

February 19, 2021

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

As the weather in our part of the world has been warming up, I am hopeful that you are taking time to get outside and enjoy the sunshine. As shared last week, I am most appreciative that our families whose children take a bus managed the extra pressure of having to rearrange schedules and pick-up and drop-off times. Thank you, again, for your help and patience when we suspended transportation services for a few days last week.

We are very pleased to announce the appointment of Mrs. Catherine Giesbrecht as Assistant Superintendent of Learning Services, commencing on April 6. She currently serves as principal of École Secondaire St. Marguerite d’Youville in St. Albert. We are very excited to welcome Mrs. Giesbrecht to our Senior Leadership Team and look forward to the wonderful things she will accomplish in service of our students and families at the Division level. See the full [news release](#) on our website.

After Family Day, we started our first day back to work and school with Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent. It is a season of penance, reflection, and fasting which prepares us for Christ’s resurrection on Easter Sunday, through which we attain redemption. We celebrated Ash Wednesday in our schools and at Division Office, and look forward to working together to observe and commemorate the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the son of God, our Savior and Redeemer. It is an opportune time to reflect on what it means to be a follower of Christ.

We are also looking forward to [Pink Shirt Day](#) on February 24. Pink Shirt Day began in 2007 when a student in Nova Scotia was bullied for wearing a pink shirt to school. It has since been recognized annually worldwide as a day to stand against bullying. Please join us in wearing pink to raise awareness of bullying prevention and where to turn for help. Provincially, individuals are taking a photo of themselves wearing a pink shirt and sharing it on social media with the [#PinkShirtDay](#) and [#WhereToTurn](#) hashtags. If you take part in posting, please also share with us at [#GSACRDpink](#).

As shared last week, following Premier Kenney’s announcement on January 28, 2021 that was further detailed by Dr. Deena Hinshaw on Saturday, February 6, 2021, and Deputy Minister Tremblay, we continue to collaborate with surrounding school jurisdictions and the Ministry of Education to review and offer physical education and academy instruction, and to discuss when and how extra-curricular activities may start again. We are working very closely with our municipalities to ensure that health guidelines are met. Until further announcements from the government of Alberta and Dr. Hinshaw, we will stay the course with respect to holding off on extra-curricular activities until at least the end of February.

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.

We are offering our last [virtual information session](#) 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. 23	École Notre Dame

Please [register](#) by the end of the day today, Friday, February 19, if you would like to attend the final session. After you submit your online registration, you will receive a confirmation with details on how to access this virtual session.

Just a reminder that you will have received an email last week to take part in our **Division Assurance Survey**. Your input is much appreciated as it will guide our planning for the 2021-2022 school year. **The timeline for completing this survey is February 12-26.** In addition, Alberta Education conducts a set of annual telephone surveys to obtain feedback from education system partners regarding their perceptions of Alberta’s education system. Respondents for the 2020 surveys include senior high school students, self-identified First Nations, Métis and Inuit high school students, parents of students in the K–12 education system, parents of self-identified First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, parents of students with severe disabilities, teachers in the K–12 system, school board trustees, and the general public. The surveys were conducted by CCI Research from the first week of March to last week of July 2020. If you would like to learn more about this survey, please visit the [provincial website](#).

As we continue to animate our Division Faith Theme: *Arise! Get Up!*, Pope Francis reminds us that “Young people should love, believe and follow their dreams, never despairing because Jesus is always with them.” Our Holy Father helps everyone to remember that our work as parents, students, staff, and parishioners is to continue to recognize our many blessings as we learn and work together.

Thank you for all that you do and have done to work with us to continue to support our students to embrace learning and to thrive during this time of uncertainty.

Sincerely,

Dr. Clint Moroziuk
Superintendent of Schools