

THE CAMROSE BOOSTER

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Battle River School Division

Every Student, Every Day, a Success.



Community Report 2023-24

During Battle River School Division's (BRSD) 2023-24 school year, countless memorable moments were shared throughout the division, all thanks to the diligence and hard work of BRSD students, staff and our families.

BRSD's new superintendent, Rhae-Ann Holoiien, is appreciative of many connections made throughout our schools. A positive learning adventure for an exciting first school year with BRSD is now in the books for Rhae-Ann, and her enthusiasm upon starting her role has been exceeded by her experiences with BRSD celebrations throughout 2023-24.

Rhae-Ann Holoiien has experienced countless memorable moments during her first year as BRSD's Superintendent of Schools.

"I am honoured to have witnessed the meaning behind our vision: Every Student, Every Day, a Success," said Holoiien. "Our vision is continually exemplified in the work of students and staff throughout our division."



To kick off the school year, a learning day was held on August 23, 2023, for administrative staff and bus drivers, and on August 29, 2023, BRSD staff members were welcomed back for a division-wide learning day, marking the first day in many years that staff joined together to celebrate the start of the new school year. The theme, *Everyday Leadership and Resiliency*, created impactful messaging and energy that each person was able to take forward into the 2023-24 school year.

Students were welcomed to school on Tuesday, September 5, by teachers and staff members, eager to offer inspiration to kick off students' learning journeys. To celebrate the start of the school year, schools hosted open houses, meet the staff events and pancake breakfasts.

For 2023-24, BRSD enrolled 5,398 students from grades one through 12 and registered 414 kindergarten and pre-kindergarten students, with increased enrolment from the previous year. Over 5,800 students attended at 19 school locations, two outreach schools, and 10 colony schools. BRSD is a large employer in the area that started the school year with 114 bus drivers and 973 employees, including 351 teachers, 177 substitutes, and 331 support staff members.

Did you know?

On an annual basis, Battle River School Division is required to report to the communities we serve.

This publication was produced and distributed to households throughout the Division at a cost of approximately 53.7 cents per copy.



Many BRSD highlights were experienced throughout the 2023-24 school year

In **AUGUST**, BRSD transportation department team announced that over 700 additional students would be riding buses. This significant increase was due to government revisions that decreased the distance for students to be eligible to ride the bus.

To accommodate increased ridership, while ensuring equality and efficiency, BRSD redesigned the City of Camrose transportation system and added an extra Camrose route. Additionally, in-town transportation options were introduced for eligible rural students in Daysland, Sedgewick, Killam, Tofield, Bashaw, and Viking. Bus routes were also added to accommodate Forestburg, Round Hill, and Camrose rural areas.



The implemented changes reduced average ride times and improved overall efficiency while offering a supportive experience for both students and families. The routes were designed to prioritize riders on a first on, first off basis, ensuring equal ride times for students.

BRSD Transportation also worked to provide an earlier bus registration window, from April to June, for the 2024-25 school year. This change was aimed at providing more timely notification of student bus assignments. This change also allows for better communication between families, schools, bus drivers and transportation department staff.



September 25 was a staff learning day across BRSD.

Our staff participated in various learning sessions and activities. Our bus drivers gathered at Norsemen Inn to connect and engage with staff while learning.

During **SEPTEMBER**, BRSD commemorated National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in various ways around the division to show importance of understanding, reflection, and commemoration.

On September 29, 2023, staff and students celebrated Orange Shirt Day, serving as a symbol of our commitment to reconciliation, and to remind everyone that every child matters.



Throughout September, our classrooms and schools actively engaged in meaningful activities aimed at deepening students' understanding of the history and lasting impacts of residential schools on Indigenous communities. Through activities, students gained deeper understanding of reconciliation and practiced critical thinking for a thoughtful approach to learning about residential schools, their impact, and their historical significance.

In the fall, students participated in volleyball, football, golf, field trips, band, the Terry Fox Run,

and cross-country running, including the 2023 Battle River XC Race Series. On September 28, BRSD's annual Spartan Race included a para/unified race, and hundreds of students from kindergarten to grade 12 gathered in New Norway for an exciting day. BRSD also hosted awards celebrations to recognize students' achievements throughout the division.



In **OCTOBER**, BRSD Board of Trustees held attendance boundary review discussions at École Camrose Composite High School, New Norway School, Ryley School and Daysland School. A survey followed for parents who were unable to attend. A consultant assisted in steering the review and feedback was considered throughout the year. The Board approved motions to make changes to existing division boundaries at its March 28 meeting.

To recognize Bus Safety Week from October 15 to 21, BRSD Transportation teams visited schools to educate students about bus safety practices. Bus safety is a critical, collective responsibility involving mechanics, drivers, supervisors, and our dedicated transportation department. BRSD safely transports over 3,600 students each school day. We emphasize the importance of bus safety to ensure that students are well-prepared in the event of any unexpected circumstances.

On October 30, over 2,100 enthusiastic students from BRSD and other local schools gathered at Encana Arena in Camrose on Thursday, October 26, for the annual Camrose Kodiaks Hockey Hooky game. BRSD superintendent Rhae-Ann Holoien enjoyed mingling with fans and cheering along with many BRSD students at the arena.



In **NOVEMBER**, BRSD Board of Trustees accepted the 2022-23 Annual Education Results Report as presented at its monthly meeting on November 28, 2023, for submission to Alberta Education. This submission is part of the Alberta government's Assurance Framework, a process instituted for schools and school authorities to consistently assess progress and demonstrate success. Some highlights include:

- BRSD's five-year graduation rates improved, while scoring at three per cent above its previous three-year average, additionally sitting above the provincial average.
- BRSD's Safe and Caring and Work Preparation measures demonstrated a high rate of achievement, with 87 per cent of parents and 80 per cent of our students feeling that our schools are safe and caring.
- BRSD's Program of Studies measure demonstrated a high rate of achievement, also showing a high rate of improvement.
- BRSD's First Nations, Métis and Inuit students outperform in comparison to the provincial averages regarding eligibility of Rutherford Scholarship, the high school dropout rate, and the three-year completion rate.

On November 28, BRSD Board of Trustees approved its Audited Financial Statements.

BRSD's International Student Program welcomed students from Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Japan, South Korea, Spain, Thailand and Turkey. Homestay families are essential to the success of the program, and BRSD is grateful to its host families



or email homestay@brsd.ab.ca for information.

BRSD students experience many diverse credit opportunities. In 2023-24, BRSD had 186 students enrolled in Work Experience across the division. Another success is the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) which supports students spending part of their time in school while working in industry as registered apprentices in one of the trades. BRSD partners with Olds College for dual credit opportunities. This allows students to gain high school credits while simultaneously obtaining post-secondary credits. The Green Certificate Program is another opportunity which provides students with access to the first level of agricultural apprenticeship.

Our Professional Learning Series consists of three dates with the first being held in November. During the second date in February, staff participated in *AI in Education and Equity* sessions and breakout sessions, and the final day was held on April 15.

In **JANUARY**, our 2024-25 school calendar was approved and released so that our families had more time to plan for the upcoming year.

In **FEBRUARY**, Kindergarten registration opened, and we promoted our K-12 French Immersion and Late French Immersion programming. French Immersion is open for any student interested in learning French. This opportunity offers adept language skills and bilingualism as a highly sought-after skill, deeper understanding of the Francophone world, enhanced cognitive function, and international connections.

In **MARCH**, BRSD celebrated International Women's Day and remarkable achievements of women throughout our division. We also celebrated Employee Recognition Day on March 1 to express gratitude to dedicated BRSD staff members who work tirelessly to support student success in a positive learning environment. Spring Break took place from March 18 to 22, and Division Office moved to 4302-38 Street during the same week.

We also received news in March that we would receive support, a generous amount of \$60,000 from Battle River Community Foundation, for the summer Reading University program. Our Reading University locations are Camrose, Tofield and virtual online morning and afternoon sessions.

We announced math, science, and physical education Tofield School teacher, Kaden Doerksen as our Edwin Parr Award nominee for 2023-24. Kaden represented our division as one of the Zone 4 nominees for 2023-24.

BRSD Board of Trustees approved the division's capital plan on March 28 for submission to Alberta Education prior to April 1, 2024, for consideration by the Government of Alberta. BRSD prioritized four project requests for its 2025-28 plan, including

for making this opportunity possible. Host families are needed and BRSD offers a monthly \$800 stipend. If you are interested in hosting, please visit brsd.ab.ca

construction projects, modernization, and a partial replacement.

In **APRIL**, BRSD participated in Green Shirt Day on April 7 and we experienced the forecasted solar eclipse with partial visibility throughout Central Alberta the following day. We celebrated National Volunteer Week from April 14 to 20 and Education Week from April 15 to 19. Students continued to compete in sports such as badminton, curling, basketball, and track and field events.

École Charlie Killam School (ÉCKS) prepared for the upcoming school year by hosting Camrose Grade 5 students, who would be starting Grade 6 in September, through weekly Cougars Connect sessions. This opportunity was coordinated in collaboration with our Mental Health Capacity Building (MHCB) and Family School Liaison Worker (FSLW) teams.

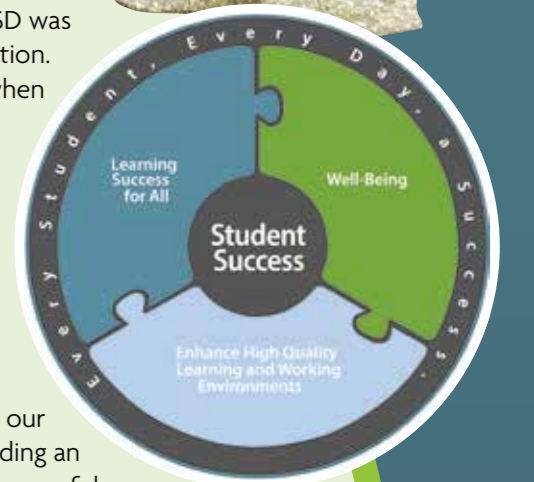
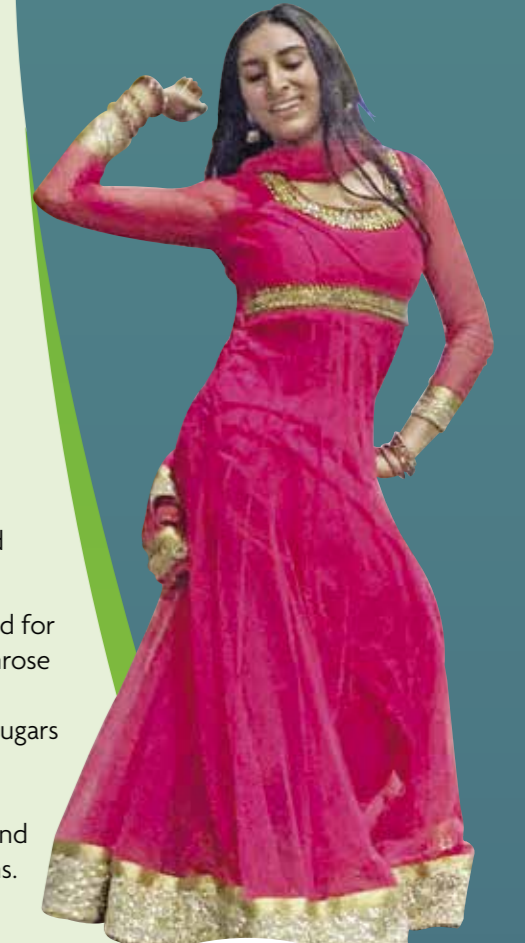
In **MAY**, BRSD shared information about challenges around its 2024-25 budget. BRSD was allocated \$69,734,768 from Alberta Education. This indicates a decrease from last year when we were allocated \$70,243,045. Despite using \$2.9 million of our reserve funds to support instruction in our schools, there was still a reduction in teachers and staff. The budget was approved at the May 23 meeting and submitted to Alberta Education by May 31, 2024.

Also at the meeting, the Board approved BRSD's 2024-27 Education Plan. We began our planning for the three-year plan by extending an invitation to public stakeholders, with a successful tally of 298 responses.

We were grateful to review received insights and suggestions for our planning. This comprehensive plan is designed around our vision: Every Student, Every Day, a Success, and outlines three core priorities: Learning Success for All, Enhance High Quality Learning and Working Environments, and Well-Being. We encourage you to read through it by accessing it on our website.

This spring, Alberta School Boards Association presented students with 2024 Honouring Spirit: Indigenous Student Awards. Two BRSD students, Sheraina and Lucas, are two of Alberta's 230 outstanding Indigenous students who have been acknowledged with honourable mention certificates for their contributions to school and community culture and education through sharing stories to inspire others.

BRSD congratulated our graduates as Farewell celebrations brightened the division in May and June. We could not be more proud of all students and their accomplishments. Thank you to all families for unwavering support and for your communication and collaboration, so that we are able to give students the best opportunity to reach their full potential, dreams and goals. It was an enjoyable year of building these relationships. **THANK YOU!**



Where is the money allocated for 2024-2025?

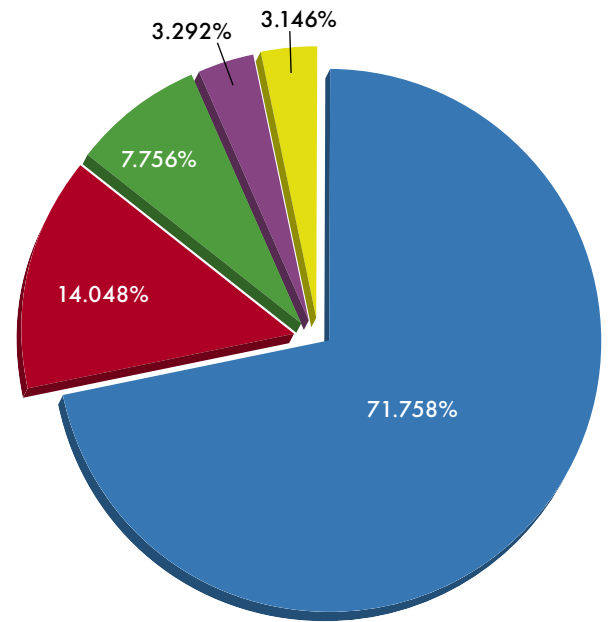
BRSD ensures resources are allocated in ways that best serve the needs and interests of our students. For the 2024-25 school year, BRSD has an overall budget of \$83,000,957. In support of the Board's priorities which directly impact the learning of our students, almost 72 per cent of our spending is directly on Instruction.

BRSD was allocated \$69,734,768 from Alberta Education for 2024-25 operations. The Board passed the budget, using \$2.9 million of our reserve funds to support staffing in our schools.

Operating and maintaining school facilities and creating positive learning environments where students and staff can comfortably spend their days, accounts for 14 per cent of budgeted spending. More than seven per cent of expenditures are budgeted to transport children to and from school each day. This includes the purchase and maintenance of school buses and the salaries and training of our bus drivers.

Just over three per cent of funding is directed to external services. This portion includes providing mental health and personal support programs for students and international promotion of our schools and programs. BRSD is proud to welcome students from across the globe, extending opportunities to enhance engagement, wellness, culture, and diversity in our schools.

The school division is permitted to allocate 3.43 per cent of its spending for Administration. The budget includes 3.29 per cent directed to administration, which includes Board costs, the Superintendent's office, and BRSD's Human Resources and Finance Departments.



- Instruction
- Facilities
- Student Transportation
- Board/Administration
- External Services

	% OF BUDGET	EXPENDITURES
Instruction	71.758%	\$ 59,559,990
Facilities	14.048%	\$ 11,659,615
Student Transportation	7.756%	\$ 6,437,411
Board/Administration	3.292%	\$ 2,732,040
External Services	3.146%	\$ 2,611,901
TOTAL	100%	\$ 83,000,957

BRSD Senior Leadership Team



Rhae-Ann Holoien, Superintendent;
 Natasha Wilm, Assistant Superintendent – Human Resources;
 Imogene Walsh, Secretary-Treasurer;
 Stephen Hoyland, Assistant Superintendent – Education Services

BRSD Board of Trustees



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The Board of Trustees of BRSD was elected to their four-year term in the fall of 2021 and will be in place until the fall of 2025. As they mark the last full year in their term, the Board is looking forward to a great year ahead. They held their Organizational Meeting for the 2024-25 school year in June, in order to be ready to go when the new school year started in September. City of Camrose Trustee, Patrick McFeely, will serve as Board Chair for the next year, while City of Camrose Trustee, Doug Algar, will continue in the role of Vice Chair.



Battle River School Division

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 a Success.*