

AGENDA
Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the
Grande Prairie Public School Division
Tuesday, April 22, 2025 6:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER and INTRODUCTIONS		
a.	National Anthem, Territorial Land Recognition, and Board Universal Guiding Principles	Board Chair Nellis
b.	Adoption of the Agenda	Board Chair Nellis
c.	Trustee Self-Declaration of Conflict of Interest	Trustees
d.	Approval of the Minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular Board Meeting Minutes 2025 03 25 	Board Chair Nellis
e.	Business Arising from Previous Minutes	
2. DELEGATIONS, PRESENTATIONS and SYSTEM LEADERSHIP REPORTS		
a.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review 2nd Quarter Budget Update 	Associate Superintendent Oladele
b.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Employee Wellness Report 	Director Maurer Director Gorgichuk
3. COMMITTEES AND REPORTS		
a.	Board Chair Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Bill in Spring Legislative Session – Information Session 2025 04 09 Local Podium Event at Comp. HS 2025 04 11 	Board Chair Nellis
b.	Alberta School Boards Association Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zone 1 Meeting 2025 04 09 	Trustee Buziak
c.	Public School Boards’ Association of Alberta Update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PBSC Meeting 2025 04 10-11 	Vice Chair Koch
d.	Board Professional Learning Retreat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Session with C. Smeaton on 2025 03 27 	Board Chair Nellis
e.	2025 Chamber Roundtable – 2025 04 04	Vice Chair Koch Deputy Superintendent Robinson
f.	Individual Trustee Reports (round table)	Trustees

g.	<p>Superintendent's Report</p> <p>Items for Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High School Meeting – March 25 • All Administrators Monthly Virtual Meeting – March 26 • Career Pathways Session – April 22 • Changes to Alberta's Access to Information and Privacy Legislation • Peace Collaborative Services (PCS) Governance Meeting – April 10 • Division Assurance Surveys • Teacher Bursary Update <p>Items for Discussion or Action</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed Charter School: Division Response • ASBA Edwin Parr Award Nominee 	Deputy Superintendent Robinson
h.	<p>Associate Superintendent of Business Services Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jordan's Principle Funding Update • 2025/26 Division Funding Profile 	Associate Superintendent Oladele
4. NEW BUSINESS		
a.	Trustee Professional Learning and Sharing	Trustees
b.	<p>Upcoming Dates and Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Workplan 	Trustees
c.	<p>Correspondence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2025 03 12 – Correspondence from GPCSD to Minister of Education – re: Standardized Diagnostic Testing • 2025 04 10 – Correspondence from Superintendent to Parent – re: Follow-up from March 17 Meeting • 2025 04 15 – Correspondence from Minister of Education & Minister of Infrastructure – re: Capital Planning Approval 	Board Chair Nellis
d.	In-Camera	Board Chair Nellis
e.	Actions Arising from In-Camera Discussion	Board Chair Nellis
f.	Actions Arising from Presentations or Delegations	Board Chair Nellis
g.	Next Meeting and Adjournment	Board Chair Nellis

Board Chair Nellis called the Regular Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., acknowledged that the Board is on Treaty 8 Land, and reviewed the Division's Universal Guiding Principles, with the following present:

PRESENT

Trustees Buziak, Johnston, Koch, Martin, Nellis, Ouellette, Superintendent McDonald, Deputy Superintendent Robinson, Associate Superintendent Business Services Oladele, Executive Assistant Business Services SheraLea Crichton, (recorder), and Secretary to the Board Amanda Westwater (minutes).

ADOPTION OF AGENDAAdoption of Board Agenda

The Board reviewed the Regular Meeting agenda. The Board agreed to the following additions to the agenda:

- An in-camera session at the end of the meeting to discuss confidential correspondence.

MOTION: Trustee Koch moved that the Board adopt the Regular Meeting agenda as amended.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15733

TRUSTEE SELF-DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflicts.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

None to report.

DELEGATIONS, PRESENTATIONS and SYSTEM LEADERSHIP REPORTSAnnual Division 3-Year Capital Plan Occurred before approval of minutes.

Superintendent McDonald introduced the report. Associate Superintendent Oladele presented the Annual Division 3-Year Capital Plan for 2026 – 2029 Report to the Board. The report is to help identify the top capital priorities for the Grande Prairie Public School Division, for consideration by Alberta Education staff for capital funding in Budget 2026 to Budget 2029. The report provided background information on the provincial process used for identifying school division capital facility construction needs, describes the current context regarding growth and development in the City of Grande Prairie, and provides an overview of the current enrolment, enrolment

projections, and school utilization for schools in the Grande Prairie Public School Division. Superintendent McDonald extended gratitude to Associate Superintendent Oladele, Deputy Superintendent Robinson, and Director of System Planning, Kimberly Frykas, for all their help on the development of the 2026 – 2029 Capital Plan. The four projects included for consideration were:

- Permanent Addition, Charles Spencer High School
- New School, Kensington Neighbourhood
- Replacement School, Crystal Park School
- Modernization Solution, Harry Balfour School – expansion of Montessori school from K-6 to K-8 with this option.

The Board discussed:

- The average number of projects submitted in a School Division Capital Plan.
- Frequency of approval for lower priority projects on a Capital Plan.

MOTION: Trustee Koch moved to approve the order the 2026 – 2029 Capital Plan priorities as follows:

- 1) New School, Kensington Neighbourhood
- 2) Modernization Solution, Harry Balfour School
- 3) Permanent Addition, Charles Spencer High School
- 4) Replacement School, Crystal Park School

There was discussion on the motion and potential amendment from Trustees Ouellette to reorder priorities: 1) Charles, 2) Kensington, 3) Crystal Park, 4) Harry Balfour.

There was debate on the current motion on the floor and discussion on:

- The potential expansion of the Montessori program at Harry Balfour and how it would impact enrollment at Avondale School.
- The ongoing growth in the Kensington area structure plan.
- Projected and current capacity at Charles Spencer High School.
- The provincial School Construction Accelerator Program for new school builds.

The Board returned to main motion.

CARRIED 15734

For: Trustees Nellis, Johnston, Koch, Buziak

Opposed: Trustees Martin, Ouellette

The Board thanked Superintendent McDonald, Deputy Superintendent Robinson, and Associate Superintendent Oladele for the informative report and all the work done to develop the Capital Plan.

MINUTES

Committee of the Whole of March 11, 2025

The Board reviewed the Committee of the Whole Meeting minutes of March 11, 2025.

MOTION: Trustee Ouellette moved to adopt the minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting of March 11, 2025, as circulated.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15735

Regular Board Meeting of March 11, 2025

The Board reviewed the Regular Board Meeting minutes of March 11, 2025.

MOTION: Trustee Ouellette moved to adopt the minutes of the Regular Board Meeting of March 11, 2025, as circulated.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15736

COMMITTEES AND REPORTS

Board Chair Report

- Chamber of Commerce 2025 Alberta Budget Presentation
Chair Nellis and Associate Superintendent Oladele attended and commented on the Chamber of Commerce 2025 Alberta Budget Presentation on March 21, 2025 hosted by MLA Nolan Dyck and MLA Ron Wiebe.

- Alberta School Boards Association Update
Trustee Buziak reported to the Board regarding the ASBA Zone 1 meeting held March 12, 2025 in Grimshaw. President Marilyn Dennis spoke about 2025 Budget, the National School Food Program agreement, Real Property Governance Act, and Jordan's Principle funding.

It was also noted that the Edwin Parr Nomination deadline for Zone 1 will be changed to March 18th next year to align with the other ASBA Zones.

- Board Policy Committee
Vice-Chair Koch commented on the meeting held March 25, 2025. The Committee discussed three Board policies (Policy 3, Policy 11, and Policy 3).
- Advocacy and Engagement Committee
The March 5, 2025, meeting minutes were included in the Board meeting agenda package as information.

- GPPSD Education Foundation Committee
Trustee Martin commented on the meeting held March 19, 2025. A new Executive Director has been hired, Elizabeth Bell. There is also one new Board member, Collette Marcotte.

Individual Trustee Reports

Trustee Ouellette extended thanks to the IT Department for assisting him with his computer.

Trustee Johnston had nothing to report.

Trustee Buziak had nothing additional to report.

Trustee Martin had nothing to report.

Vice-Chair Koch attended the City of Grande Prairie's State of the City address with Trustee Martin and Board Chair Nellis. She noted great discussion and panels; as well as what is upcoming for post-secondary education through Northwestern Polytechnic.

Board Chair Nellis attended the virtual ASBA Bargaining Session with Superintendent McDonald.

Superintendent's Report

Items for Information

Superintendent McDonald shared the Superintendent's Report to the Board as information, which included the following information:

- **All Administrators Monthly Virtual Meeting**
The March 12 Professional Learning meeting for all school and system administration was focused on a variety of topics, including providing an update on division support for the use of artificial intelligence, reviewing the Resource Guide for Schools to Support English as Additional Language (EAL) learners, school level professional learning planning and planning for the 2025-2026 school year.
- **Interpreting Service Trial**
Director of Teaching and Learning Corinne Kruse, Director of Human Resources Tammie Maurer, and HR specialist Nythia Hojka introduced administrators to Language Line, an on-demand telephone interpreting service selected after reviewing three options. The service, already used by Alberta Health Services (AHS), will assist school administrators

in communicating with non-English-speaking parents for registrations and meetings. Thanks to AHS, the division can access the service at their rates during the pilot program, which runs through this year and the 2025-2026 school year.

- **Spring Kindergarten Intervention**
Director Kruse has submitted a request to Alberta Education for division funding to offer small group literacy and numeracy intervention to Kindergarten students, beginning after the April break to the end of June. This is the 3rd year that direct intervention is being offered to kindergarten students. While the past 2 years have focused on literacy, this year students will also receive numeracy intervention.
- **Third Year Nursing Student Presentations**
Appreciation is extended to the 11 schools who partnered with the Bachelor of Science – Nursing program this year to welcome third year nursing students to provide classroom health promotion presentations. The presentations are an important part of the program for the young nurses and have been very well received by school administrators and teachers.
- **Apple Schools Update**
The four APPLE Schools in the division—Alexander Forbes, Avondale, Roy Bickell, and Crystal Park—are fully staffed, with staff completing initial training in early March. Each school is identifying key priorities in nutrition, physical health, and mental health to shape program delivery. Schools have started implementing activities like healthy food tastings, sports programs, and screen time reduction, while APPLE Schools staff work with School Councils to develop vision statements for the next two years.
- **Provincial Distribution of Information About Measles**
On March 18 Superintendents received a letter from the Medical Officers of Health in the North Zone identifying the increase in the number of confirmed cases of measles. The letter identified that as of the date of writing there were no confirmed cases in our school division, but contained proactive information about the virus, symptoms, and the response expected from our division if any confirmed cases are identified that involve staff, students or volunteers. As requested, principals have distributed the letter to all school parents, staff and volunteers. Superintendent McDonald commented on the policies and guidelines that the division has applied for any communicable diseases in schools.

Items for Future Action

- ASBA Friends of Education Award Nomination
The nomination package for the RCMP School Resource Officers Program as the division's nominee for the Friends of Education Award was reviewed by the Board.

MOTION: Trustee Martin moves the Board nominate Corporal Gavin Ool, and the Grande Prairie Royal Canadian Mounted Police School Resource Officer Program, as the division's nominee for the 2025 ASBA Friends of Education Award.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15737

Superintendent McDonald thanked Deputy Superintendent Robinson and the Secretary to the Board for their assistance in developing the nomination package.

- 2025-2026 School Board Social Planning
Trustees were asked to engage in discussion about their goals for the upcoming Board Social scheduled for October 4, 2025. The Board reviewed feedback from the Teacher Trustee Liaison Committee (TTLC). There was general discussion on:
 - Changing the name of the event
 - Cost per ticket
 - Ability to reserve tables for schools
 - Development of a stakeholder committee to assist in planning

Associate Superintendent of Business Services

Associate Superintendent Oladele shared the Associate Superintendent of Business Services' Report to the Board as information, which included the following information:

- SCORES Update
The Technical Committees for the Standing Committee on Recreation and Education Services Agreement (SCORES) have had several meetings this year. Key items discussed during the meetings include:
 - Review of the draft updated SCORES agreement
 - Tournaments and developing a fee schedule
 - Mobile Skateparks for Summer 2025
- GP Christian School Modulars
Over the May long weekend, the Maintenance Department will relocate two modular classrooms from I.V. Macklin School to GP Christian School to provide extra space during its expansion. The move, which won't affect classroom space at I.V. Macklin, will be jointly funded, with the division contributing donated labor to reduce costs.

- Information Technology Update
 - **Cyber Security Workshop:** Information Technology staff attended a cyber security workshop from March 12 – 14 hosted by Alberta Technology Leaders in Education (ATLE). The team explored the dark and deep web, learning how to navigate these platforms safely and securely and how these strategies can help protect the Division.
 - **Student Laptop Refresh:** For the 2025-26 school year, all student laptops will be replaced under a new five-year lease to manage costs and maintain consistency. The IT department, with help from three summer students, will distribute nearly 4,000 laptops across 17 schools, ensuring they are ready for the first day of school on August 28, 2025. There was discussion on target ratios, the average cost per student laptop, and how technology is being incorporated into curriculum.

- Transportation Committee Meeting

The Transportation Committee met on March 18 to discuss the ongoing implementation of the new regulation. The committee had an initial discussion about lowering the temperature threshold for school bus cancellations. The Transportation Coordinators from the three school divisions will review data from the past two years to assess the potential impacts of the change.

- 2025 Federal Election

Preliminary discussions have occurred with Elections Canada as they have requested use of 9 school sites for the April 28th Federal Election.

NEW BUSINESS

Trustee Professional Learning and Sharing

Nothing to report.

Upcoming Dates and Events

- Board Workplan

The Board reviewed the Board workplan as information. Trustees were reminded of the following upcoming events:

 - Board Professional Learning Retreat 2025 03 27
 - NSBA (Atlanta) 2025 04 04 – 05
 - ASBA Speakers' Corner 2025 04 07
 - ASBA Zone 1 (GPPSD Hosted) 2025 04 09
 - PSBC 2025 04 10 – 11
 - Board Policy Review Committee (3:30 pm) 2025 04 22
 - Review 2nd Quarter Budget Update 2025 04 22

- Review Annual Leadership Succession Planning Report *In Camera* 2025 04 22
- Review Annual Division Compensation Report *In Camera* 2025 04 22
- Review Bi-Annual Legal and Insurance Issues Update *In Camera* 2025 04 22

Correspondence

- Correspondence from President of the AMA Section of Pediatrics to Minister of Education – re: Program Unit Funding (PUF)

MOTION: Trustee Johnston moved that the Board write a letter in support of increased Program Unit Funding (PUF) funding to the Minister of Education and Minister of Health.

There was discussion on the motion.

Trustee Ouellette suggested an amendment to remove the Minister of Health as PUF is administered by the Ministry of Education.

Trustee Johnston accepted the amendment as friendly. The Board voted on the amended motion:

MOTION: Trustee Johnston moved that the Board write a letter in support of increased Program Unit Funding (PUF) funding to the Minister of Education.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15738

- 2025 03 13 Letter from Wolf Creek Public School Board Chair to Minister Hajdu – re: Advocacy for Jordan’s Principle
- 2025 03 17 Letter from GPPSD Parent – re: Shortened School Year Calendar

Superintendent McDonald provided additional background on a meeting held with the parent. Superintendent will send a thank you letter on behalf of the Board and Division.

Chair Nellis commented on the Board Highlights that are prepared for distribution to School Council Chairs.

IN CAMERA SESSION

MOTION: Trustee Oulette moved that the Board go in camera to discuss confidential correspondence at 8:03 p.m.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15739

MOTION: Trustee Martin moved that the Board come out of camera at 8:18 p.m.

UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED 15740

ACTIONS ARISING FROM IN CAMERA

No actions.

NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT

Next Board Meeting and Adjournment

The next meeting of the Board of Trustees is scheduled for Tuesday, April 22, 2025, to be held at Central Office in the Board Room.

Board Chair Nellis called the Regular Board Meeting closed at 8:18 p.m.

Chair

Secretary-Treasurer



**Grande Prairie
Public School
Division**

Second Quarter
Budget Report

April 22nd, 2025

REVENUES

For the 6-month period (September 2024 to February 2025), the Division recorded \$58.9 million in revenues, representing 51.2% of the budget, which is in line with expectations at this time of the year.

Revenue items of note:

- Grant from the provincial government higher than same period last year due to higher enrolment and a one-time grant for Low Incidence Support Services.
- Additional funding received from the federal government for Jordan's Principle to hire additional Educational Assistants compared to the same period last year
- Fee revenue continue to trend higher than the same period last year due to higher volume of students in KinderPal and Academy making full payments at the start of the school year and monthly pre-authorized debit arrangements.
- Investment revenue is down by \$36K year-over-year, reflecting the Bank of Canada's continued interest rate reductions.
- Gifts and donation, rentals and fundraising are volatile revenue streams that vary by school but are on track to meet budget expectations for the year. Fundraising is 134% or \$301K compared to \$295K for the same period. Donations are \$34K higher than same period last year.

EXPENSES:

As of February 28, 2025, expenditure totaled \$60.8million, 51.0% of the budget, which is inline with expectations for this time of the year. While overall expenditures align with forecasts, some areas have higher variances due to timing. Key expenditure highlights include:

Expense items of note:

- Non-certificated salaries, wages, and benefits increased compared to the prior year, as school staff are now paid over 10 months starting this school year. The first quarter also includes payments for 20 additional Educational Assistants hired under the Jordan's Principle grant.
- Non-certificated salaries & wages and benefits include retroactive pay for non-instructional staff from dating back to September was paid during this period, approximately \$360K.
- Benefit costs for both certificated and non-certificated staff are lower in the first half of the year compared to the second half. In January, contributions to Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Employment Insurance (EI) reset for all employees who reached the maximum contribution limits in the previous calendar year.
- Increase to health plan premium for non-certificated staff took effect on February 1st, increasing monthly expenses by \$60K
- Services, contracts, and supplies are on track but lower than the same period last year due to the timing of the insurance payment.
- Transportation expenses are higher than the prior year due to an increased contract rate, driven by the inflation escalation adjustment in our agreement with First Student.

PROJECTED SURPLUS

Looking at our second-quarter numbers, we're showing a \$1.96 million deficit. If this trend continues, we're projected to end the year about \$398,526 under our original \$4.3 million deficit target.

To ensure we meet the targeted spending and remain within the ASO limit, discussions are ongoing with schools and central office staff regarding their spending plans for the remainder of the year.

Grande Prairie Public School Division
Operations Financial Update for the Quarter Ended February 28, 2025

	2024-2025 Fall Budget	Y-T-D Feb 28, 2025		Y-T-D Feb 29, 2024	
		Actual	% of Bud	Actual	% of Bud
Revenues					
Alberta Education	100,740,509	50,188,293	49.8%	49,600,579	50.7%
Alberta Infrastructure	7,687,534	3,843,767	50.0%	3,818,297	49.5%
Other - Government of Alberta	668,019	343,895	51.5%	454,859	49.4%
Federal Government	1,862,506	1,311,869	70.4%	485,431	n/a
Fees	1,852,345	1,488,864	80.4%	1,343,122	72.7%
Other sales and services	811,500	753,521	92.9%	828,476	102.7%
Investment income	550,000	349,145	63.5%	385,528	70.1%
Gifts and donation	472,639	214,715	45.4%	180,357	26.5%
Rental of facilities	158,000	121,123	76.7%	139,997	88.6%
Fundraising	225,000	301,621	134.1%	294,986	131.1%
Total Revenues	115,028,052	58,916,813	51.2%	57,531,632	52.1%

Expenses by Program

Instruction - Pre-K	4,430,481	2,419,042	54.6%	907,609	54.2%
Instruction - Grades K - 12	86,798,966	44,206,427	50.9%	41,833,789	50.0%
Plant operations and maintenance	21,070,430	10,396,609	49.3%	10,766,363	52.8%
Transportation	3,033,056	1,769,956	58.4%	1,685,335	59.1%
Board & system administration	3,423,074	1,660,461	48.5%	1,635,922	50.6%
External services	598,277	428,171	71.6%	434,510	49.7%
Total Expenses	119,354,284	60,880,666	51.0%	57,263,528	50.8%
Annual Surplus (Deficit)	(4,326,232)	(1,963,853)		268,104	

Expenses by Object

Certificated salaries & wages	51,687,718	25,543,361	49.4%	24,462,336	48.7%
Certificated benefits	11,617,079	5,567,414	47.9%	5,292,325	48.1%
Non-certificated salaries & wages	21,777,476	11,702,368	53.7%	9,841,243	51.0%
Non-certificated benefits	5,883,752	3,130,294	53.2%	2,443,346	46.0%
Services, contracts and supplies	19,293,660	10,382,007	53.8%	10,612,058	59.1%
Amortization expense	9,068,399	4,534,198	50.0%	4,595,087	49.7%
Interest on capital debt	11,600	4,646	40.1%	6,191	51.6%
Other interest and finance charges	14,600	16,378	112.2%	10,942	74.9%
Total Expenses	119,354,284	60,880,666	51.0%	57,263,528	50.7%

DATE: April 22, 2025

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Tammie Maurer, Director of Human Resources

SUBJECT: Employee Wellness Update

REFERENCE: Board Policy 1, 2, and 20

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Board of Trustees and provide assurance that the Division is committed to fostering a workplace that prioritizes wellness, engagement, and psychological health and safety. The division's 3-Year Education Plan establishes 'Belonging' as a priority and through our intentional actions and behaviours, employees are supported to achieve their potential to ensure optimum learning for all students.

Employee well-being is both a shared and individual responsibility, meaning that the division establishes conditions in the workplace that support employee wellness but the ultimate responsibility for wellness is with the employees themselves.

BACKGROUND

System-level responsibility for leading the division's wellness focus is shared by the Director of Inclusive Learning, Nancy Gorgichuk, and the Director of Human Resources, Tammie Maurer.

The division employs an Employee Wellness and Engagement Coordinator, Carla McLeod, who is responsible for managing wellness initiatives in the division as well as supporting the work of the Division Wellness Committee and the Employee Wellness Representatives.

The Division Wellness Committee includes representation from all employee groups in the division and meets four times per year. The purpose of the Division Wellness Committee is to provide leadership, feedback, and coordination for the advancement of well-being amongst staff throughout the Division.

Employee Wellness Representatives include the individuals at each of our schools and worksites who have agreed to be their site's champion for wellness. They support wellness activities at their sites and share division wellness information with their colleagues. Employee Wellness Representatives meet as a whole group two times per year.

The division's initial learning about system-wide employee wellness was informed by the work of Laura Putnam's "Workplace Wellness that Works". Putnam defines the 9 elements of wellness as:

- Physical, Emotional, Social, Financial, Career or Occupational, Community, Environmental, Creative or Intellectual, Spiritual.

These 9 elements have become the foundation of our wellness planning and inform both our month-to-month activities and our structures for engagements such as the division wellness day.

In 2023-2024, the division extended thinking about wellness to incorporate Psychologically Safe and Healthy Work Environments.

In 2024-2025, the division continued to progress employee wellness by implementing division-wide consideration of the Right to Disconnect, an initiative that encourages responsible behaviours related to how and when we communicate.

WELLNESS INITIATIVES and ACTIVITIES

Since developing the initial, division-level work on employee wellness in 2022, the following initiatives and activities have been implemented:

- **Division Wellness Committee & Site-Based Representatives:**
 - The Division Wellness Committee includes representatives from all employee groups. In 2023, Site-Based Employee Wellness Representatives were introduced to broaden reach and improve feedback collection. This collaborative approach continues to enhance connectivity across the Division through targeted, year-round wellness initiatives aimed at cultivating a sense of belonging.
- **Employee Wellness Professional Learning Day**
 - Hosted on February 28, 2025, Employee Wellness Day offered staff a day dedicated to well-being, with planned activities designed to support and promote holistic health.
 - This is the third year the wellness day has occurred.
- **Psychological health & safety**
 - All leadership staff completed PH&S training during the 2023–2024 school year. This training emphasizes the impact of workplace culture, leadership relationships, and job structure on mental health. This year, the wellness work focused on three of the 13 factors, supportive work environments, communication, work life balance and collaboration.
- **Administrative Procedure 418 – Supporting Employee Attendance:**
 - Clear, consistent procedures have been implemented to guide employee attendance. This ensures equitable application of expectations while reinforcing a supportive approach to positive attendance outcomes.
- **Development of the Employee Wellness Portal**
 - a resource for all employees to learn about division supports for employee wellness
- **Dedicated employee wellness time at staff meetings/PL days**
 - Time dedicated to sharing wellness information and activities
- **Employee Appreciation prize draws based on participation in wellness activities**
- **Strategies to promote understanding of benefits and Employee Family Assistance Programs**
- **Employee Wellness Newsletters**
- **Redevelopment of a comprehensive Employee Appreciation Week**
- **Division-wide connection events such as division dodgeball and walking groups**
- **Site-based wellness funding is allocated to each site to support self-identified wellness activities.**
- **Continued development of the Employee Wellness Framework**

EVIDENCE SUPPORTING the DIVISION WELLNESS FOCUS

Different sources of feedback provide a broad understanding of the impact of the division’s focus on employee wellness:

- **Assurance Survey Data**
- **2024 Thought Exchange**
- **2025 Employee Wellness Day Survey**

Assurance Survey Evidence

Each year in the Division Assurance Survey, GPPSD employees are asked the question: “*My workplace supports my wellness*” responses for the past 4 years:

- 2021: 86% respondents were satisfied
- 2022: 88% respondents were satisfied
- 2023: 91% respondents were satisfied
- 2024: 89% respondents were satisfied

2024 Thought Exchange

- All employees were asked to complete the Wellness Thought Exchange to help identify what is most important to supporting their personal health and wellness, and connectedness at work.
- 837 employees participated in the Thought Exchange.
- Employees shared that the most important areas to them were: supportive work environments, quality communication, support for work-life balance, and collaboration opportunities with colleagues.

2025 Employee Wellness Day: Survey Summary

- The number of responses was very similar to last year’s survey
 - 472 in 2025
 - 466 in 2024
- Nearly 90% of respondents indicated that the day supported their wellness.
- The number of respondents who indicated a ‘strong disagreement’ with the employee wellness day has decreased from approximately 4% in 2024, to 1% in 2025.
- 85% of respondents report that they preferred beginning the day with the social wellness opportunities offered in 2025 as opposed to a Keynote Speaker as offered in previous years.
- Consistent with last year’s results, approximately 75% of respondents report learning something from wellness day that they will implement to support their wellbeing, going forward.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Having a strategic wellness focus is the right work: creating psychologically safe and healthy work environments, with attention to communication and work-life balance is important.
- Ongoing engagements with both the Division Wellness Committee and the Employee Wellness Representatives provide regular opportunities for collaboration and employee input to ensure wellness efforts are responsive and evolving.
- Initiatives: Employee Wellness Professional Learning Day (Feb 28, 2025) was well received, with nearly 90% reporting it supported their wellness. Recognition and engagement efforts, including an Inclusive Employee Appreciation Week, enhance morale and organizational pride.
- Assurance surveys show that the satisfaction with workplace wellness has remained high.
- Things that are valued most by employees: Employee Wellness Professional Learning Day, dedicated wellness time in schools, and EFAP/benefits.
- Continued Priorities: Employees value being recognized and feeling appreciated, and the committee will continue to look at ways to enhance work life balance, and foster supportive, connected and collaborative cultures.

SUMMARY

The division continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to employee wellness, recognizing it as both a shared and individual responsibility. Through a strategic approach, the division aims to foster a

psychologically healthy and supportive work environment where staff feel a strong sense of belonging and engagement. These ongoing wellness efforts are aligned with broader goals of ensuring welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe school communities.

DATE: April 22, 2025

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: James Robinson, Deputy Superintendent

SUBJECT: Superintendent's Report

REFERENCE: Board Policy 2 – The Role of the Board, Board Policy 18 – Superintendent of Schools/CEO Roles and Responsibilities. Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

HIGH SCHOOL MEETING

On Tuesday, March 25, system educational leadership met with principals from the Bridge Network, Charles Spencer High School, and the Grande Prairie Composite High School for their regularly scheduled high school update meeting.

Topics discussed included reviewing high school first responders programming, new curriculum piloting and implementation, dual credit options for 2026-2027, and summer school 2025.

Dual credit: In collaboration with Northwestern Polytech (NWP) a significant increase in the number of dual credit opportunities for students will be available in the pathway areas of Business, Education, Health, Humanities, and Trades. The majority of coursework is asynchronous, allowing students to complete their course work at their current high school and as a Tri-Division high school cohort group. We are working with NWP to potentially waive student application fees and some of the student fees that are part of the general tuition costs.

Summer school July 2025 will be hosted at the Bridge Network. New courses for this year are Science 20, Criminal Law and full courses English and Social Studies 10-2 and 20-2. Physical Education 10 and 20 will be offered in-person with a student fee anticipated to be under \$50 to cover the cost of off-site activities. Career and Life Management (CALM) and PE student and parent evenings will be scheduled as group intakes, and all other students will meet individually with staff from the Bridge Network for course intakes.

myBlueprint is an online career exploration and high school planner resource that has been piloted this year at Grande Prairie Composite High School, Crystal Park School and Grande Prairie Christian School. Feedback to date from teachers, student and parents focuses on the value of the resources in supporting meaningful learning and career exploration with direct connections to the Alberta curriculum.

ALL ADMINISTRATORS MONTHLY VIRTUAL MEETING

The monthly information meeting was held on March 26. Topics included clarity around staff use of school facilities, information our anticipated staffing timelines, Division Assurance Survey information, information about the Career Pathways engagement on April 22, and information on training sessions for the new interpretative services pilot described in a previous board report.

CAREER PATHWAYS "CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE"

Development of the Career Pathways Framework began in the spring of 2024. The GPPSD Career Pathways Framework serves as a foundational structure that provides clarity and coherence of career education. The framework emphasizes the interconnectedness of PK-12 education, families, industry, post-secondary, and community partners. Kimberly Frykas, Director of System Planning, and Dennis Vobeyda, Principal of Grande Prairie Composite High School, have led the development of a draft framework with the support of an administration committee. To guide the work, a large-scale virtual engagement with staff, students, parents, industry and community was completed in the fall of 2024.

The next steps are to re-engage with members of the school community to finalize the framework:

- April 16 - School Administrators
- April 22 - Parents, Students, Community, and Industry
- April 24 - Leadership Academy Teachers
- May 13 - Presentation to the Board of Trustees
- May 20 - myBlueprint Pilot Teachers
- June 6 - Student Advisory

The April 22nd engagement, taking place at Grande Prairie Composite High School Theatre and available virtually, is open to all parents, students, community and industry members. The evening will start with a one-hour session for parents, students, community and industry, presented by our Careers School Engagement Coordinator, to learn more about: High School Completion Requirements, CTS – Career and Technology Studies Programming, Work Experience Programming, Registered Apprenticeship Programming, and Dual Credit Programming. A structured 45-minute engagement session to collect feedback on the Division Career Pathways Framework will follow the information session.

Peace Wapiti Public School Division and Grande Prairie Catholic School Division have also been invited to attend as the Careers School Engagement Coordinator supports all three school divisions. In collaboration with Careers, information has been shared with employers and the Chamber of Commerce. The division is promoting this engagement through social media, the schools, and has extended invites to the City of Grande Prairie, Northwestern Polytechnic, the Chamber of Commerce and key industry partners.

Supporting this work, NWP hosted a session at this year's teachers' convention that brought teachers on site to build their understanding of the post-secondary programming offered in our community. This background knowledge will allow teachers to better support our students as they explore career pathways and post-secondary opportunities.

CHANGES TO ALBERTA'S ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PRIVACY LEGISLATION

On April 9, members of the System Administration team attended an ASBOA webinar presented by Brownlee LLP on Bill 33 and Bill 34, two recent pieces of legislation intended to replace existing FOIP legislation.

The proposed bills would replace the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP), which came into effect in 1999. Bill 33 is the Protection of Privacy Act and guides how public bodies collect, store and utilize personal information. This requires all organizations to develop a privacy management program that describes how and why we collect information, how we secure it and what we do with it, including internal controls to ensure system-wide compliance. Bill 34 attends to how information is accessed through requests for information. **Bill 34 reduces the responsibility of**

who judges?

organizations to respond to vexatious, repeated, or threatening requests for information and extends reporting timelines. In the context of school divisions, workplace investigations are no longer subject to inquiries. For Boards, Bill 34 provides more information on discretion around in-camera meetings, though no specific details were provided.

Regulations supporting the new legislation are anticipated to be made available in May-June of this year.

PEACE COLLABORATIVE SERVICES (PCS) GOVERNANCE MEETING

The annual meeting of the senior administration from the partner school divisions in PCS occurred on Thursday, April 10. Each division identified priorities and affirmed their continued partnership. A review of the year to date was provided by Elizabeth Linfield, the Regional Manager for PCS who is completing her first year.

The 2025-2026 year has been successful to date with professional services being offered to our students by a blend of PCS employees and contractors. Collaboration between the leadership team and the regional manager has resulted in several procedures being developed and implemented to guide consistent practice and clarity of expectations within the collaborative.

Our school division had the opportunity to provide the attendees with an update on the responsibilities associated with being the 'banker board' for Peace Collaborative Services with the intent of creating understanding prior to presenting a revised banker board fee proposal at the next governance meeting in the fall of 2025.

DIVISION ASSURANCE SURVEYS

Grande Prairie Public School Division's Annual Assurance Survey results inform our annual Division and School Education Plans and helps improve the quality of education for all community members. The online survey was distributed to all parents through SchoolMessenger on April 7th, and they have until April 17th to provide feedback. Schools are supporting all staff and students in grades 4-12 to complete the survey. Information is shared on our website and social media posts are scheduled to provide reminders. [Share Your Feedback: GPPSD's Annual Assurance Survey | Grande Prairie Public School Division](#)

TEACHER BURSARY UPDATE

The 2025 Teacher Bursary Program attracted strong interest, with 60 applications received from students and graduates in their first through final years of the Bachelor of Education program. Four applicants in their final year of the program were awarded employment contracts and a \$5000 bursary. Candidates were selected based on priority needs in the Division, including teachable subject areas, and grade levels, with additional consideration given to volunteerism and prior experience. The successful candidates brought strengths in areas such as French Immersion, Secondary Education, Indigenous Studies, and demonstrated flexibility in their teaching interests.

We will also be interviewing candidates who are currently in their 3rd year of studies and will be issuing three bursaries.



**Grande Prairie
Public School
Division**

In partnership with:



Career Pathways Engagement



Tuesday
April 22, 2025



**Grande Prairie
Composite High
School Theatre**



6:00 pm - 7:00 pm:

Learn about Work Experience, Registered Apprenticeship, and Dual Credit.

7:00pm - 7:45pm:

Engage in small groups to provide feedback on the Division Career Pathways plan.



Register by emailing:
kimberly.frykas@gppsd.ab.ca



April 23, 2025

Delivered by email only

The Honourable Minister Demetrios Nicolaides
Minister of Education
228 Legislature Building
100800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2B6

Dear Minister Nicolaides,

This submission is provided on behalf of the Grande Prairie Public School Division (GPPSD) in response to the Grande Prairie Technical Institute's application for a K-12 charter school, in the City of Grande Prairie. The proposed charter school would be a vocational venture focused on experiential learning and based on the principles of Montessori programming. The proposed opening date of the charter school is the 2025-2026 school-year.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with an enhanced understanding of the significant efforts the Grande Prairie Public School Division makes to ensure that both students and parents have a choice in their public education, and to demonstrate that the program focus of the proposed charter school is already provided, exceptionally well, by existing programming provided by GPPSD.

The Grande Prairie Public School Division has always been an innovative leader in ensuring student access to low-cost, high quality publicly funded learning opportunities in Grande Prairie. Choice and innovation define our division. *Board Policy 1 - GPPSD Mission and Guiding Principles* explicitly states our Board's expectation that opportunities be developed for students to explore passions, interests, and life-defining learning opportunities. This belief in ensuring choice in programming permeates our division and has contributed to GPPSD being a model for progressive student-centered programming not only in Northwestern Alberta, but in the entire province. Our success providing responsive programming for students and parents is illustrated by our High School Three Year Completion rates increasing by 8.1% over the past 5 years and our consistently high parental satisfaction with the quality of education their children receive currently being 92%.

The remainder of this submission will provide more detailed examples of how we address student and family choice in the areas of focus identified in the charter school application.

Parental Engagement and Choice

GPPSD has eighteen (18) schools in the City of Grande Prairie, supporting approximately 9000 students. Of our 18 schools, three schools offer secondary programming, and three are dedicated schools of choice, offering specialized programming. Of the remaining fifteen (15) schools, ten (10) support programs of choice that provide targeted learning opportunities for students. Choice permeates our division.

We build interest and choice through authentic and meaningful engagement with our parents. Whether it is in-person opportunities to learn from our division community, or through targeted surveys, what our parents say, matters. Evidence of this can be found in our long-standing history of developing choice-focused programming. This includes the development of:

- A dedicated Pre-K-6 Montessori School
- A dedicated Pre-K-8 French Immersion School, supported by high school programming
- An innovative partnership offering K-9 education with a Christian focus.
- Sports Academy programming available in 9 of our 18 schools
- Senior trades education in high schools
- High school International Baccalaureate programming
- Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) programming in three schools
- Enhanced instrumental and choral music programming in eight schools

Significant choice exists in the Grande Prairie Public School Division, and it is through working closely with our parents and our entire community that we can ensure high quality learning opportunities supported by schools and programs of choice.

Montessori, STEM, and Trades Focused Programming

While we were provided with limited information on the proposed charter school, the focus appears to be a Montessori-vocational-experiential venture. Each of these three focus areas are currently available at GPPSD, and in other regional partner school divisions, through dedicated schools and programs of choice.

Parkside Montessori School

First developed in 2007-2008, Parkside Montessori School is recognized locally and internationally as a leader in publicly funded Montessori programming. Unique to this Pre-K to Grade 6 school, all teachers in the school are both certificated teachers and certified in Montessori education through the North American Montessori Centre. All education assistants are also certified. What makes Parkside Montessori School unique from other programs that exist throughout the province is that they are formally recognized as a Montessori school while other organizations often co-opt the name 'Montessori' for the purpose of creating the impression that experiential or hands-on learning is the same as Montessori learning, which it is not.

The division is currently working closely with the parent community at Parkside Montessori School and has included a plan in the 2026-2029 3-Year Capital Plan to extend programming to include grades 7 and 8. This expansion of programming will strengthen the school community and add enhanced publicly funded learning opportunities for our students.

It is also important to note that one of our local partner divisions, Grande Prairie and District Catholic Schools, also operates an elementary Montessori School in the City of Grande Prairie.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Programming

A schoolwide focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) programming exists in three dedicated schools within the division. Our STEM schools maintain a commitment to regular provincial curriculum but enrich those learning opportunities by focusing on enhanced learning through STEM programming. These schools excel at providing hands-on experiential learning and they develop opportunities for student engagement through partnerships with engineering and science focused organizations both within the city and throughout the province. This approach is further strengthened by our division partnership with Northwestern Polytechnic.

The division employs dedicated teacher-leads at each of our STEM schools with the expectation that the work of the STEM teacher not only supports STEM learning in the specific site but also extends to other schools resulting in an expansion of hands-on, experiential learning in all GPPSD schools.

Trades Focused Programming

GPPSD offers an enhanced approach to preparing students for their careers after high school. GPPSD offers targeted programming and a robust system of support to ensure that students are ready to enter the workforce, or to further their education, upon completion of high school. We do this by:

- Ensuring a variety of program options for students, including:
 - High School Courses in 25 CTS Occupational Areas
 - Registered Apprenticeship Off Campus
 - Work Experience Off Campus
 - Dual Credit
- Supported by the CTS Bridging Program, our high schools currently deliver quality learning through instruction provided by **certificated teachers with red seal trade designations**. Our schools offer CTS apprenticeship courses in the following areas:
 - Auto Service Technician and Mechanics
 - Carpentry
 - Cooking and Baking
 - Hairstylist and Esthetician
 - Welding
- Being deliberate in developing awareness, from Pre-School to Grade 12, of career pathways and readiness skills to prepare students for life after high school.

The newly constructed Grande Prairie Composite High School is home to GPPSD's **Senior Trades Program**. This state-of-the-art hub for technology and trades innovation allows students to build on their experiences from our K-8 school's Career and Technology Foundations programs as well as the introductory trades at Charles Spencer High School. Students graduate from our schools already on the pathway to a meaningful career.

Students in high school explore careers through our well-developed 'Work Experience', 'Registered Apprenticeship' and 'Dual Credit' programming. These opportunities exist through our division's commitment to building strong and mutually beneficial relationships with other school divisions, post-secondaries, community organizations, and business and industry. Careers: The Next Generation is a key partner who supports students through facilitating internships and providing career education.

The Division is proud of our partnership with neighbouring school divisions over the past decade to support students, industry, and business. For the past 10 years we have partnered with Grande Prairie and District Catholic Schools and Peace Wapiti Public Schools to develop Off Campus opportunities and processes that support the Grande Prairie area. Having common processes allows industry partners to have a more seamless experience when they are supporting students from all three school divisions. We have developed this partnership because it is important to optimize experiences for both students and partners in business and industry.

GPPSD has also partnered with Northwestern Polytechnic and Northern Lakes College for the past nine years to provide increasing amounts of Dual Credit Programming. Currently students have access to Power Engineering 4th year, Surveying, Educational Assistant, Health Care Aide, and multiple single University Transfer Courses.

In collaboration with Northwestern Polytechnic, Grande Prairie and District Catholic Schools, and Peace Wapiti Public Schools, dual credit pathways have been developed for the 2025-2026 school year in the following areas: **Business, Education, Health, Humanities, and Trades**. The intent of the pathways model is to allow students to explore multiple areas and then focus on one that will transition them into post-secondary. We are excited for these new opportunities for students and are committed to expanding courses in these pathway areas to meet student interest. Supporting students to transition to post-secondary within our region helps build our local workforce and reduces post-secondary costs for families.

Critical to supporting this work is the development of a system-wide understanding of career awareness from Pre-School to Grade 12. The Grande Prairie Public School Division's intentional focus on 'Career Pathways' builds understanding about opportunities in the trades, post-secondary, and the world of work in a manner that supports students and their families to be best prepared for their future in our community. This coordination and alignment will have a substantial impact on students' readiness to be great citizens.

Summary

The Grande Prairie Public School Division is a leader in providing student-centered choice and innovation. Engaging with parents and the community is an authentic part of GPPSD's practice because **we are the community of Grande Prairie**. We value collaboration with parents and the community because it strengthens both our division and our community when we work together to invest in our students.

Every student in the Grande Prairie Public School Division has access to hands-on, employment-focused learning opportunities that cannot be replicated by single purpose ventures. We are immensely proud of the work we have done to ensure opportunities exist for young people that not only prepare them for

their future but also strengthen our entire community. We have always done this by engaging with our parents and our community to ensure we meet the needs of our students.

While presented to us without meaningful background information, the focus of the proposed charter school in Grande Prairie does not appear to offer program choices that are unique or different from opportunities already provided to all students in the City of Grande Prairie through publicly funded school divisions. Our programming is designed to support the learning of all members of our community. Additionally, the breadth of student programming at GPPSD beyond the skilled trades area provides enhanced opportunities for students to explore multiple pathways throughout their high school experience. Students have access to Music, Performing and Visual Arts, Social Sciences, Physical Activity and Wellness in addition to CTS programming. For example, a high school student in our division can be working on the CTS apprenticeship curriculum while having access to all academic streams of curriculum and still explore the fine arts.

It is our belief that charter schools do not increase choice or cause innovation in public education and that this proposed charter school will not enhance opportunities for students in Grande Prairie. Charter schools' dilute choice and limit meaningful opportunities for students by creating a limited pathway for learning that cannot achieve the impactful learning experiences that an innovative and responsive school division, like the Grande Prairie Public School Division, is able to do.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide an overview of the choice-focused work of our division and thank you for giving earnest consideration to the information presented in this submission.

Respectfully,



Joan Nellis, Board Chair
Board of Trustees
Grande Prairie Public School Division



James Robinson
Deputy Superintendent of Schools
Grande Prairie Public School Division

CC: Board of Trustees
Dr. Vivian Abboud, CEO of Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA)
Troy Tait, Executive Director and CEO of Public School Boards' Association of Alberta (PSBAA)

DATE: April 22, 2025

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Ola Oladele, Associate Superintendent Business Services

SUBJECT: Associate Superintendent Report

REFERENCE: Board Policy 1 – Role of the Board

PURPOSE

To update the Board on recent activities and initiatives across Business Services. The report provides updates on Jordan's Principle, 2025-2026 Funding Profile and the 2nd Quarter Budget Update.

JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE FUNDING

Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) recently announced changes to the Jordan's Principle (JP) program. These changes are being made to narrow the scope of eligible requests, ensuring the program better aligns with its original intent and remains sustainable long-term. ISC has also raised concerns about misuse, as some non-urgent requests have been submitted. To address this, support for students attending off-reserve or private schools will now be redirected to provincial school boards or other federally funded programs. JP is intended to address urgent needs and should not replace provincial or territorial responsibilities or be used for requests outside its intended scope.

Since the program started in 2016, the number of requests has grown quickly. In 2021-2022, ISC approved 614,350 requests. By 2023-2024, the number increased to nearly 3 million, a 367% increase.

For GPPSD, these changes mean a loss of \$1.86 million annual funding. This will affect 56 Educational Assistants (EAs), whose JP-funded contracts will not be renewed after June 30th. Some of these EAs may move into other positions within the division. Director of HR Tammie Maurer and Director of Schools – Inclusive Learning Nancy Gorgichuk have already reached out to the affected staff and parents to discuss this change.

2025/26 GPPSD FUNDING PROFILE

On March 25, Alberta Education released the 2025/26 Funding Profile for school divisions, followed by the Funding Manual about a week later. GPPSD's overall funding for the next school year increased by \$3.8 million (4.1%). Here are the key highlights and how they affect our division:

1. Key Change: Adjusted Enrolment Method (AEM)

Alberta Education has replaced the previous enrolment calculation method (Weighted Moving Average) with a new approach called the Adjusted Enrolment Method (AEM).

- The new AEM calculation uses 70% of projected enrolment for next year and 30% of current-year enrolment to determine our funding.

2. Funding Breakdown

a. Base Instruction Grants: Overall increase of \$1.76 million

- Grades 10-12 funding saw a significant increase (+\$1.08 million or 7.44%) due to expected enrolment growth at the high school level.
- Grades 1-9 funding had a modest increase of \$751,000 (1.93%).
- Kindergarten (ECS) funding slightly decreased by \$37,000 (1.53%), mainly because of projected enrolment numbers.

b. Program Supports & Services: Overall increase of \$735K

- Program Unit Funding (PUF) and Severe Learning Support (SLS) Severe Kindergarten have been combined into a single grant category. With the combination, the increase is negligible at \$1,200.
- The biggest increase in this category was for Specialized Learning Supports (SLS), up by just over \$300K to \$7.1M.
- The Classroom Complexity Grant increased by \$98K to 547K.
- Other targeted supports (FNMI, ESL, Refugee) went up by \$202K.

c. School-Based Grants: Overall increase of \$1.3 million

- The newly introduced School Technology Grant increased significantly, from \$192,000 to \$330,400 (+\$138,400). This new grant combines the existing SuperNet funding with additional Technology Support funding to improve IT infrastructure and cybersecurity.
- Operations and Maintenance (O&M) saw the largest increase of \$903K to \$9.4M. This funding also includes a new supplemental rural O&M grant of \$538K.
- The Transportation Grant had a moderate increase of \$310K, to cover new transportation eligibility requirements and rising operational costs.
- IMR decreased by \$10K

3. General Thoughts

While GPPSD will receive an overall funding increase of about 4.1%, \$3.8M, there are some important concerns to consider as we develop the budget for the upcoming year:

- Recently negotiated collective agreement with non-instructional staff, upcoming teacher settlements, and benefit costs are currently unfunded by the province. As a result, much of the increased funding may be needed to cover these obligations, leaving little room for new initiatives or programs.
- Combining the SLS Severe Kindergarten funding with PUF effectively results in no real funding increase. While the PUF grant itself would have increased by \$792K, removing the separate SLS Kindergarten grant of \$791K essentially cancels this out. This makes it challenging to adequately meet the complex needs of young learners.
- GPPSD offers student supports, such as intervention, that were provided with limited or no specific provincial grant funding. Some of these programs were funded by the Division's Accumulated Surplus from Operations (ASO) to ensure that the division complies with Alberta Education's limit. GPPSD is projected to be within the ASO limits at the end of the current school

year, therefore there is a need to carefully review the sustainability of these programs going forward.

4. Funding Adjustment (Claw back)

For the current school year, GPPSD projected enrolment of 9,089 students in the spring budget. Actual enrolment was lower, at 8,940 students, a shortfall of 1.7%.

Alberta Education's standard procedure is to adjust (claw back) funding based on such enrolment discrepancies. The recently released funding profile confirmed Alberta Education would retain \$578K from GPPSD due to this variance. However, this adjustment is approximately \$867K less than initially projected in the Fall budget.

SECOND QUARTER BUDGET UPDATE

Attached is the second-quarter financial update for the 2024–2025 school year, covering the six-month period ending February 28, 2025. The report compares the Fall budget with actual results for the first half of the current school year, alongside data from the same period in 2023–2024.

The Spring budget, revised in the Fall, reflects updated revenue and expenses related to the school startup process. As a result of these adjustments, budgeted revenue increased by \$795K, bringing the total revenue to \$115,028,052. At the same time, expenses were revised by \$1.2 million to a total of \$11,935,284. These changes resulted in a projected deficit of \$4.3 million, which ensures that the Division remains aligned with the ASO limit.

As of the second quarter, the deficit stands at \$1.96 million. When projected over the full 12 months, this brings us closer to our target deficit, with an estimated shortfall of \$398,526 by year-end.

Grande Prairie Public School Division

DRAFT 2024 – 2025 Board Work Plan



	PUBLIC MEETING DATES	MONTHLY GOVERNANCE ACTIONS	PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
AUGUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024 08 20 Organizational Meeting Regular Meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board Self-Evaluation 2024 08 20 Board Evaluation of Superintendent 2024 08 20 Meeting with Local MLAs 2024 08 27 	2024 08 07 – 09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PSBC
SEPTEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024 09 10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TEAMS Meeting (1:00 pm) with Minister of Education 2024 09 05 Advocacy & Engagement Committee (11:00 am) 2024 09 10 	2024 09 18 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASBA Zone 1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024 09 24 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy and Engagement Committee (3:30 pm) 2024 09 24 Review Board Self-Evaluation (Committee of the Whole) 	
OCTOBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024 10 08 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board Policy Committee (3:30 pm) 2024 10 08 Audit Committee (4:30 pm) 2024 10 08 PD Committee Meeting 2024 10 08 Review Annual Student Enrollment Summary 2024 10 08 Review Annual Exit Survey Report <i>In Camera</i> 2024 10 08 	2024 10 09 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASBA Zone 1 2024 10 16 – 18 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PSBAA FGM
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024 10 22 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board Policy Committee (3:30 pm) 2024 10 22 Board Social 2024 10 26 TTLIC Meeting (3:45 pm) 2024 10 29 	2024 10 21 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASBA Speaker's Corner
NOVEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024 11 12 Committee of the Whole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocacy & Engagement Committee (3:30 pm) 2024 11 12 Review Annual Student Attendance Report 2024 11 12 Draft Annual Education Results Report 2024 11 12 (Committee of the Whole) Non-Instructional Support Staff Committee Meeting 2024 11 13 	2024 11 13 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASBA Zone 1 2024 11 15 - 16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PSBC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2024 11 26 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Board Policy Committee (3:30 pm) 2024 11 26 Audit Committee (4:30 pm) 2024 11 26 Approve Annual Education Results Report 2024 11 26 	2024 11 17 – 19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ASBA FGM

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve Audited Financial Statements 2024 11 26 • Fall Budget Update 2024 11 26 • Review Bi-Annual Legal and Insurance Issues Update 2024 11 26 <i>In Camera</i> • Council of School Councils (7:00 pm) 2024 11 28 	<p>2024 11 26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASBA PL
DECEMBER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024 12 10 • Committee of the Whole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Planning Retreat 2024 12 05 (Thursday) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Presentation of Educational Director Work Plans • TTLC Meeting (3:45 pm) 2024 12 03 • Advocacy & Engagement Committee (3:30 pm) 2024 12 10 • Review Annual Class Size Report 2024 12 10 • Review draft 2025-26 School Year Calendar (Committee of the Whole) 2024 12 10 • Annual HR Report (Committee of the Whole) 2024 12 10 • Student Advisory Committee (9:00 am) 2024 12 13 	<p>2024 12 09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASBA Speaker's Corner – Role of Trustee Fostering Safe & Healthy... <p>2024 12 11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASBA Zone 1
JANUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2025 01 14 • Committee of the Whole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy & Engagement Committee (3:30 pm) 2025 01 14 • Review Annual Student Profile and Specialized Learning Services Report 2025 01 14 (Committee of the Whole) • Review Annual Student Transportation Update 2025 01 14 • Council of School Councils – Workshop – 2025 01 23 	<p>2025 01 08</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASBA Zone 1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2025 01 28 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Policy Committee (3:30 pm) 2025 01 28 • Approve 2025 – 2026 School Year Calendar 2025 01 28 • Review Annual Information Technology Report 2025 01 28 • Review Annual Student Intervention Programming Report 2025 01 28 • Review 1st Quarter Budget Update 2025 01 28 • Student Advisory Committee (9:00 am) 2025 01 31 • School Assurance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2025 01 30 ○ 2025 02 04 ○ 2025 02 21 • PD Committee Meeting 2025 02 06 	<p>2025 01 13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASBA Virtual Session ASEBP <p>2025 01 20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASBA Speakers' Corner

FEBRUARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2025 02 11 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy & Engagement Committee (3:30 pm) 2025 02 11 • Review OLF Framework Implementation and Planning Companion 2025 02 11 • TTLC Meeting (3:45 pm) 2025 02 18 • Non-Instructional Support Staff Committee (4:15 pm) 2025 02 19 	2025 02 6 - 7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSBC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2025 02 25 • Committee of the Whole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Policy Committee (3:30 pm) 2025 02 25 • Develop Budget Process and Budget Development Principles 2025 02 25 (Committee of the Whole) • Review Annual Division Occupational Health and Safety Report 2025 02 25 • Review Annual Division Operations and Maintenance Report 2025 02 25 • Review Annual Division Wellness Report 2025 02 25 • Council of School Councils Meeting 2025 02 27 	2025 02 12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASBA Zone 1 2025 02 24 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASBA Speakers' Corner
MARCH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2025 03 11 • Committee of the Whole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Advisory Committee Meeting (9:00 am) 2025 03 06 • Board Advocacy & Engagement Committee (3:30 pm) 2025 03 11 • Review draft 3-Year Capital Plan 2025 03 11 (Committee of the Whole) • Review Annual Indigenous Programming Report 2025 03 11 	2025 03 10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASBA Speakers' Corner
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2025 03 25 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Policy Committee (3:30 pm) 2025 03 25 • Approve Annual Division 3-Year Capital Plan 2025 03 25 • Board Professional Learning Retreat 2025 03 27 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learning Focus TBD 	2025 03 12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASBA Zone 1

<p style="text-align: center;">APRIL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2025 04 22 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Policy Review Committee (3:30 pm) 2025 04 22 • Review 2nd Quarter Budget Update 2025 04 22 • Review Annual Leadership Succession Planning Report <i>In Camera</i> 2025 04 22 • Review Annual Division Compensation Report <i>In Camera</i> 2025 04 22 • Review Bi-Annual Legal and Insurance Issues Update 2025 04 22 <i>In Camera</i> 	<p>2025 04 04 – 05</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSBA (Atlanta) <p>2025 04 07</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASBA Speakers' Corner <p>2025 04 09</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASBA Zone 1 <p>2025 04 10 – 11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSBC <p>2025 04 23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEBA/ATA Engagement Session <p>2025 04 23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASBA Protection of Privacy Act and Access to Information Act session
<p style="text-align: center;">MAY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2025 05 13 • Committee of the Whole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Spring Governance Retreat 2025 05 01 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review Draft 3 Year Educational Plan ○ Review Draft Division Assurance Summary ○ Review 2025-2026 Division Budget Development • TTLC Meeting (3:45 pm) 2025 05 06 • Council of School Councils Meeting 2025 05 08 • Advocacy & Engagement Committee (3:30 pm) 2025 05 13 • Review draft Division 2025-26 Budget 2025 05 13 • Grande Prairie Composite HS Graduation (11:00am) 2025 05 16 • Non-Instructional Support Staff Committee (4:15 pm) 2025 05 21 	<p>2025 05 05</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASBA Speakers' Corner <p>2025 05 14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASBA Zone 1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2025 05 27 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board Policy Committee (3:30 pm) 2025 05 27 • Approve Division 3-Year Education Plan 2025 05 27 • Approve Division 2025-26 Budget 2025 05 27 • Approve Locally Developed Courses 2025 05 27 • High School Graduation Celebrations 2025 TBD 	
JUNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2025 06 10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Advisory Committee Meeting (9:00 am) 2025 06 06 • Advocacy & Engagement Committee (11:00 am) 2025 06 10 • Review 3rd Quarter Budget Update 2025 06 10 • Review Annual Summer Operations and Maintenance Report 2025 06 10 	<p>2025 06 01 – 03</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASBA SGM <p>2025 06 03 - 05</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSBAA SGM <p>2025 06 11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASBA Zone 1
JULY			<p>2025 07 02 - 05</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSBA Congress (Winnipeg)
AUGUST			<p>2025 08 6 – 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSBC Meeting

March 12, 2025

Memo to: Minister of Education,
The Honourable Demetrios Nicolaides

Memo from: The Board of Trustees,
Grande Prairie and District Catholic School Division

Re: Standardized Diagnostic Testing

We are reaching out to express our concerns regarding the provincially mandated Literacy and Numeracy Assessments. While we fully support the need for accountability and the importance of tracking student progress, we are deeply concerned about the suitability and impact of these assessments on our learners and their teachers.

Assessing students in Kindergarten through Grade 3 using standardized measures presents significant challenges that can work against our students' love for learning, their developmental needs, and effective instructional practices. Specifically, we would like to convey the following information:

1. Developmental Appropriateness

Young children, particularly those between the ages of five and eight, develop at vastly different rates in cognitive, social, and emotional domains. Standardized assessments do not adequately account for this variability and instead impose uniform benchmarks that may not reflect a child's actual learning journey. For example, a kindergarten student who is still refining fine motor skills may struggle with written components of the assessment, even if they fully grasp the underlying concepts.

2. Impact on Learning Time

The significant amount of time dedicated to test preparation and administration takes away from meaningful, hands-on learning experiences. In our schools, teachers report that up to 45 minutes per student, often in a one-on-one situation, is spent on testing. This impacts teaching and learning time. It also means that the rest of the students are not receiving instructional time. This can mean up to a week of learning loss per testing period. The first testing period is at the beginning of the year, a crucial time for building relationships and routines and transitioning students into their new grades. Furthermore, our teachers needed training and support in administering these tests, time and money that could have been better spent supporting them in pedagogy and instructional practices that are focused on problem-solving, collaboration, and joyful engagement.

3. Emotional Toll on Learners

The pressure of high-stakes assessments can create unnecessary stress and anxiety for students. Teachers frequently report instances of students experiencing distress, including crying, shutting down, or expressing frustration. For example, in our division, one Grade 3 student broke down in tears and refused to continue, while another wrote on their assessment, "I hate this!" These reactions highlight the emotional strain these tests place on children. Standardized assessments are a deterrent for fostering engagement, curiosity, and creativity when it comes to learning.

4. Misalignment with Curriculum

A significant issue with the Numeracy assessment is that many of the questions require skills beyond the grade-level curriculum. For example, the Grade 1 curriculum focuses on interpreting and explaining quantities up to 100 and examining addition and subtraction within 20. However, the Numeracy assessment requires students to read, write, and position numbers on a number line well beyond this range. Another example highlighting this disconnect is that the assessment requires students at the beginning of grade 1 to use a number line to place different numbers, something that has not yet been introduced at their grade level. This inconsistency creates confusion and does not accurately measure the intended skills.

Additionally, the numeracy assessments include a 'timed' number facts section where students must complete problems in a fixed sequence in a short duration of time. Research strongly indicates that timed fact assessments create anxiety and are not the most effective approach for building accuracy and fluency.

5. Limited Usefulness of Data

These particular literacy and numeracy assessments do not provide a comprehensive picture and can result in damaging labels being put on students. For example, the literacy assessments do not provide any insight into reading comprehension. When we previously used our division's reading assessments, we were able to analyze student errors to determine the specific interventions needed for decoding, while also identifying areas where students struggled with different types of comprehension. When we compared this data with the provincial mandated assessment, we found that our division's results allowed us to provide more targeted support for students than we could with CC3 and LeNS alone. Reading is a combination of both decoding and comprehension, and an effective assessment system must reflect both aspects to truly guide instruction.

Regarding the numeracy assessments, there is a great deal of research to suggest that students who may not yet have rapid-fire basic facts can still understand math concepts and learn math deeply. Conversely, placing students in a timed-test situation places emphasis on correct responses with no underlying knowledge.

6. Equity Concerns

Standardized testing can disproportionately disadvantage students from diverse backgrounds, particularly English language learners and those from under-resourced communities. Every year, we welcome many students from other countries whose first language is not English. In the classroom, teachers use translation tools to support learning, but these are not permitted during assessments. As a result, these students are

being assessed in a way that does not fairly measure their true abilities or potential. In addition, some of the words used in the literacy assessments are also not culturally relevant, nor do they have a real-life context or any background connections for many of our students. For example: colonel; brooch

7. Purpose vs. Impact

We have heard that these assessments aim to establish norms across Alberta, providing insight into what students know at different grade levels. However, if these norms are not aligned with the curriculum or with developmentally appropriate expectations, we must question whether their value outweighs the anxiety and negative effects they are causing for both students and teachers. Assessments should enhance learning and teaching, not create barriers to success. The well-being of our learners should take precedence over data collection that does not accurately reflect their abilities or support their educational growth. Again, research tells us that the largest indicator of success in any standardized assessment is socio-economic status. Hence, if the assessments do not cater to a variety of learning styles, languages, cultures, and specific supports, they serve no purpose.

Recommendations for Improvement

To ensure that assessments truly support the learning and development of our students, we respectfully propose the following changes:

- Shift towards more developmentally appropriate assessment methods, such as teacher observations, portfolios, and performance-based tasks.
- Reduce the frequency and duration of standardized testing to protect instructional time.
- Provide professional development for educators on the effective use of formative assessments instead of standardized tests.
- Professional training so our teachers are able to understand and communicate the purpose of, and interpretation of these standardized diagnostic results.
- Ensure assessments are inclusive and culturally responsive to better serve diverse student populations.
- Even if timed recall is required, allowing students to complete the questions in any order would be a more developmentally appropriate alternative.
- Worked with focus groups of teachers to gain valuable insight and feedback. We believe our teachers are trained professionals who, with each passing year become masters of their craft.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these concerns further and share real examples from our schools to illustrate the challenges these assessments create. We also invite you to visit our classrooms to see firsthand the positive impact of our division's assessment practices and the incredible learning that takes place when students are engaged in developmentally appropriate instruction.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this important issue. We believe that by working together, we can create an assessment system that truly supports the social and emotional well-being, as well as the academic growth of our students.

April 10, 2025

Mrs. Jillianna Baldwin

Email: jilliana.baldwin@gmail.com

RE: Follow-up from March 17, 2025 meeting with Superintendent McDonald

Dear Mrs. Baldwin,

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me recently to share your thoughts and concerns regarding the school year calendar. I sincerely appreciate your willingness to engage in open dialogue and your dedication to enhancing the educational experience for all of our students.

Your commitment to student well-being and your passion for making a positive impact on their lives is commendable. We are fortunate to have parents like you who are actively involved and care deeply about the direction and decisions of our school division.

After consideration and discussion with our Board of Trustees, I want to inform you that we will not be making changes to shorten the school year calendar. While we value and respect your perspective, we must also weigh a wide range of factors, including instructional time requirements, provincial guidelines, and the diverse needs of our students and staff.

Please know that your voice has been heard, and your advocacy is appreciated. We remain committed to continuous improvement and welcome your ongoing input as we work together to support student success.

Thank you again for your engagement and partnership.

Warm regards,



Alexander (Sandy) McDonald
Superintendent of Schools
Grande Prairie Public School Division

CC: GPPSD Board of Trustees

AR 128663

April 15, 2025

Mrs. Joan Nellis
 Board Chair
 The Grande Prairie School Division
 10127 - 120 Avenue
 Grande Prairie AB T8V 8H8

Dear Joan,

On behalf of the Government of Alberta, we are pleased to advise you of the following project approval for the Grande Prairie School Division as part of the school capital approval announcements in March 2025.

Design Funding Approval

Project Name	Grade Configuration	Opening/Final Capacity
Addition to Grande Prairie Composite High in Grande Prairie	10 to 12	2,032

Alberta Infrastructure is responsible for the delivery of this project; however, a final decision has not been made regarding the delivery method. Alberta Infrastructure and Alberta Education staff will contact your administration in the following weeks to initiate the collaborative development of this project.

We invite you to explore innovative partnerships that will result in improvements to program quality and the efficient use of resources. To ensure that the project is not delayed, all partnerships should be in place before design work starts. We encourage your school division staff to continue working with Alberta Infrastructure and Alberta Education staff, who are available to provide assistance and guidance as needed.

All approved school projects are now eligible to proceed from one funding stage to the next without having to wait for the next annual budget cycle, significantly accelerating the process for building and modernizing schools in the communities that need them the most.

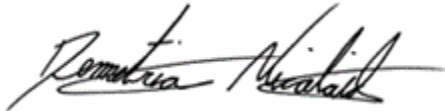
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Please continue to work with your Alberta Education and Alberta Infrastructure contacts throughout the capital project process to ensure this project is accelerated as soon as it is ready.

Your Alberta Infrastructure contact for this project is Greg Leitch, Director, Learning Facilities Branch, who can be reached at greg.leitch@gov.ab.ca or 780-886-7581. Your Alberta Education contact is Peter Burgess, Manager, Stakeholder Relations, Capital Planning, who can be reached at peter.burgess@gov.ab.ca or 780-427-2083. Both numbers can be reached toll free by first dialling 310-0000.

We look forward to the successful and timely completion of this project.

Sincerely,



Demetrios Nicolaidis
Minister of Education



Martin Long
Minister of Infrastructure

cc: Alexander McDonald, Superintendent