

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

As a school division we take tremendous pride in our motto “where students come first”. This priority is always at the center of our work in schools and at the forefront of any decision we make as we move toward achieving our three goals: *academic excellence, social emotional well-being and career connections*. [Click here](#) for more information. In this month’s message I want to share a window into the commitment our staff are putting forward each and every day to ensure your child receives the best support we are able to provide.



Professional Learning Days

On our most recent professional learning day, Friday, November 25th, there were numerous learning opportunities for staff in our division.

Over the course of a school year, our elementary and middle school teachers utilize these learning days to plan and respond to their students’ math and reading assessment data, and they also meet in collaborative response model (CRM) teams to share best teaching practices to further benefit their students over time. Our K-3 teachers also use some of this time to assist in implementing the new curriculum, while our grades 4-8 teachers spend time developing a division-wide writing assessment prototype that will help teachers better assess the writing skills of our students. At the high school (9-12) level, teachers are organized by subject area across the division to share ideas and best practices utilizing Google Classroom as a key resource. [Click here](#) for more information.

Giving Voice to our Division

Over the years we have established a number of groups that meet regularly to ensure the adults who work with your children are heard and supported.

- Support Staff - Support Staff Matter
- Teachers - Teachers Matter
- Administrators - SAT (Superintendent’s Advisory Team)
- Division Office – DOS (Division Office Staff) Advisory

We also greatly appreciate hearing the voices of our parents and students. To do this we meet regularly with Parents Matter and Students Matter. With our parent group we have sought advice recently on items such as student assessment, parent involvement in schools, and keeping our schools as safe as possible. With our Students Matter group we asked at a meeting on December 8th for their perspective on student attendance. They gave us very insightful feedback on what the adults should and should not do when they are trying to make it more likely that a student will attend school. They also helped us select some posters that encourage attendance that will soon be placed in our schools. Previously they have shared some very helpful opinions regarding such topics as how teachers assess their learning or how to keep our students feeling safe and welcome while they are in school.



“Our parents and our students matter groups play a key role in shaping our actions as a school division”

Career Connections

Our School Board Chair, Holly Bilton, has been selected to the Alberta Education Career Education Task Force (CETF). This provincial task force will review our present career education programming and provide guidance to enhance career opportunities for all K-12 students in our province.

One of our three goals in Chinook's Edge is Career Connections. Any improvement in career opportunities for students has the potential to improve their motivation and learning in their current program and it has the positive spin off effect of enhancing their well-being in general. This work by our government in the area of careers could impact students for years to come. If you have a moment to contribute to a survey please visit this [link](#) (please note that the survey is only open until Thursday). Find additional information related to the work of the task force at this [link](#).

Students, parents and the public are encouraged to share their voice in this initiative, not only to change the direction of how our schools and students prepare for future programming, but will enhance the guidance for our staff and student career understandings.

In our school division, we have a Chinook's Edge Career Connections Team that works with school based administrators, career counselors and career practitioners to improve student and staff understanding of career opportunities and transitioning to postsecondary after high school. This is accomplished through online and onsite dual credit opportunities that provide students with a snapshot of programs that may align with their interest.

Our focus is to improve student tracking from K-12 to ensure students have a strong foundation of support to make their best decisions to create a fulfilling life after high school. Students begin building skills that will allow them to pursue a career that is aligned with their passion so that they take as much joy from their life long career decisions as possible.



Our Collaborative Response Model

We are working hard this year to ensure that all of our schools are well on their way toward implementing a collaborative response model to provide detailed support for individual students.

The collaborative response model brings teacher teams together to analyze student data focusing on literacy, numeracy/math, attendance, career goals and social emotional support to help develop strong interventions for our students, centered around a key teaching practice. Staff are constantly monitoring student achievement, attendance, and social emotional data trends to see if a particular student may require more support. Through the process they quickly move their attention to their own teaching practice and what might help all students in their care.

It is important to note that this process attends to each and every student and their personal situation. While it supports students who are struggling, it is also designed to help students who are achieving well, and even those who are exceptionally talented, to receive what they need to remain engaged in their learning and achieving their highest potential.

Our staff are putting in a concerted effort to make sure all students are being as successful as they can be, in school and in life.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

I would like to extend the warmest of wishes to you and your family over the holiday season. I look forward to seeing everyone refreshed from a well deserved break when we return to school on Monday, January 9th.