s anxiety and have strategies to deal with it.”

“My child gained better coping skills and learned different ways to handle stress. I am grateful for this service.”

“The counselor was a great support to our daughter who has anxiety. We appreciated her insights and direction. It was very comforting knowing our daughter had support at school. This allowed her to focus on her schooling and stay there all day.”

“My child is happier and is coping with her anxiety better.”

“I can redirect my daughter when she feels stressed, and she can use the skills and tactics the FSCRC taught her.”

“ My son has been given tools to manage his big emotions.”

Family Relationships

“I am the grandmother. The counselor helped me to understand how to deal with a family

situation-the dynamics, my role and how to deal with it. She listened to my concerns about my grandkids at school.”

“I am better able to have a conversation with my daughter about her day at school without her getting upset-she talks about the strategies she used to calm herself down when another student upsets her.”

“My child and I are better at communicating our feelings to one another and then working to resolve whatever the issue may be.”

“The FSCRC really helped me manage difficult life problems, so my daughter is less worried and stressed about her home life.”

“The counsellor is so relatable and approachable which is so important when you are socially withdrawn. My daughter has a difficult time opening and being vulnerable with others and she found the FSCRC to be a great listener and easy to work with. I have gained an understanding of how to approach her issues.”

General Comments

“The counselor was fantastic with both of my boys. I was able to email her anytime they were struggling, and she fit them into her schedule. She always followed up and kept me in the loop on what they worked on.”

“The counsellor helped ease my child’s transition to a new school”

“Thank you for being there for us all. My kids benefit from being able to talk with you. Thank you for your care and the resources.”

“The FSCRC is amazing. Both of my children (grade 12 and 5) love her. She is a strong support to both. She is honest, caring and genuine in her interactions. She has gone above and beyond in communication with me. My children both have gained valuable skills they can use both in school and outside school that will last a lifetime.”

“It was really great to have support from the FWW, and for me to see skills and strategies shared with us benefit us. She really enjoyed her time working with you. We saw such growth.”

“Staff benefit from consultations that provide practical tools and strategies for addressing student needs in the classroom, building teacher confidence in supporting mental health and Social Emotional Learning. Teachers expressed appreciation for the program but also advocated for more FSCRC time in their schools to meet the increasing mental health needs of students.”

Colleague Survey

“It was very well done, and the strong messaging was valuable for them to hear.”

“Our FSCRC are incredibly effective. They work hard to enhance mental health in both their 1-1 and group sessions”

“Our FSRC is amazing to work with, and the students love coming to see her. She puts so much work and care into each student.”

“Our FSCRC willingly and confidently present SEL support to our classrooms. She is always well received, and the information is so valuable. Her knowledge is broad and relevant.”

“Great program and great presentation of the material. [FWW] was always extremely well prepared and worked well with the students. I loved having access to the videos and would often show one again if particularly helpful for helping us practice the skills in class on another day.”

“This support is very necessary for all students. Some don’t know how to recognize what they are feeling and how to advocate for themselves.”

“Great program and great presentation of the material. [FWW] was always extremely well prepared and worked well with the students. I loved having access to the videos and would often show one again if particularly helpful for helping us practice the skills in class on another day.”

“In addition to student counselling, our FSCRC works hard to provide resources and support for our families and staff to better understand and manage the mental health needs of our students which is an area essential to sustainability and prevention.”

“Our FSCRC serves the needs of our school very well. She is so knowledgeable and connected with our school community.”

Program Impact

Recent survey results demonstrate the effectiveness of FSCRC services:

- 90% of teachers rate the program as very accessible, and 93% feel it is very helpful to students.
- 98% of caregivers indicated that, because of FSCRC support, both they and their child developed better coping skills to manage social-emotional-behavioral concerns.
- 90% of students served reported that they met their counselling goals, showing strong positive outcomes.

Conclusion

The Family School Community Resource Counselling program continues to be an essential service within the Golden Hills School Division and has made a measurable impact on student well-being. Increased communication with caregivers and staff has contributed to consistently high satisfaction rates across stakeholders. The FSCRC program demonstrates clear and lasting value for the division. Grounded in a systems approach and focused on both direct counselling and family-school collaboration, the program strengthens our schools and communities, helping students succeed academically and emotionally.

Areas for Growth

Using a continuous improvement model the FSCRC team will focus on the following goals for the 2025-2026 school year:

- Continue to explore efficiencies through the increased use of universal (Whole class presentations) and targeted approaches (Group Counselling) and careful triaging with the School Resource Team regarding those students referred for individualized intervention.
- Leverage the use of Master of Counselling practicum students from local post-secondary

institutions to offer a greater number of evidence based individualized, targeted and universal interventions to student.

- Ensure interventions are evidence informed and continually evaluate their effectiveness/appropriateness in a school setting. Increase the opportunity for professional development and Clinical Supervision for FSCRC.
- Continue to attend Interagency and other networking opportunities to be aware of collaboration opportunities with new and existing psychosocial services and resources.

Recommendation: That the Board of Trustees receives the FSCR Program report for information and the record.



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

"Inspiring confident, connected, caring citizens of the world"

September 23, 2025

Background:

Administrative Procedures (AP) are regularly reviewed, and new procedures are drafted to support the necessary changes in administrative best practices. This process of review and development, with opportunity for input by the appropriate stakeholders, leads to effective operations within the school system. The following AP has been reviewed by appropriate stakeholders and are recommended for implementation:

- AP 206 - *Teaching About Human Sexuality and Related Topics*
 - AP 206 – Form 1 Generic Form

The above AP is attached for review.

Recommendation:

That the Board of Trustees receives the attached information around the development of *AP 206 Teaching About Human Sexuality and Related Topics and AP 206 – Form 1*.

Jeff Grimsdale
Superintendent



TEACHING ABOUT HUMAN SEXUALITY AND RELATED TOPICS

Background

Golden Hills School Division will provide human sexuality instruction as mandated through the grades 3 through 6 Physical Education and Wellness curriculum, the grades 7 through 9 Health and Life Skills curriculum, Career and Technology Studies in high school (reproduction and readiness for parenting developing maturity and independence) and Career and Life Management in High School.

Procedures

1. Principals shall give parents/guardians the opportunity to exercise the decision to opt-in their student to curricular instruction about human sexuality and/or related topics, by notifying parents/guardians 30 days in advance of the instruction, or classroom content.
 - 1.1. Each year before human sexuality topics are taught in a school, the Principal will notify parents via an opt-in form (AP 206-1), and teachers will inform parents via email/letter outlining:
 - 1.1.1. Applicable grade(s) and approved resources;
 - 1.1.2. The general date that each topic will be discussed; and
 - 1.1.3. The teacher(s) who will instruct the learning.
 - 1.2. The parental opt-in requirement applies when subject matter deals primarily and explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation or human sexuality.
 - 1.3. The decision not to opt-in does not, and cannot, apply to discussions that incidentally arise, including gender identity and sexual orientation, as a part of daily classroom interaction.
2. Parents may opt-in each year by:
 - 2.1. Completing the opt-in form (AP 206-1) sent out by the Principal.
3. Alternate learning and assessment experiences shall be provided for those students who do not opt-in.
4. Principals shall not permit the use or provision of learning and teaching resources that deal primarily and explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation or human sexuality unless the learning and teaching resources are approved by the Minister.
 - 4.1. Where the use of learning and teaching resources referred to in section 4 are provided by an external party, the Principal shall not permit their use unless both the learning and teaching resources and external party are approved by the Minister.

Reference:

- Education Act. AS.A 2012
- Alberta Bill of Rights
- Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom, Constitution Act, 1982
- Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Amendment Act
- Guide to Education ECS to Grade 12

Parental Notification and Consent (Opt-In): Grade Instructions Related to Human Sexuality, and Related Topics

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Recent changes to the Education Act require parents/guardians to **opt-in** students for instruction of topics that deal primarily and explicitly with gender identity, sexual orientation, or human sexuality. Please review the information and complete the form below to allow your student to participate in the upcoming lessons.

1. Instructional Details:

Description of Content:

Relevant Learning Outcomes:

Approved Resources:

Date(s) of Instruction: _____

Teacher: _____

2. Parental Consent (Opt-In Requirement)

Please indicate consent for your student's participation below.

Consent:

☐ I consent to my student's participation in all instruction involving the identified content.

3. Alternative Arrangements:

If the consent form is not returned, your student will be offered a supervised alternative learning activity during the scheduled time.

4. Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement:

By signing this form, you acknowledge that you have received adequate notice of the content and purpose of the instruction and that you are granting permission for your student to participate.

Parent/Guardian Name (Please Print): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return this form to [_____] by [_____] – minimum 30 calendar days prior to instruction.]

For further information, contact:



ELECTIONS SUMMARY Nominations Update

"Inspiring confident, connected, caring citizens of the world"

September 23, 2025

Background:

Nominations for trustee positions closed at **12:00 p.m. on September 22**. The current status by ward is as follows:

WARD	CANDIDATE	INCUMBENT/ACCLAIMED
Ward 1	Barry Kletke	Acclaimed
Ward 2	James Northcott	Acclaimed
Ward 3	Justin Bolin	Acclaimed
Ward 4 (Election – Three candidates for two positions)	Rob Pirie Jen Mertz Steven Durrell	Incumbent Incumbent New Candidate
Ward 5	Laurie Huntley	Acclaimed

The only election will be held in **Ward 4**, scheduled for **Monday, October 20**, at the **Civic Centre from 10am to 8pm**.

Recommendation:

That the Board of Trustees receives this as information and for the record.

Jeff Grimsdale
Superintendent of Schools

Tahra Sabir
Secretary Treasurer