



PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA™

THE ADVOCATE

April 30, 2024



WHAT'S INSIDE!

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In this edition of *The Advocate*, you'll find the President's message, PSBAA receiving The Friend of ASCA Award, two Board Chair messages, upcoming events for 2024, a lineup of our SGA guest speakers, articles of potential interest, along with our regular features. Enjoy!

Next issue: May 29, 2024

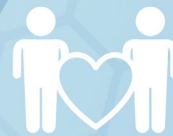
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Documentation



Collaboration

Fostering Cross-Ministry Collaboration

Dennis MacNeil
PSBAA President

As we head into the spring season, I feel it's important that we underscore the significance of cross-ministry collaboration. In our election readiness piece from last year we discussed the phrase "it takes a village." This phrase comes from a proverb that an entire community must come together in support of children. In our increasingly interconnected world, where challenges and opportunities in education transcend traditional boundaries, the need for cooperation among various government departments become more apparent than ever.

Cross-ministry collaboration serves as a key purpose for advancing the education sector. It enables us to leverage diverse perspectives, expertise, and resources to address multifaceted issues facing our schools and communities. From curriculum development to student well-being initiatives, the collective efforts of different ministries and their constituencies are indispensable in shaping a comprehensive and inclusive educational landscape.

Under the umbrella of public education advocacy, cross-ministry collaboration takes on a pivotal role. By forging alliances with other government entities, we amplify our voice and influence in advocating for policies and funding mechanisms that prioritize the needs of our students and educators. Whether it's advocating for increased investment in educational infrastructure or championing initiatives to promote equity and accessibility, our ability to collaborate across ministries creates a bigger impact and strengthens our advocacy efforts.

Cross-ministry collaboration empowers us to address systemic challenges that extend beyond any single department. Issues such as mental health support for students, digital literacy, and Indigenous education require a diverse approach that draws upon the expertise of multiple stakeholders. By fostering collaboration among education, health, and social services, we can develop integrated solutions that address the root causes of these complex issues and promote positive outcomes for all our students and staff across Alberta.

In our role as advocates and voices for public education in our province, it is imperative that we continue to lay the groundwork for relationships with trustees and our government counterparts across the province. It is up to us to champion cross-ministry collaboration and foster meaningful partnerships that will benefit our students and their needs. Making sure we all take the time to build those connections is essential for the work we do and truly highlights the value of trusteeship.

This will allow us to work towards shared goals, which means we can unlock new opportunities for innovation, efficiency, and excellence in education. Let us take this time as we head into the month of our Spring General Assembly, to reaffirm our commitment to collaboration, and recognize that by uniting our efforts, we can truly make a difference in the lives of Alberta's students and future generations.



THE FRIEND OF ASCA AWARD



Left to Right: Troy Tait, Wendy Keiver, Kerry Bodell, Brandi Rai, Karen Becker, Pat Grisonich and Dennis MacNeil



**Alberta
School Councils' Association**
Promoting parent engagement in public education

On the last weekend of April 2024, PSBAA attended the ASCA 95th Anniversary 2024 Conference and AGM. We are excited to announce that while at the event, PSBAA was awarded The Friend of ASCA Award. This award recognizes an organization or individual in the education community whose support of Alberta School Councils' Association warrants recognition. Some of the qualifications for this award are as follows:

- Provided support that has directly contributed to the sustainability, and elevated the profile, of ASCA.
- Demonstrate commitment to the best possible education for children in Alberta through partnerships.
- Through leadership and practice, has contributed to parents being viewed as respected and vital learning partners.
- Assisted ASCA in ways that have contributed to empowering parents on school councils to confidently advocate for children.

PSBAA was recognized for its commitment to nurturing supportive school environments, family engagement in education, and empowering students to achieve their full potential. We are so honored to accept The Friend of ASCA Award and we are proud to continue to be strong supporters of ASCA. Thank you ASCA for acknowledging the work we do and for the kind words!





Joy McGregor, Board Chair High Prairie School Division

The 2023-2024 academic year has yielded significant gains in High Prairie School Division's Board of Trustees, moving the educational agenda forward. More specifically, the Board has recently focused on policy, engagement, strategic planning, emergency preparedness planning and forming a strategic research partnership surrounding community engagement.

The HPSD Board of Trustees attended a strategic planning session. Their work yielded a confirmation of board priorities, board outcomes and board policies 1 and 11.

Specifically, the Board revisited policy #1, the Mission, Vision and Core Values for the Division. I am happy to report the Board of Trustees has revamped and revitalized this policy. It was approved at the April Board meeting.

Further, the Board has revisited its policy 11. A formalized, systemic and transparent approach to evaluating the Superintendent is outlined in the added appendix. This was also approved at the April Board meeting.

In relation to engagement, HPSD is proud to announce that they are 1 of 7 recipients for the ARN Research Grant. We have partnered with Dr. Emily Milne and her team at MacEwan University in Edmonton. This grant will focus on best practices in community engagement and the study is entitled "Engaging Diverse Stakeholders to Advance Educational Equity". We are looking forward to our partnership with Dr. Milne and MacEwan University.

As a preemptive measure, High Prairie School Division was proud to host Northland, Living Waters, Holy Family Catholic and KTCEA for a tabletop exercise for wildfire preparedness. We were happy to work with our collaborative partners in order to prepare for such an event.

As technology is ever-changing, HPSD redid their website this month. This project, which has been two years in the making, has yielded some nice results. Drop by our website from time to time to keep updated on the changes, as they are still scheduled for the next few weeks.

Currently, we are finishing the installation of vape detectors in our washrooms in our Junior/Senior High and Outreach Schools. We are looking forward to addressing this problem (vaping) with deliberate, well-thought means.

Finally, as Board of Trustees, some of our Trustees have started attending Parent-Teacher Interviews in the schools in attempts to further engage their community. The Trustees set up a table and ensure they are in a high-traffic area to try and reach as many families as possible. All in all, a busy year for everyone in HPSD!





In Parkland School Division we listen and we act!



PARKLAND
SCHOOL DIVISION

Lorraine Stewart , Board Chair Parkland School Division

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I am delighted to share this brief glimpse into our Engagement World. One of our Governance Assurance Outcomes #10 is that 'Stakeholders will have trust and confidence that Trustees Engage, Listen and Advocate'. Our division tagline is 'Where the World Opens Up', and we feel that our engagement events provide a world of opportunity for stakeholders to give us their feedback, celebrations and challenges related to education in Parkland School Division.

In April of every year, we host our Education Planning Day Event, inviting Elders, students, parents, educators, administrators, and community leaders including the Chamber of Commerce, and the Mayors' offices of Stony Plain and Spruce Grove. The purpose of this day is to gather input and feedback to inform our Education Plan. 130 participants sit at mixed tables and rotate their places for the afternoon sessions. Participants are asked to provide their perspectives on the following questions:

- What are your thoughts, generally, about education today?
- What are your thoughts about community, equity, and appreciation for diversity?
- What are your thoughts about effective ways to support mental health?
- What are your thoughts about what students are learning and how they learn it?

Responses are gathered and compiled into themes that find their way into the Education Plan.

Participants have expressed an appreciation for a full days' conversation where they can hear and share many perspectives from the lived experiences at the tables.

In March of every year, Trustees host the Student Advisory. The structure and format of the day varies, and this year, we engaged grade 11 students who had been part of the group last year. This afternoon provided a day for students to sit in small groups with trustees and give us their perspectives on their education. Part of the conversation centered around the data collected from their grade 10 survey results related to safe and caring learning environments. The themes gathered will also find their way into the Education Plan. Students expressed an appreciation for the opportunity to be heard and commented on how good it felt to be genuinely listened to!

A new engagement for us this year was our West End Engagement open to school and community from our west end, rural schools of Duffield, Entwistle, Tomahawk, and Wabamun. The focus of the two-hour evening engagement was on the Rural Advantage. Participants provided examples and stories of how the Rural Advantage is present in their schools and communities. This conversation was followed by participants discussing how the Rural Advantage could be enhanced. Parkland County Mayor and council members were also present to listen to the ideas generated. Trustees will now meet with our County counterparts to determine if there are actions that can be taken. Participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to be heard.

Our engagement events support our Board's commitment to enhancing community and belonging.

Choice in Alberta Education: Challenges and Opportunities for Public Schools

Earlier this year PSBAA hired educator and researcher Dr. Curtis Riep to do a deep dive into the topic of Choice in Alberta Education: Challenges and Opportunities for public schools. Curtis has publicly released the research findings in a thirty-page paper which can be found on our website. PSBAA has written a brief summary of the full paper that is also now available on the PSBAA website directly under Dr. Riep's paper.

[CLICK HERE to view this document](#)



Mark Your Calendars for the 2024 Spring General Assembly

- May 30 - June 1, 2024
- May 15 - Earlybird Registration Deadline
- May 9 - Hotel Room Block Deadline

We are looking forward to welcoming you all to the Westin Downtown Calgary on May 30 to June 1. Our theme this year is: ***'Navigating our Future: Transformative Governance and Leadership.'***

The SGA will kick off on Thursday evening with the Presidents reception and dinner to follow. Our Keynote dinner speaker will be Jennifer Turner, Director of the Centre for Wellbeing in Education.

Our Professional Development session will be kicked off by speaker, Olympian, and Amazing Race contestant Sarah Wells. Her motivational topics will include overcoming obstacles and striving for excellence in leadership. We will hear from the Minister of Education Demetrios Nicolaides just before lunch, which will bring us to our afternoon half day session with Brian Woodland who as a retired Director of Communications and Community Relations for the Peel District School Board, has 32 years of

experience in public education.

Starting on Saturday morning, we will hear from Dr. Tom Thompson, past President of Olds College. He will be presenting on the topic 'How to Govern Through Complexity and Change.' We are pleased to have him for the entire Saturday morning. Following in the afternoon we will have two boards present. Rick Massini and Mark Davidson from Medicine Hat Public School Division discussing 'Implementing a System Approach to Instruction K-12.' Then finishing the professional development with Laurie Huntley, Jeff Grimsdale, and Deborah Hinds from Golden Hills School Division. They will be presenting on 'Comprehensive Mental Health Supports in Schools.' PSBAA is very much looking forward to hearing all our guest speakers present, as professional development continues to be an area of importance to our members.

WESTIN ROOM BOOKING NOTICE

PSBAA Spring General Assembly (SGA) is right around the corner! If you haven't booked your room at the Westin Downtown Calgary PSBAA asks you to please do so **ASAP** as spots are filling up! **Room Block deadline is May 5, 2024.** Please note that when you book your room you need to use the PSBAA room block link to correctly book a room for our event. The room block for PSBAA goes from **May 30 check-in to June 2 check-out.**

****if you are continuing your stay at the Westin for the ASBA SGM following the SGA, please book your stay through the ASBA room block separately. ****

SGA GIFT BASKET REMINDER

Spring General Assembly is right around the corner!

As previously mentioned, we want to elevate our membership experience this year at SGA by handing out gift baskets. Member boards that wish to participate are asked to bring their gift basket to the event where they will be given out. There are no specific size, theme or monetary amount required. Bring what you feel your board wants to provide. If you have any questions regarding the gift baskets you can contact PSBAA directly. Thank you to everyone in advance and we look forward to having this addition to the 2024 SGA!

CLICK HERE! for more information on the 2024 Spring General Assembly!



2024 Spring General Assembly

Jennifer Turner, Ph. D.



Jennifer Turner
Director of the Centre for Well-being in Education
Dinner Guest Speaker - May 30

Professional Development Guest Speaker - May 31
'Cultivating Inspirational Leadership: Empowering Others Through Success and Setback, Mastered with the Art of Storytelling'



Sarah Wells

Brian Woodland



Professional Development Guest Speaker - May 31
'Trust Is Like Air: How to Build and Maintain Relationships as a Foundation for Effective Communication'

Professional Development Guest Speaker - May 31
'How to Govern Through Complexity and Change'



Tom Thompson, Ph. D.

Rick Massini



Professional Development Guest Speaker - June 1
Medicine Hat Public School Division
'Implementing a System Approach to Instruction K-12'



Mark Davidson

Laurie Huntley



Jeff Grimsdale

Deborah Hinds



Professional Development Guest Speaker - June 1
Golden Hills School Division
'Comprehensive Mental Health Supports in Schools'

Special Recognition Awards Dinner
Guest Speaker - June 1
'The Value of Public Education'



Curtis Riep, Ph. D.

[CLICK HERE for more Information!](#)



2024 Fall Conference and AGM - Celebrating 35 Years! October 16 - 18, 2024

PSBAA is 35 years old! Lois Hole Dinner and Silent Auction

This fall, PSBAA is celebrating 35 years of protecting and promoting public education in Alberta. We are so proud of the work our members do and how far this organization has come. We would like to celebrate this milestone at the 2024 Lois Hole Dinner by providing a silent auction with all proceeds going directly to the Lois Hole Hospital for Women. PSBAA is asking its members if they know of a company/organization that would like to donate items for this auction, or if members personally would like to contribute an item as well. If so, please contact communications@public-schools.ab.ca ASAP. We would like to start collection donations now with the deadline for items to be collected by October 1st, 2024.

Registration is OPEN for 2024 Events! For our Events Page [CLICK HERE!](#)

PSBAA PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODULE COMPLETION CERTIFICATES

Congratulations to those who have completed the PSBAA professional development modules. Your dedication to continuous learning and improvement is commendable! We recognize the significant effort and time these modules require and with busy schedules it can sometimes be difficult to make the space for them to be completed. That being said, this is a reminder that those who have the modules completed by our Spring General Assembly, will receive a completion certificate presented to them. If you are close to finishing the modules we suggest you do so before SGA so we can recognize you for your efforts!

PSBC GRANDE PRAIRIE August 7-9, 2024



Join PSBAA in Grande Prairie! This year the August PSBC meeting will take place at multiple different locations in and around the Grande Prairie area. On Wednesday August 7th after registration, you will get the chance to take part in a paleo presentation along with a self guided tour at the Currie Museum with a BBQ on the museum grounds to follow. Thursday is a full day of touring the area! Starting in Grimshaw then heading to Dunvegan and finishing up back in Grande Prairie with a tour of the hospital and Northwestern Polytechnic. Friday morning all members will be driven to a local school where the PSBC meeting will take place, once the meeting is adjourned, members will have the opportunity to tour local schools, venues and various sights. More details to come! Registration is now open. ***Please note that if you plan on bringing a guest*** and they want to take part in the tours, activities, and meals, to check off the second box on the registration page. If your plus one is just wanting to join the Wednesday BBQ and Currie Museum tour, there is a third box for that specifically. Make sure to book your spot now and we will see you in August!

We would like to acknowledge and thank Grande Prairie, Peace River and Peace Wapiti School Division's for their sponsorship and support!



BONANZA SCHOOL CREATES BRAILLE BOOKS FOR LOCAL STUDENTS



**PEACE WAPITI
PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION**

Educating Today for Success Tomorrow

Braille books are now available to PWPSD students thanks to a group of Grade 5 and 6 students.

After months of hard work, 16 Grade 5 and 6 students from **Bonanza School** have delivered braille books to the library at Crystal Park School in Grande Prairie. What began as a visit from Mrs. Karen Beatty, teacher for the visually impaired through Peace Collaborative Services, has turned into 100 books translated into braille for students from **Peace Wapiti Public School Division**, Grande Prairie Public School Division, Peace River School Division, Holy Family Catholic Regional Division in Peace River and Northern Gateway Public Schools in Whitecourt to enjoy.

Since learning how to braille, the students worked together to translate books they purchased from a used bookstore. They then recorded themselves reading the books, offering students with visual impairments and other disabilities a variety of ways to enjoy the stories. Bonanza School Principal Theresa Simmonds says the students helped edit each other's braille work and critiqued each other's recordings to ensure a high-quality result, and that it took approximately 1400 recordings to

get the perfect audio for all the books.

In addition to braille and audio, students learned how to use a PIAF Picture in a Flash machine to make simple drawings to add to an assortment of the books. The PIAF machine works with the carbon in the ink to raise it off the page, so that those with visual impairments can feel the picture.

On March 12, the students met with Mrs. Beatty and Mrs. Hampton, Crystal Park School librarian, to share and deliver their books, which will be catalogued into the library and available to any student across the five school divisions.

After reflecting on their project, students shared that they are more confident in their writing and editing skills, they enjoyed learning a new language, their empathy for others has grown and that hard work can bring them great happiness.

Bonanza School would like to thank Faking Sanity for its generous deal on the books, Saddle Hills County for the donation of 100 data sticks for the audio recordings, Mrs. Hampton for cataloguing and housing the books, and Mrs. Beatty and the Peace Collaborative Team for bringing them this wonderful project and continuing to support students throughout the Peace Country.

Do you have a good news story from your school jurisdiction that you would like to share with PSBAA member boards? Please let us know by emailing:

communications@public-schools.ab.ca



Calling all young people, parents, caregivers, educators, youth workers and more!

Are you looking for ways to support mental health and well-being in your community?

You can download Kids Help Phone's mental health materials below to share information about youth issues and raise awareness of our free, confidential e-mental health services with the young people and adults in your network.

[CLICK HERE for more Information!](#)

Board Development Program - Legal Responsibilities Webinar

May 08, 2024 - 1:30 - 3 p.m.

Where do the board's duties and responsibilities come from? What do board members need to know in order to meet their legal responsibilities?

What actions can board members take to help them meet their legal responsibilities? This course will also examine conflict of interest including tips on how to effectively manage it. Join in for a live and interactive webinar to find out the answers to these questions, hear what other Not-for-Profit board members are experiencing and test your knowledge of the information that is shared.

[CLICK HERE for more Information!](#)



Board Development Program - Organizational Purpose & Planning Webinar

May 15, 2024 - 1:30 - 3 p.m.

What is governance? What are the board's roles? What are the board's responsibilities? How is planning connected to the board's roles and responsibilities? How are an organization's vision, mission, and values connected to organizational plans? What is included in the plan?

The Alberta Government's webinar will introduce to you why planning is needed, what it includes, and give you some ideas on how to get started.

[CLICK HERE for more Information!](#)

Board Development Program - Risk Management Webinar

May 29, 2024 - 1:30 - 3 p.m.

What is risk? What types are there? How can it be assessed and managed?

Risk is everywhere, but that just means that you have to spend some time to understand it and deal with the ones that are most relevant to your organization.

[CLICK HERE for more Information!](#)



Alberta
Foundation
for the Arts

Dr. MacEwan Literary Arts Scholarship

Application Deadline: March 3, 2025

This \$7,000 scholarship is awarded annually to a young Albertan writer who shows extraordinary talent in an eligible literary genre and who demonstrates clear educational or training goals.

To be eligible for scholarship funding:

- the applicant must be a resident of Alberta.
- is a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, or Protected Person with an open study permit from inside Canada
- have had a primary residence in Alberta for one full year before applying
- ordinarily live in Alberta for at least six months each year with the exception of attending a formal program of study

Must be 25 years or younger as of the application deadline.

Must be enrolled in an eligible writing training program.

[CLICK HERE for more Information!](#)



Alexander Rutherford Scholarship

Application Deadline: Apply online when the official high school marks are available, and when the applicant is enrolled in full-time post-secondary studies.

This \$2,500 scholarship was named in honour of Alexander Rutherford, who had the distinction of being Alberta's first Premier and Minister of Education. He was known for his strong support of public education, particularly the University of Alberta and his active involvement in community affairs.

To receive this scholarship, a candidate must also meet all of these eligibility criteria:

- be a Canadian Citizen, a Permanent Resident of Canada or Protected Person under
- Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, (Visa students are not eligible).
- be an Alberta resident, and to be considered an Alberta resident the following conditions must apply:
 - one parent or legal guardian must have maintained permanent residence in Canada for at least 12 consecutive months immediately prior to the applicant commencing a program of study;
 - applicant has maintained permanent residence in Alberta at least 12-months prior to commencing a program of study;
 - applicant is not eligible to receive a scholarship with respect to any grade unless the applicant or the applicant's parent(s)/legal guardian were a resident in Alberta throughout the whole of that grade.
- have completed high school on or after September 30, 1980.
- be enrolled in a full course load in a designated undergraduate post-secondary or an apprenticeship program of at least one semester in length.

[CLICK HERE for more Information!](#)

ARTICLES OF POTENTIAL INTEREST

Click on the links below

- [Alberta government wants power to remove municipal councillors, repeal bylaws it doesn't like](#)
- [Cellphones use in Schools | Alberta Online Engagement](#)
- [New draft social studies curriculum ready to pilot](#)
- [Protecting Young Minds from the Harms of Online Culture](#)
- [Smith Discusses Alberta trans Policies in Exclusive Interview](#)
- [Alberta Insists Bill 18 won't Shatter Change Post-Secondary Schools, despite skepticism from Opposition and Ottawa](#)
- [Supporting more Students to Live and Work in Alberta's North](#)
- ['Once is too many times': Education assistants facing rising violence in classrooms](#)



PSBAA RIDDLE

This month's Riddle: Two men are in the desert. They both have backpacks on. One of the guys is badly injured. The guy who is not injured has his backpack open and the guy who is injured has his backpack closed. What is in the backpacks?

Every month PSBAA will add a new word puzzle to the Advocate. The first person who correctly answers the riddle and sends their answer to communications@public-schools.ab.ca will receive a PSBAA branded stainless steel water bottle (as shown), which is awarded exclusively to our prize winners! (Those who have won a prize in this contest during the past six months are not eligible.)

Answer to last month's riddle: The horse's name is Friday.

