

Board of Trustees Meeting Highlights Battle River School Division — Nov. 2020

Audited financial statements approved

The November meeting of the Battle River School Division Board of Trustees focused in large part on reviewing and wrapping up last year's financial picture.

Although the Board was back to meeting in a virtual format, they were joined virtually by a representative of the firm MNP who conducted the annual audit for the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

Auditor Benji Waser spoke to some of the atypical aspects of this year's financial statements, as they reflect a year that began with a multi-million dollar fire damage insurance claim related to Central High Sedgewick Public School and also included a spring revenue decrease caused by the switch to emergency online learning in March.

Mr Waser stated that his firm had done some extra procedural reviews due to COVID-19, to ensure appropriate accountabilities were being maintained, even in these challenging times. He commended management for 'doing a great job in a very unusual year' and said his firm noted no control deficiencies, no indication of irregularities and called this a 'very clean' audit.

Annual Education Results Report presented

Assistant Superintendent Shan Jorgenson-Adam presented the school division's Annual Education Results Report to the Board, which provides data on results for the school year just ended, as well as plans for how to move the division forward to support learning and improving.

Ms. Jorgenson-Adam noted that some of the exam data was not available last school year but also said "there were lots of positives to be found in our schools, despite the challenging times."

Critical Minimum Enrolment Report

Each November the Board receives a summary of enrollment for the current school year, based on a September 30 student count. BRSD continues to be in a time of declining enrollment and in this particular year the local school division, like all others across the province, also has more students than expected who have not returned to the in-person, at-home or online schooling options available.

As a result, there are a number of schools below the Critical Minimum Enrollment guidelines outlined in the Board's Policy 16. No action will be taken at this time, but the Board is hoping to begin community consultation and discussions about the issue of declining enrollment before the end of this school year.

Policy Review ensures BRSD is ready for election candidates

The BRSD Board's Policy Committee continues its ongoing process of reviewing and updating. The emphasis for November was on ensuring that all policies potential candidates in next year's Trustee election might wish to review, such as Role of the Trustee, and Trustee Code of Conduct, are up-to-date.



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Natasha Wilm

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COVID-related updates

The Board received an update from Superintendent Rita Marler regarding plans the school division has in place to support Grade 7 to 12 students as they shift to online learning for the period of November 30 to January 8.

Schools have been preparing for this possibility since last fall and feel they will be able to offer a much more complete online educational experience than the emergency service that was put in place last spring.

More than 700 BRSD students have already been participating in an At-Home Learning Program since September.

BRSD was fortunate to avoid having any COVID cases in schools until the end of October. By the time of the Board meeting on November 26 there had been a total of 10 COVID-19 cases identified, in 6 different BRSD schools.

The school division has well developed response protocols in place for identifying and notifying close contacts of students or staff who test positive, as well as to ensure facilities undergo a deep cleaning when a positive case is identified.

At the time of the Board meeting, it appeared that 9 of the cases had been contracted in the community, while one case may have been contracted through in-school transmission.

- Information based on BRSD Board of Trustees Meeting November 26, 2020



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