

January 28, 2021
Superintendent’s Update: Students, Parents/Legal Guardians, and Staff

I hope that you have been staying healthy and keeping warm as we journey through these colder temperatures. I am sending my communication on Thursday this week, as the Board has designated tomorrow’s scheduled Professional Development Day as a Staff Wellness Day and schools will be closed. Both the Board of Trustees and I are deeply appreciative of the hard work and dedication of our staff in service of our students and their families. Whether it has been additional planning, the provision of instruction and support both in-person and online, or constant assistance with things like sanitization and monitoring adherence to health protocols, our staff are the reason that the Division has been able to continue providing quality Catholic education to our students while keeping our school communities healthy and safe throughout this pandemic.

This week we have been praying with an ecumenical spirit as we mark the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. In John’s Gospel, Jesus prays for his disciples before going to the cross. He urges that his followers “may all be one,” as he and the Father are one, “so that the world may believe” and have life in His holy name (John 17). In this passage, it is underscored that the concept of unity amongst Christians is central to the very being of the Church, as well as to its mission and witness. Please continue to pray for the growth of an ecumenical spirit in the hearts of our Christian Churches.

I am pleased to announce that the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 Division Calendars have been finalized and temporary versions have been posted to the [Division Calendar](#) page of our website. I would like to thank our stakeholders for providing their guidance and feedback during the calendar development process. Families and staff were engaged via an online survey and further opportunities for feedback and input were provided through conversations with School Councils, the Division’s Policy Advisory Committee, as well as School Leadership Teams. I truly feel that we captured the voice of our community and am particularly excited about the staggered entry days for students at the beginning of the year. This was well-received by both families and staff this year and was identified as something to explore moving forward, even once we are past this time of pandemic. The staggered entry days provide a unique opportunity for teachers and school staff to orientate and connect with students more personally on the first two days of the school year.

On January 27, 2021, Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Chief Medical Officer of Health, indicated that the current health measures are necessarily in effect because “despite the decreasing number of people ending up in hospital with COVID-19, Alberta’s medical system remains under duress.” We continue to be vigilant in adhering to health measures for schools. Please continue to check the [Alberta Health website](#) for updates from the Minister of Education about changes to such measures as they relate to school jurisdictions. We continue to update our [Parent Guidebook for School Re-Entry: 2020-2021](#) accordingly, with any relevant changes. Our [website](#) and official social media channels ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#)) are also reliable sources of Division news and announcements.

Our [2021 Pre-K & Kinder Virtual EXPO](#) was held on **January 14**. If you did not have an opportunity to participate in this online event, please contact your designated school to learn about our dynamic Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten English and French programming, Sports and Recreation Academies, and how to register your child(ren) in one of our schools.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the remaining [virtual information sessions](#) regarding the benefits of **French Immersion Kindergarten in Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools**. Please [join us](#) to hear from some of our families, who will share **their personal experiences with French Immersion in our schools**. Time will also be allotted in these one-hour sessions for questions and answers. Questions can either be submitted in advance, using the online [registration form](#), or asked during the live events. **All sessions will start at 6:30 p.m.**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Host School</u>
Tuesday, Feb. 9	École Father Jan
Tuesday, Feb. 23	École Notre Dame

Please [register](#) by **February 5** for the upcoming sessions, respectively. After you submit your online registration, you will receive a confirmation with details on how to access these virtual sessions.

Today (January 28) we celebrate the feast day of St. Thomas Aquinas, an Italian Dominican friar, philosopher, Catholic priest, Doctor of the Church, and patron saint of students and universities. St. Thomas holds a special place in the context of Catholic education, with our schools being committed to growth in the areas of both academics and faith. One of St. Thomas’ famous quotes speaks to the very nature of Catholic schools: “*Love takes up where knowledge leaves off.*” In Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools, we are committed to creating opportunities for students to grow academically, physically, and spiritually, in a faith-filled context characterized by hope, joy, and love. It is essential to note that the gift of Catholic education is available to everyone - those who are Catholic and those who are not. I will share more on the universal gift of Catholic education in future updates.

Let’s hope that some warmer weather is on the way soon and that the COVID-19 vaccines are received and distributed as soon as possible. Take care and God bless.

Sincerely,

Dr. Clint Moroziuk
Superintendent of Schools