

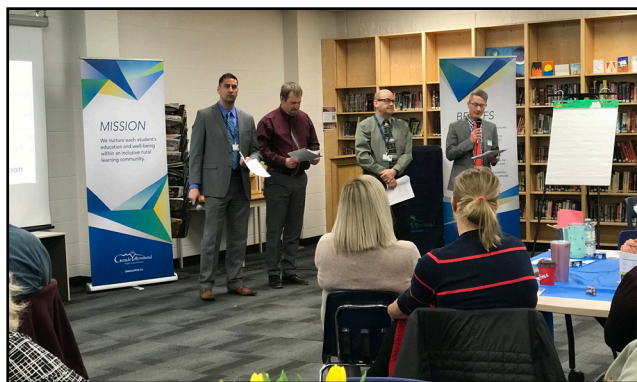


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - May 4, 2020

The first four months of 2020 have been challenging yet despite changes to funding, and the significant impact of the COVID pandemic, Grande Yellowhead Public School Division has maintained its focus on student learning. The crisis has illustrated the crucial role that teachers play in the communities they serve. In addition to ensuring student learning remains a top priority, teachers and school leaders have worked to ensure schools share fact-based information, provided digital devices and technology support, facilitated access to nutritional meals for struggling families, and maintained access to mental health supports and counselling. The Division applauds the incredible partnerships that exist between teachers, students, and families in the support of student learning.

Prior to the COVID restrictions announced in early March, the Board of Trustees for Grande Yellowhead Public School Division had just completed their second year of Community Engagement events in each of the five zones beginning February 25 in Edson and ending in Grande Cache on March 12.

Each event ran from 6:30 to 9:00 pm, and attendees heard from Board Chair Brenda Rosadiuk, the local trustee for that zone, Superintendent Lewis, and the community's school principals – who described their collaborative approach to using data, leveraging professional learning, and accessing Division services and resources to support the learning journey of all GYPSD students, junior kindergarten through to Grade 12.



The evening events are one of the ways that the trustees connect with community members to discuss the Board's mission, vision, and priorities for Grande Yellowhead Public School Division. Yellowhead MP Gerald Soroka and MLAs Long and Getson also attended the events for their areas.

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In addition to an overview of school and Division budget allocations led by Superintendent Lewis, the event participants responded to four survey questions posed by the Board of Trustees:

- What does it mean to be an educated person in this community?
- What are the key skills our graduates require coming into the workforce?
- What are our blind spots? What are we not seeing?
- How will you/how are you, as a stakeholder, supporting public education in this community?

Responses to the questions were collected, collated, and reviewed for themes. Top answers for Question 1 included Social Skills and Emotional Intelligence. Important skills identified in Question 2 for graduates were Emotional Intelligence and Communication.

The Board was pleased by the overwhelmingly positive feedback it received for Question 3 - to identify blind spots. Participants shared their appreciation for the effort schools make to support students in the rural context – particularly students with complex needs – and asked for more opportunities and avenues for parents to connect with teachers and the school, more social-emotional supports, and expanded cultural learning programs.



The top responses to Question 4 included advocating for the school and the Division, participating in community engagement events and volunteering in the school.

The Board of Trustees strives to connect with parents, community partners, staff, and students throughout the Division. Community Engagement is a Board Priority, and the events are an important avenue for the trustees to hear from the stakeholders and collect important feedback on key topics.

The Board extends its appreciation to everyone who was able to join in the conversation to help inform the upcoming school year. The [complete summary](#) can be accessed on the GYPSD website. Photos from all community engagement sessions can also be viewed on the Division's Facebook page.