

Item #9

**Administration Report
October 23, 2024**

To: Board of Trustees, Grande Yellowhead Public School Division
From: Dr. Parsons, Superintendent of Schools
Subject: **Superintendent Report - September/October 2024**

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Trustees receive the Superintendent's Report as information.

REPORT

Governance Connection:

As per **Board Policy 12**, *Role of the Superintendent*, and the *Education Act*, the superintendent of schools is the chief executive officer of the board and chief education officer of the school authority.

Background:

The superintendent provides the board with information, advice, and support required for the fulfillment of its governance role, and reports to the Minister on all matters required of the superintendent as identified in Policy 12, legislation, and the competencies outlined in the *Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (SLQS)*. *Quality superintendent leadership occurs when the superintendent's ongoing analysis of the context, and the superintendent's decisions about what leadership knowledge and abilities to apply, result in quality school leadership, quality teaching, and optimum learning for all students in the school authority.*

Key Information:

Since arriving in the division on September 15, 2024 and since assuming the position of Superintendent of Schools/CEO on October 1st, 2024 I have engaged with staff members in numerous engagements and activities on behalf of GYPSD. In an effort to bring some semblance of order to my diverse GYPSD activities and work engagements I will, for this report, group my work under competencies as stipulated within the Superintendent Leadership Quality Standards (SLQS).

Leadership Quality Standard 1 - Building Effective Relationships

In overlapping with Dr. Lewis, my first week in GYPSD was indeed a busy one. Knowing the importance of building effective relationships, we gave priority to

meeting students and staff in the schools and in the central office. Consequently, in that first week, we visited 12 different schools and spent time talking with central office staff. On Monday, September 16th, we began at Grand Trunk School and following our interactions there we proceeded to Evansview School, Wildwood School, Niton Central School, and Fulham School. On Tuesday, September 17, 2024, with Board Chair Karpluk, Dr. Lewis, and Assistant Superintendent Aschenmeier we visited both our Jasper schools and were honored to witness the emotional but joyful return to school by students and staff following the devastating Jasper Fire. We also got to attend the very moving opening assembly at Jasper Junior/Senior High School.



Following the Jasper school visits we visited and toured Crescent Valley Elementary School, Ecole Mountain View School, and Harry Collinge High School in Hinton. On Friday, September 20th, with

Dr. Lewis, I was able to visit and meet staff at Ecole Pine Grove Middle School and Parkland Composite High School in Edson. On Friday, September 26, along with Assistant Superintendent Aschenmeier, toured and talked with staff at Ecole Westhaven and Mary Bergeron Elementary schools. On Tuesday, October 1st, 2024 I again toured and spoke with staff at all schools in Hinton, this time with the Board of Trustees. On October 2nd, 2024 with the Board of Trustees, we toured and spoke with administrators and staff in all of our Grande Cache Schools: Grande Cache Community High School, Summitview School, and Sheldon Coates Elementary School.

The school tours made possible a close-up view of our impressive school facilities, but more importantly, the visits afforded opportunities to meet and speak with our staff and the visits started the all-important first step in the process of building effective relationships.

Leadership Quality Standard 2 - Modeling Commitment to Professional Learning

On Thursday, September 19, 2024, I participated in my first GYPSD Central Office staff meeting and got to formally meet the full Central Office team. This meeting was followed by my first GYPSD Leadership Team (Elementary) professional learning session. I enjoyed the energy and creativity of our principals and Vice Principals as



they struggled to understand their school data and make plans to overcome challenges revealed by their data. On Friday, September 20, 2024, I attended my first GYPSD High School Leadership Team professional learning session, again with Dr. Lewis, Dr. Harding, and Asst. Superintendent Aschemeier. Assistant Superintendents Harding and Aschenmeier did an excellent job facilitating the sessions and focusing the leadership group on working with their school data to overcome challenges. Moving forward, I will endeavor to support their data-driven work with our Education leadership teams.

Leadership Quality Standard 3 - Visionary Leadership

Under the competency of Visionary Leadership, a superintendent is expected to, *“engage with the school community in implementing a vision of a preferred future for student success based on common values and beliefs.” It is essential that the desired vision is informed by research on effective learning, teaching, and leadership.*”

In my short time with GYPSD, the work I have been engaged in with trustees, my senior leadership team, and staff confirms that there is a desired state, as articulated in the GYPSD Education Plan, and the division is working in multiple ways to make this desired state a reality. I believe, through my training and



experience, I can help in the area of visionary leadership and in helping GYPSD achieve the reality it seeks. This will involve promoting innovation, developing strategies to support staff, and promoting in the community an understanding and support for our GYPSD goals and priorities. A good example of working with the community to build understanding and support is the Fulham engagement we just worked our way through.

Leadership Quality Standard 4 - Leading Learning

Under this competency, *“A superintendent establishes and sustains a learning culture in the school community that promotes ongoing critical reflection on practices, shared responsibilities for student success and continuous improvement.”*

Again, in my short time with GYPSD, the school tours, the leadership team meetings, and the many conversations with staff/students have been geared towards understanding our division, inclusive of our strengths and challenges. With understanding comes an increased ability to support our staff and to help build principal and staff capacities for the purpose of achieving greater student success. To this end, leading learning, the central office team and I sent the

following message out to all GYPSD personnel. The message speaks for itself, but it is worth repeating here:

Hello GYPSD,

In addressing this first message to GYPSD it is, in my mind, synonymous with each and every one of you, our staff. GYPSD is truly about each of you, who work daily to make GYPSD all that it can be in service to students.

In this, my first message to each of you, I want to emphasize, as Michael Fullan said, "Learning is the Work." Therefore, in the service of learning, I want to thank each of you for the work you do, in whatever capacity. Whether your work involves keeping our schools clean, heated, transporting our students, secretarial services, assisting teachers, teaching students, or leading our schools. Your work, our collective work, is crucial in establishing a supportive learning environment and to a positive learning process.

In speaking to "Learning is the work," Fullan spoke of the consistency - innovation continuum and how it applies to all jobs. He argued, how organizations address their core goals with relentless consistency while getting better and better at what they do (innovation) is the key to organizational success. Therefore, I want to recognize the value, and importance of the work you each do. Collectively, our focus must be on processes that respond to the learning needs of students and on improving classroom instruction.

On behalf of the central leadership team, and in the season of **change** and gratitude, **we** recognize our role and responsibility to serve and support **you**. As **partners**, our collective purpose is to establish **optimal** environments for the success and achievement of **all students**. In service to this purpose, we are **committed** to the spirit of collaboration, teamwork, and innovation.

I am indeed honoured to be a member of the GYPSD team.

The central office team and I look forward to working with each of you in service to students and in helping GYPSD to become known for excellence in our service to student learning.

Again, thank you for all that you do

Leadership Quality Standard 5 - Ensuring First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education for All Students.

Under this competency, a superintendent, “establishes the structures and provides the resources necessary for the school community to acquire and apply

foundational knowledge about First Nations, Metis, and Inuit for the benefit of all students.”

While I did not establish the structures within GYPSD, in my short tenure I have witnessed that structures are in place to support building out this competency within our division. For example, I attended, with Assistant Superintendent Aschenmiere, a smudging ceremony at Parkland Composite High School and we also attended the Tri-School Truth and Reconciliation Ceremony in Hinton. These celebrations were absolutely wonderful and were well received by their community. As superintendent, I will continue to build structures to encourage and support this most important work.



Leadership Quality Standard 6 - School Authority Operations and Resources

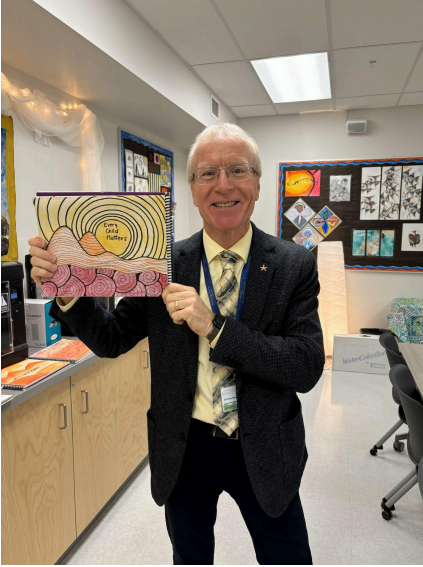
Under this competency, “a superintendent directs school authority operations and strategically allocates resources in the interest of all students and in alignment with the school authority’s goals and priorities.”

In my short tenure with GYPSD, I have placed priority on getting to know our people and our division. With increased understanding of our strengths and our challenges, I will strategically allocate resources in the interest of all students and in alignment with our school authority’s goals and priorities. To this end, I have a great senior team to help me. A great example of this was the work Dr. Harding and staff did in getting together all the background information for the Fulham public engagement session, the excellent way Dr. Harding moderated and led that public engagement session, and the excellent work and willingness to listen by trustees.

Over the weeks and months ahead, we will work to fully ensure GYPSD operations and our resources are aligned and working in the best interest of GYPSD students and staff.

Leadership Quality Standard 7 - Supporting Effective Governance

In support of effective governance, one of the first activities undertaken with Dr. Lewis was to attend a policy meeting on Tuesday, September 17th, 2024. This governance activity was followed on September 18th, 2024 with a Committee of the Whole (COTW) meeting and then a Public Board Meeting (PBM). On



September 24, 2024, I traveled to Calgary to join Chair Karpluk for an ASBA meeting at the Sheraton Cavalier Hotel. This meeting proved to be a great opportunity to interact with the Minister and his staff. It also provided an opportunity to discuss GYPSD concerns with the Deputy Minister, Asst. Deputy Minister, and share ideas with other Superintendents. Likewise, on October 16th, I attended the PSBAA meetings in Edmonton. Again, this was another opportunity to meet and interact with government officials and trustees from across the province. These meetings and interactions are crucial to supporting effective governance and I want to thank the Board and my staff for their support. Without their support, this type of interaction would not be possible.