

# Black Gold Pipeline



Volume 12, Number 1  
February, 2009

## Chairman, Board of Education

It's hard to believe that we are already in the second half of the school year. Trustees have visited thirteen schools and we look forward to continuing the scheduled visits over the next few months.



The Board of Education attended the Minister's Education Leadership Recognition Award (MELRA) ceremony on November 29, 2008. Thank you to all BGRS staff for the hard work which makes it possible for Black Gold to be recognized and acknowledged for improvement in Safe and Caring Schools, Work Preparation, Citizenship and School Improvement.

The Board continues to advocate on behalf of BGRD students to our MLAs and Alberta Education. The review regarding funding to support special needs students is progressing to phase two and our Board will continue to participate.

The Board has had an opportunity to meet with Village of Thorsby council and Beaumont Town council to discuss schools within their communities.

Ken Boschman, our Deputy Superintendent retired at the end of December, 2008, and Stuart Evans, former Associate Superintendent assumed the position. We congratulate Neil Fenske on his promotion to the position of Associate Superintendent and look forward to working with him in this capacity.

Our team of trustees will continue to strive to ensure our students receive the best education.

**Barb Martinson, Chairman, Board of Education, 780-955-6025 – [barb.martinson@blackgold.ca](mailto:barb.martinson@blackgold.ca)**

## Superintendent

The 2008-09 school year is approximately half over and we have had many changes in the organization at the school level and at Central Office. I wish to congratulate all those staff who have retired and welcome staff to their new roles. May we honour the past as we look to the future.

Speaking about the future, planning is well underway for the new replacement school for Thorsby Elementary. If all goes well, BGRS will be tendering for the new school in the spring. At this time, there is no news from Alberta Education regarding our request for a new joint school in Beaumont. We continue to make our concerns known regarding the enrolment growth in Beaumont.



The Government has approved the fourth cycle of AISI funding, and planning is underway to explore possible projects for BGRS.

The Government also reaffirmed its commitment to "Class Size Initiative" and they will continue to monitor class size averages and provide funding for the Initiative.

A committee was formed to review the current grade configurations for BGRS in the City of Leduc. The mandate of the committee is to explore what the future BGRS Leduc grade configurations might be, and to make a recommendation to the Board of Education. The meetings have been very productive. This is an exciting opportunity to explore what the future holds.

We have many wonderful and productive traditions in BGRS. I encourage you to look for the compassion and hope that exemplifies our desire to work with students and each other. I wish to thank you all for the outstanding work you do each and every day.

**Norman Yanitski, Superintendent of Schools, 780-955-6026 — [norman.yanitski@blackgold.ca](mailto:norman.yanitski@blackgold.ca)**



## Deputy Superintendent

Welcome to a new year! It's hard to believe just how fast the school year seems to go by. We're already half way through this year and we've starting planning and getting ready for the next school year.

I'm sure it comes as no surprise, especially when you look around at all the staffing changes in your own school, to find out we have been very busy again this year. We have hired 64 new support staff which brings the total number of support staff in schools to 336 people. Our substitute service has arranged over 3,400 teacher placements so far this year. We've also written 147 teaching contracts which includes 64 probationary and interim contracts and 83 temporary contracts. As I said, we're having a very busy year in Human Resources!

We are also still waiting for the new automated substitute booking system. It quickly became more complex than anticipated so now we are hoping to run the preliminary testing this spring, hopefully for full implementation next fall. Once the new system is operating smoothly for the teaching staff we plan to include the school support staff substitute bookings as well.

On behalf of Jeannine Gervais, Liliane Duhaime, Debbie Lambert, and Claire Davis, I wish everyone a great remainder of the year!

**Stuart Evans, Deputy Superintendent, 780-955-6032 – [stuart.evans@blackgold.ca](mailto:stuart.evans@blackgold.ca)**

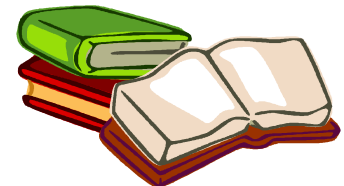
## Associate Superintendent

Welcome to the New Year. Many of us plan to have a year at least as good as the one past. For a few of us, the passing of the year is a blessing and we cherish the thought of having a better year than the one just past. May the year be all we hope for and then some.

Recent assignment changes at Central Office will significantly impact our organization in a few aspects while being barely noticeable in other aspects.

A few things that will remain the same are:

- ▶ Curriculum & Instruction as a unit will continue as before. The strong relationships with Student Services and Professional Development/AISI will be an essential part of the portfolio.
- ▶ An especially welcome addition is Dianne Butler in the position of Director of Student Services.
- ▶ Crystal Elton is filling in for Jen Southcombe as On-line Coordinator while Jen is on maternity leave.



On the other hand, Ken Boschman's decision to retire is a real loss to BGRS. His public presence was always professional and calming. Behind that public image was a huge amount of work and preparation. He was passionate about the organization, insightful, and respectful. While there is no replacing Ken, I wish him the best in his retirement.

**Neil Fenske, Associate Superintendent, 780-955-6028 – [neil.fenske@blackgold.ca](mailto:neil.fenske@blackgold.ca)**

*We could learn a lot from crayons: some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, some have weird names, and all are different colours....but they all exist very nicely in the same box.*





## Secretary-Treasurer

The 08/09 revised budget was approved by the Board of Education at their meeting on January 14, 2009. The revised budget reflects the increased funding that we realized when our September 30<sup>th</sup> student enrolment exceeded the projections that were used in the preparation of the spring budget. The increased funding was fully allocated to the instructional program, primarily through increased staffing at the school level. Black Gold Regional Schools currently has an enrolment of 8,724 students.

The design development phase for the replacement of the Thorsby Elementary School is complete and we expect to commence construction in July. The new school will open in September of 2010. The Facilities Department is also working on a mini-modernization of Willow Park School, which includes a much needed mechanical upgrade. We have received funding for two steel-framed modular classrooms at Ecole Beau Meadow School and another one at Ecole J.E. Lapointe School.

There are rumblings of a delay in the announcement of the 2009 Provincial budget. We wait with great interest for word on what funding BGRD will receive this year. Once the announcements are made, the Resource Allocation Committee (RAC) will continue the work of allocating the instructional resources.

On behalf of the Business Services department, I thank you for your patience in our migration to Bellamy, our new financial software program. It has been challenging for those of you in the schools, as well as in Central Office.

**Ruth Andres, Secretary Treasurer, 780-955-6049– [ruth.andres@blackgold.ca](mailto:ruth.andres@blackgold.ca)**

## Business Services

Can you believe that it is already seven months since we began the transition to Bellamy software? We are continuing to learn and understand the functionality in the new program. In the near future, we will be forwarding information about “Employee Self-service.” This is the component of the software that allows online, secure access to payroll information. You will have access to historical payroll information, as well as current information such as benefit coverage.

### Payroll & Benefits

If you have a question or concern regarding your pay or benefits, please contact the appropriate person, as detailed:



**Cindy Sobey, 780-955-6052 – [cindy.sobey@blackgold.ca](mailto:cindy.sobey@blackgold.ca)**

Teachers and Substitute Teachers



**Donna Kumpula, 780-955-6053 – [donna.kumpula@blackgold.ca](mailto:donna.kumpula@blackgold.ca)**

Education Assistants, School Secretaries

Library Clerks, Technicians

Administration, Maintenance



**Carrie Bendfeld, 780-955-6055 – [carrie.bendfeld@blackgold.ca](mailto:carrie.bendfeld@blackgold.ca)**

Benefits for: Custodians, Relief Custodians, Miscellaneous, Hourly, Substitute School Secretaries and Educational Assistants

## Business Services, continued

- ☰ **Address or Benefit Changes** – If you relocate or change dependant information, please notify Carrie Bendfeld in the payroll department. A new family member must be added within 30 days of arrival to avoid penalty.

### Net Pay for January

This is a reminder that if you reached your CPP or EI maximum deductions during the 2008 year and deductions ceased for a period of time, you will have seen an increase in your net pay in the months leading up to and including December 2008. Both of these amounts will again be deducted beginning in January, and as a result you will see a significant impact on your net pay.

### Alberta Health Care

Due to the elimination of the Alberta Health Care premiums, you will not see an AHC premium deduction on your pay commencing January, 2009. The net savings will be 10% of the total monthly premium – the employee portion of the premium. This 10% is **not** based on the amount shown on the December pay stub.

### Life Insurance Premiums

You are required to pay income tax on the amount your employer pays towards your life insurance premium. Most of the deduction will show up under the ‘employee’ amount in order to keep your taxable benefit lower.

### T4 Slips

Regular employees will receive their T4 slips via courier to schools by February 27, 2009.

T4 slips for all terminated employees and substitutes will be postmarked by February 27, 2009.

If you have worked in more than one job category within Black Gold Regional Schools during 2008, you should expect more than one T4 slip. i.e. Teacher and Substitute Teacher or School Secretary and Educational Assistant. This also applies if you have had a baby during the year.

### Health Spending Account – (HSA)



ASEBP has advised us that not all of our employees are using the Health Spending Account (HSA) or employees are not maximizing their reimbursements for the HSA. Please read through the HSA employee guide to ensure you are taking full advantage of the HSA and know how to effectively recoup your health expenses.

Eligible expenses are detailed on the Canada Revenue Agency website at [www.cra.gc.ca](http://www.cra.gc.ca) under “Medical Expenses”.

If you are healthy and most of your medical expenses are covered by the ASEBP benefits, you can still claim the portion of ASEBP premiums that you pay as an expense on your Health Spending Account. For a full-time employee, use 10% of the full amount of the premiums for EHC, Dental and Vision. For part-time employees deduct 90% x your FTE from the full amount of the premiums and use the remainder for your eligible premium.

#### Example:

Employee has worked **full-time**, all year and has participated in **family** coverage for extended health care, dental and vision.

Total premiums paid:

EHC 187.75 + Dental 110.00 + Vision 20.25 = \$318.00 per month

$\$318 \times 12 \text{ months} \times 10\% \text{ employee portion} = \$381.60$

This means that even if you do not have other expenditures that are eligible for reimbursement under your HSA, you have an eligible expense of \$381.60 simply by reclaiming your benefit premiums.





Please read your HSA Statement carefully. There are important messages on the bottom that will tell you when your credits expire. Read your HSA Employee Guide or go online at [www.asebp.ab.ca](http://www.asebp.ab.ca) for more details. The following information/tips from ASEBP may help you maximize the benefits from the HSA.

### **There's a better way to manage your Health Spending Account!**

The next time you have an expense you'd like reimbursed from your HSA, visit the ASEBP website and take advantage of our 24/7 online expense submission service. Simply login to My

ASEBP where you can:

- ✓ Submit your HSA expenses as you get them
- ✓ View all the HSA expenses you submit
- ✓ Find out how much is in your HSA
- ✓ Get instant confirmation ASEBP received your HSA expense
- ✓ Learn when your next HSA reimbursement will happen
- ✓ And more!

### **Haven't registered yet?**

Registering on the ASEBP website is easy and gives you instant access to HSA expense submission online. Just go to the ASEBP website [www.asebp.ab.ca](http://www.asebp.ab.ca) and click the **Register Now!** Link on the front page. Follow the easy steps and you'll receive your temporary password in the mail with directions for completing your registration. If you have any questions on managing your Health Spending Account, call ASEBP at 780-431-4786.

**Laurel Kvarnberg, Finance Manager, 780-955-6059 – [laurel.kvarnberg@blackgold.ca](mailto:laurel.kvarnberg@blackgold.ca)**



## Student Services

I am pleased to serve Black Gold Regional Schools as your new Director of Student Services. I would also like to welcome Dr. Arthur Burrows, Instructional Consultant, to our staff. Ken Boschman, retired Deputy Superintendent, is now on contract with BGRD to provide assessments and consultations in the schools.

With the Severe Disabilities Profile Funding Review behind us, we have now engaged in Alberta Education's *Setting the Direction in Special Education in Alberta* project. The results of this project, which involves broad-based public consultations, will be implemented in September, 2010. The goal is to propose a more effective direction for special education in Alberta. Some of the priorities stemming from the initial public consultations in November, 2008 include: inclusive education, integration of services, professional development for staff and sufficient funding. The next phase of public consultations will occur in February-March, 2009. Watch the newspapers and/or the Alberta Education website for opportunities to participate in this project.

Three times a year, we offer professional development opportunities for our Special Education Coordinators and Counsellors from across BGRD, who are then better equipped to provide leadership and support in these areas to their colleagues in the schools. In the fall, we offered training on the Wechsler *Fundamentals: Academic Skills (WFAS)*, individual achievement test. At our second meeting on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, we will be offering a workshop on the new Alberta Education resource *Supporting Positive Behaviour in Alberta Schools*. We have a third meeting planned for April 21<sup>st</sup>, with the topics yet to be determined. Student Services also offers professional development activities for staff such as *Non-Violent Crisis Intervention* training on school-based or Division-based Professional Development days.

I look forward to working for the Division in my new capacity as Director of Student Services.

**Dianne Butler, Director, Student Services, 780-955-6037 – [dianne.butler@blackgold.ca](mailto:dianne.butler@blackgold.ca)**

## Technology



- **Wireless Network Access** is available for both BGRS and personal computing devices.
  - more than half of our schools have school-wide coverage, thanks to the BGRS Facilities Department
  - the remainder have access in the office and library areas with further access to be added
  - Student or Staff Owned Devices Agreements must be signed by the school principal
  
- **Projectors** are available (currently one projector for every 100 students)
  - projectors will be mounted by the Facilities Department as their schedule allows
  - temporary setups where wires are not left on floors – carts, for example, are possible
  - all projector setups/requests are through the school principal to Peter
  
- **Netbook Projects Starting:** Pilot Projects where a cart of Netbooks are shared among a few classes
  - LCHS: Martha Howson, Sharon Wilson
  - ESBCHS: Aaron Heinemann, Pat Gobeil, Marilyn Gourley, John Tschritter
  - Ecole J.E. Lapointe School: Shane Slade, Terra Kaliszuk, Jacqueline MacDonald, Keith Pask
  - Leduc Junior High School: David Evans, Bob Young, Kathy Kosowan
  - East Elementary School: Trena Kiss, Roxanne Brayford
  - Leduc Estates School: Erik Larson, Barb Parolin, Sarah Kooiker
  
- **Network Analyst:** Replacing our Help Desk Position
  - Jordan Hinman joins us to work with Barry and Corinne in providing support in areas relating to networks, servers and related software.
  
- **Black Gold ICT Webpage** updates from Susan Mackey and Ray McCubbing:
  - What's New in Division I [www.blackgold.ca/ict/Divison1/What'sNew.htm](http://www.blackgold.ca/ict/Divison1/What'sNew.htm)
  - What's New in Division II [www.blackgold.ca/ict/Divison2/newindivII.htm](http://www.blackgold.ca/ict/Divison2/newindivII.htm)
  - Smart Board Resources [www.blackgold.ca/ict/Divison1/smart\\_board\\_resources.htm](http://www.blackgold.ca/ict/Divison1/smart_board_resources.htm)
  - Div 3 and 4 ICT pages have been updated, with new resources added:  
[www.blackgold.ca/ict/divison3/index3b.htm](http://www.blackgold.ca/ict/divison3/index3b.htm) [www.blackgold.ca/ict/Division4/Division4.htm](http://www.blackgold.ca/ict/Division4/Division4.htm)
  
- **Edtech Wiki:** [edtechwiki.blackgold.ab.ca](http://edtechwiki.blackgold.ab.ca)
  - New repository for Teacher Information related to Ed Tech
  - Some items will remain on the Intranet such as SASI support
  - As with Intranet, only available internally. Login: ed Password: tech
  
- **Ed Tech Leadership Blog:** [blogs.blackgold.ab.ca/leadership](http://blogs.blackgold.ab.ca/leadership). Recent Items of Interest:
  - Horizon Report 2009
  - National Film Board Online
  - Enhancing Child Safety and Online Technologies

Peter Balding, Division Technology Administrator, 780-955-6040 – [peter.balding@blackgold.ca](mailto:peter.balding@blackgold.ca)



*As Valentine's Day approaches, a young man's thoughts turn to love.*

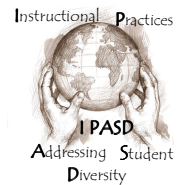
Ricky, age 10 was asked: "How would you make a marriage work?"

Ricky responded: "Tell your wife that she looks pretty, even if she looks like a truck."





## Alberta Initiative for School Improvement

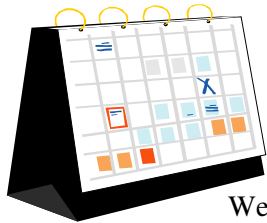


Our two Cycle 3 AISI projects, Growing, Reflecting & Assessing Together and Instructional Practices Addressing Student Diversity, are progressing well thanks to all the effort teachers are making implementing these strategies. It is important that we maintain a focus on these projects even as we progress in planning for our Cycle 4 AISI projects. Thanks to Kim Epp and Keith Pask who are doing a wonderful job working on the GREAT project and to our new Division Lead Teacher, Kim van Steenis who is doing an excellent job leading the IPASD project. Kim, Kim and Keith will be representing the Black Gold Regional Schools AISI projects at the Annual AISI Conference in Calgary on February 9 and 10, 2009.

AISI Cycle 4 planning is well under way. Topics and themes that have been discussed on the WIKI and/or sent to me by email have been reviewed and schools will soon have the opportunity to decide which topic or theme to pursue. All schools will be involved with the actual planning of the project(s) and updates and discussion topics will continue to be posted on the Cycle 4 WIKI. Since teachers are the ones implementing the project strategies in their classrooms, it is vitally important that the teacher voice be heard during the planning of the project. Ideas can be sent through the AISI representatives at your school and/or through joining the discussion on the WIKI. Links to the WIKI are found on both the AISI – GREAT website and the AISI IPASD website below.

<http://www.blackgold.ab.ca/Resources/AISI/IPASD/index.htm>. <http://www.blackgold.ab.ca/Resources/AISI/Great/index.htm>.

### Division Professional Development (PD) Days

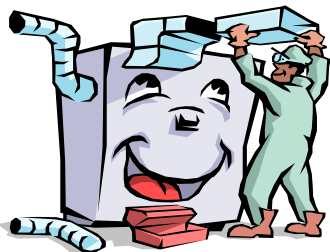


Thanks to all those staff members who step forward to facilitate inservices on our Division PD days and/or sit on the Division PD Advisory Committee. Without you, we would not have a program. If you are willing to offer a workshop or host a working session (ie. developing social units, writing common exams, etc.) please contact me. When you see a gap in our programming, please consider hosting a working session yourself.

We will soon be planning our PD program for next year and would greatly appreciate your input on our PD survey which will be posted online soon.

Faye Gertz, AISI/PD Coordinator, 780-955-4528 – [faye.gertz@blackgold.ca](mailto:faye.gertz@blackgold.ca)

## Operations and Maintenance



Operations and Maintenance is faced with several significant challenges this year; economic uncertainties, cost escalations, reduced funding for Plant Operations & Maintenance (PO&M) and reduced funding for Infrastructure Maintenance & Renewal (IMR).

The reduced funding in our IMR budget combined with the cost escalations is a bad mix. As an example, to keep ahead of our roofing maintenance program, \$2,000,000 should be invested in this area over the next three years. This would be a substantial amount to absorb and would leave limited funds to cover needs in other key areas of our buildings.



We now need to reassess our priorities and come up with a feasible game plan. I think the words "yes we can" may not be spoken so freely.

Nonetheless, even with these financial challenges we are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in all of our facilities, and we will meet that commitment.

Dan Borys, Operations & Maintenance Manager, 780-955-6068 – [dan.borys@blackgold.ca](mailto:dan.borys@blackgold.ca)