



PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA™

THE ADVOCATE

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In this edition of *The Advocate*, you'll find the President's message, two Board Chair messages, highlights from the Special Recognition Awards at the 2024 Spring General Assembly, plus upcoming events for 2024. We will also share a good news story, articles of potential interest, along with our regular features. Enjoy!

Next issue: September 30, 2024

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Building Trust and Embracing Change: A Year-End Message

Dennis MacNeil
PSBAA President

As we wrap up another dynamic and inspiring school year, I want to take a moment to reflect on our journey and share some thoughts on the next steps ahead. This year has been one of significant growth, filled with achievements and challenges alike. When leaving this year's successful PSBAA Spring General Assembly, I was struck with a thought. At the heart of our success lies two key points: trust and governing effectively through change.

Trust within our school boards is a key foundational piece which everything else can be built upon. It is what allows us to work collaboratively and supportively. Trust allows for open dialogue, where ideas and concerns can be freely shared. It fosters an environment where everyone feels valued and heard. For our educators, it means knowing that they have the board's unwavering support in their mission to nurture and educate our students. For parents and guardians, it means confidence that their children's best interests are the top priority of every decision we make. And for our students, it translates into a safe, supportive, and enriching learning environment where they can achieve.

Building and maintaining this trust requires transparency, consistent communication, and a commitment to integrity in all our actions. It's about making decisions with empathy and understanding, recognizing the diverse needs of our community, and always striving to protect, elevate, and promote public education in our province.

It is known, that change is an inevitable part of life, and this past year has been a testament to our resilience and adaptability. Whether it's integrating new technologies,

updating curriculums, or navigating unforeseen global challenges, our ability to govern effectively through change is key to moving the education needle forward. Embracing change with a positive and proactive mindset allows us to turn potential obstacles into opportunities for growth. It's about being forward-thinking and flexible, ensuring that we are not only responding to current needs but also anticipating future ones.

As we learned at the Spring General Assembly, effective governance in times of change requires strong leadership, clear vision, and a collaborative approach. It's about setting realistic goals, and advocating for the necessary resources our educators and staff need every step of the way. It's also about being open to feedback, learning from our experiences, and continuously striving for improvement.

As we come to the end of another academic year, I want to express my deepest gratitude to each and every one of you. The hard work, dedication, and support does not go unnoticed. You all continue to be instrumental in our organizations success, and I wish you all a restful and rejuvenating summer.

Let us carry forward the trust we have built and the lessons we have learned as we head into the summer months. I look forward to connecting with all of you in Grande Prairie for our August PSBC, where we can continue learning from the valuable professional development offered. Let's continue to embrace change and strive for excellence in the year ahead. Together, PSBAA can help ensure that our students have the best possible foundation for their future.



Daryl Scott Board Chair

One of the key responsibilities of the [Wild Rose School Division](#) (WRSD) Board of Trustees is advocacy. Each school year, the Board engages in advocacy through communication with our local MLAs and collaboration with partner organizations. This includes yearly joint meetings with our local municipalities to discuss shared concerns, interests, and responsibilities.

In the fall of 2023, one of the primary concerns raised in our joint meetings with local municipalities was the urgent need for enhanced mental health supports and rehabilitation services from the Ministry of Health. We have observed an increase in both the number and severity of mental health and rehabilitation challenges faced by our students and their families, highlighting the necessity for timely and effective support. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of mental health therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech-language pathologists in rural areas. The centralized services currently offered by Alberta Health are often difficult for our rural families to access. This

concern is shared by both our school division and our local municipalities.

Consequently, these discussions culminated in a [joint letter](#), co-signed with our partner municipalities, addressed to the Ministers of Health, Education, Mental Health & Addiction, and Children & Family Services, as well as our local MLAs. Our letter clearly defined the problem and formally requested that Alberta Health take proactive measures to enhance health supports in rural communities or allocate funds directly to school divisions so we can independently seek and hire these health services, ensuring they are available within our school buildings.

Our next step in this advocacy process is to secure an in-person meeting with the relevant Ministers alongside our municipal partners. We will continue to advocate for these essential services that significantly impact the learning and wellbeing of our students and their families. We welcome others to join us in this important effort.

Dale Karpluk Board Chair



[Grande Yellowhead Public School Division](#) (GYPSD) is proud of the Superintendent's Youth Council which takes part in a student engagement process called the Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR). The YPAR informs principals, the superintendent, the central office leadership, and the GYPSD Board of genuine student initiatives to improve our high schools. The core leadership objectives include consensus building, researching and surveying, data analysis, and project presentations. Our five high schools each have five students who represent their school on the Council. They meet with the other high school students four times during the year as they identify and research their projects. The culminating activity is for students to pitch their ideas to their principal, with the superintendent and trustees observing the process. The principal gives the students feedback to determine if the project is feasible and can progress. The thoughtful projects the students identify to improve their schools are impressive. In nearly every case these projects have been actualized to the benefit of each of our high schools. Practical ideas include vaping sensors

in washrooms, the enhancement of outdoor gathering spaces for students, and increased use of school exercise equipment, to name a few. The YPAR process of holding time and space for youth to contribute and to have a voice in decision-making that is grounded in efficacious research is an exciting and interesting practice that will continue in 2024/25.

A second area of pride for GYPSD is our annual Indigenous Camp held in Jasper each spring. This year 60 guests and presenters cultivated a vibrant two-day collaborative learning community centered on insights from Indigenous peoples in the community with invited Elders. The event benefits GYPSD students, families, teachers, leaders, and support staff. Attendees appreciated the wealth of knowledge shared by language holders, knowledge keepers, teachers, and community supporters of child and youth initiatives and programs.

GYPSD continues to be proud to be an inclusive Public School Division working in the best interests of all students in our care.



2024 SPRING GENERAL ASSEMBLY SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDS



Advancing Association Business and Initiatives Award

Winner: Brian Callaghan

Brian was nominated by Lynn Ware from Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools. PSBAA presented this award to Brian due to his commitment to his school board and to this Association.

Dick Baker Legacy Award

Winner: Bill Stuebing

Bill was nominated by Lynn Ware from Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools. PSBAA presented this award to Bill for modeling and mentoring outstanding values of integrity, respect and leadership in his work as a trustee, to his school board and to this Association.



Promoting and Advancing the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation of Canada in Relation to Public Education in Alberta Award

Winner: Rupertsland Institute - Métis Centre of Excellence

The Rupertsland Institute - Métis Centre of Excellence was nominated by Donna Cherniwchan of Aspen View Public Schools. PSBAA presented this award to the Rupertsland Institute due to their commitment in promoting and advancing one or more of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in relation to education within Alberta.



Special Contribution to Public Education Award

Winner: Cheryl Dumont

Cheryl was nominated by Cathy Hogg from Prairie Rose School Division. PSBAA presented this award to Cheryl due to her special contribution to public education.



Special Contribution to Public Education: Media Award

Winner: 89.7 The One

89.7 The One was nominated by Wolf Creek Public Schools. PSBAA presented this award to 89.7 The One for their engagement in media and/or media outlets such as social media, newspapers, reports and other media sources whom have made a special contribution to public education.

We are thankful for everyone who attended the 2024 Spring General Assembly on May 30 to June 1. It was a great event, great speakers, great food, and capped off with our own Special Recognition Awards. Congratulations to all those who received recognition. The honourees were all so well deserving.

Please don't forget to fill out the 2024 SGA Survey if you haven't already done so!

[Click here to fill out the Survey!](#)

2024 Spring General Assembly presentations are now on the Member Portal of the PSBAA Website! To view click here: [Member Resources](#)

PSBAA SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARDS

Do you know someone who has made a special contribution to Public Education this year? Advanced business initiatives in your school division? Promoted or advanced Truth and Reconciliation? Or maybe has just been an all around great mentor or leader?

Then nominate your fellow colleague through the PSBAA website under [Member Resources](#) in the award nomination forms section.

The Deadline for nominations is Friday, March 31, 2025.



UPCOMING EVENTS



2024 August PSBC in Grande Prairie

- August 7 - 9, 2024
- July 26 - Earlybird Registration Deadline
- July 12 - Hotel Room Block Deadline

Join PSBAA in Grande Prairie! This year the August PSBC meeting will take place at multiple different locations in and around the Grande Prairie/Peace River 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!

CURRIE MUSEUM TOUR & BARBEQUE EXPERIENCE THE JOURNEY

[DISCOVER MORE](#)

[CLICK HERE!](#) for more information on the 2024 August PSBC!

I'm not a robot
 

Attention: Due to the numerous spambot registrations appearing on PSBAA event registration forms. We have incorporated an 'I'm not a robot' check box at the top of our forms.

We now require this box to be checked when registering for PSBAA events in order for the system to identify the difference between a legitimate registration and a spambot registration.



UPCOMING EVENTS

2024 Fall Conference and AGM - Celebrating 35 Years! Lois Hole Dinner and Silent Auction Plus the Mayfield Dinner Theatre

October 16 - 18

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 are honored to announce that this years Lois Hole Dinner speaker is named one of the 100 Influential Edmontonians of the Century, Sandra B Woitas. 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 our Events Page [CLICK HERE!](#)

Sandra Woitas



Lieutenant Governor Lois E. Hole Dinner Speaker
October 16, 2024

Professional Development Guest Speaker
October 17, 2024



Jordan Tinney





Listen up!

Here are a few podcasts that might be of interest that you can dive into over the summer! One is based in Canada and the other in the US. Both tackle the issues facing public school systems across North America.

Public Good - with Shannon Moore and Stephen Hurley

Shannon D. Moore (University of Manitoba) and Stephen Hurley explore how we can protect the idea that public education is, in fact, a public good. Great guests, multiple perspectives and tools that will help us mobilize the conversation in our own communities.

[Click here for more information](#)

Have you Heard

Features journalist Jennifer Berkshire and scholar Jack Schneider as they explore the age-old quest to finally fix the nation's public schools, one policy issue at a time. Informative and light hearted.

[Click here for more information](#)



Alberta Blue Cross Build Together Grants

Alberta Blue Cross is offering five \$50,000 grants for their Built Together grant program that is designated for healthy living infrastructure projects across Alberta.

The Built Together grant program is designed to support infrastructure projects that you and your community are passionate about. Programs such as playgrounds, adult gyms, walking paths, outdoor rinks, skate parks and more are all eligible for the grants.

[CLICK HERE for more details!](#)



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!](#)



PROGRAMS



Alberta Community Development Stepping into Summer

With summer just around the corner, Alberta Community Development are nearing the end of their spring webinar season.

The summer can be a great time to catch-up on learning you've been wanting to explore in preparation for the fall. The Community Development Unit, through the Non-profit Learning Center (NPLC) has a growing collection of videos, online courses, and resources that you can access at anytime to grow your skills.

Busy schedules can make it challenging to attend webinars live. Community Development materials are available to you when you need them, they have recorded many of their live webinars and posted them to the Alberta Community Development YouTube Channel. Recorded webinars give you the time and flexibility to access content when you need it or to break it down into shorter viewing session when your time is limited. [Click on the links below.](#)

- [Board Development Program Series](#) (15 videos)
- [Crowdfunding Alberta Webinars](#) (7 videos)
- [Cybersecurity for Non-techie Board Members](#) (3 videos)
- [Grant Writing 101 Series](#) (4 videos)



EPCOR Community Engagment

EPCOR is recognized for its commitment to strengthening the communities in which it operates, and their support has been strengthening Edmonton Public Schools students for over 13 years. EPCOR has been an important, ongoing supporter of the Edmonton Public Schools Foundation since 2011, with a lifetime giving total of over \$450,000.

Earlier this year, EPCOR made a commitment of over \$100,000 to support our youngest learners in a new way - supporting early literacy in all 25 Full-Day Kindergarten classrooms. Year 1 of EPCOR's incredible new investment focuses on purchasing much-needed books to equip these classroom libraries.

"Early literacy skills are essential in creating lifelong learning opportunities for children," says John Elford, EPCOR President and CEO. "Our investment to purchase new books for Kindergarten classroom libraries will make reading more accessible for students. Improved literacy skills help set students up for success throughout their educational journeys and strengthen communities for the future."

Be sure to read the full article on EPCOR's generous gift [HERE!](#)



Northland School Division Mourning Loss of School Board Trustee

It is with sadness that we announce the passing of School Board Trustee Thomas Auger. Thomas, who served as Ward 6 Trustee (Demarais, Sandy Lake), passed away on Monday, June 3, 2024.

Thomas was a dedicated public servant. He served as a School Board Trustee with [Northland School Division](#) multiple times and as a councillor with the Municipal District of Opportunity. Thomas was instrumental in negotiating for a school to be built in Sandy Lake.

Outside of public service responsibilities, Thomas enjoyed spending time with family and friends, hunting, fishing and gardening.

He is survived by his wife, Caroline, his children Tina, Gwen, Sheila and Darryl, and his grandchildren. The loss of Thomas is felt deeply, not only by his immediate family but also by the entire Northland School Division family.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Thomas' family, friends, and all who knew him. He will be profoundly missed.



Attention Principals and school Administrators

The [Edmonton Oil Kings Adopt-A-School Program](#) brings local businesses together with schools across oil country! Adopt-A-School sponsors provide season tickets to Edmonton area schools to encourage students to work hard and achieve the best they can! Sponsored schools reward students who have achieved great accomplishments or who excel in aspects such as academics, sports or community initiatives. Last season over 7500 tickets were distributed from the program and over 1200 students were rewarded for academic, sport and community achievements. Sign up today for the opportunity to be a participating school in the program.

Note: sign-up does not guarantee your school tickets. You will be contacted once your school is selected.

[CLICK HERE to Apply!](#)

May promoted Mental Health Awareness

[Grande Yellowhead Public School Division's](#) Wellness Navigators hosted Wellness Fairs in Hinton, Edson, and Evansburg, and invited community organizations who support and provide resources to join them. GYPSD students gathered valuable information and connections in the areas of health promotion, wellness, nutrition, physical activity, harm reduction, mental health and well-being: The Fairs connected the support available at school to beyond their school years when they transition into adulthood.

The Wellness Navigator Team hope to organize this event on an annual basis.

The Wellness Navigators are a new addition this year to the Division's focused work on System Health and Wellness. Working alongside the [Bringing Empowered Students Together \(BEST\)](#) Team and Family School Liaison Counselors (FSLCs), the Wellness Navigator's role is to promote health and wellness by offering preventative, universal programming to students.

There is a Wellness Navigator located in each of the five high schools in the Division.



ARTICLES OF POTENTIAL INTEREST

Click on the links below

- [Giving students a head start in Alberta's job market](#)
- [Alberta expands education relationship with Hesse, Germany](#)
- [Limiting distractions in Alberta's classrooms](#)
- [Five P3 high schools delivered for Alberta students](#)
- [Retired school board trustee honoured with Legacy Award](#)
- [Giving students a head start in Alberta's job market](#)

HAVE A GREAT SUMMMER!



PSBAA RIDDLE

This months Riddle: Pronounced as 1 letter and written with 3. 2 letters there are, and 2 only in me. I'm double, I'm single, I'm black, blue, and gray. I'm read from both ends, and the same either way. What am I?

Every month PSBAA will add a new riddle/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 months riddle: All the people on board are married.