

[View this email in your browser](#)



OCTOBER 22, 2020

Inspiring all learners to become confident, collaborative and ethical citizens motivated with a passion to achieve a sustainable future.



Based on current enrolments at Peace Wapiti Academy's five junior high feeder schools, the high school will reach 100 per cent utilization by 2022. Among those is Whispering Ridge Community School which has already reached a utilization rate of 90.5 per cent since opening in 2018.

Enrolment and Utilization Report

In his report to the Board, Deputy Superintendent Darren Young announced that enrolment at PWPSD schools currently sits at 5,070 students in ECS - Grade 12, a decrease of two per cent over last September.

Enrolment grew by approximately 14 students at Bonanza School and 15 students at both Harry Balfour School and Sexsmith Secondary School, with the greatest growth seen at Whispering Ridge Community School where 46 new students enrolled in the 2020-21 school year. All other PWPSD schools either maintained or experienced declines in enrolment.

Alberta Education deems a school fully utilized when enrolment reaches 85 per cent of capacity. Since opening in 2018, Whispering Ridge Community School has already reached a utilization rate of 90.5 per cent. Peace Wapiti Academy currently sits at 79.2 per cent utilized, with enrolment projections from its five junior high feeder schools indicating that the high school will reach 100 per cent utilization by 2022. Both schools are included in the Board's upcoming request for modular classrooms.

In their [2021-2024 PWPSD Three-Year Capital Plan](#), the PWPSD Board is seeking government approval for three new schools, listed below. Modernization of Bonanza School is also included in the plan.

1. **A new Grades 9-12 high school**, to reduce enrolment pressure on Peace Wapiti Academy, located in the eastern part of the County of Grande Prairie, preferably at the Five Mile Hall site.
2. **A K-8 school in the southwest Clairmont area**, in response to enrolment growth in the area.
3. **A replacement Peace Wapiti Academy**, located north of the City of Grande Prairie, to address enrolment growth and reduce ride times for students from five rural feeder schools.

Board to request 10 modular classrooms for installation at three schools



Alberta Education has set November 1, 2020 as the deadline for the annual submission of requests for new modular classrooms. A school is deemed fully utilized and in need of additional space once enrolment reaches 85 per cent of capacity.

In his presentation to the Board, Deputy Superintendent Darren Young outlined the need for 10 modular classrooms to address growing student enrolment and utilization at Whispering Ridge Community School and Peace Wapiti Academy, and to replace aging units at Beaverlodge Elementary School. The Board approved the following requests for the 2021-22 school year, for submission to Alberta Education before the November deadline.

Whispering Ridge Community School: Four modular classrooms

This school year, WRCS saw an enrolment increase of 46 students, pushing the school's capacity rate to 90.5 per cent utilized. The school is projected to approach or reach 100 per cent utilization in the upcoming year. With the ongoing construction of new homes in the area, initial conservative estimates saw enrolment increasing steadily by at least seven per cent each year. This year, the school actually experienced enrolment growth of 10 per cent, with projections for the upcoming 2020-21 year estimated at eight to 10 per cent.

Peace Wapiti Academy: Two modular classrooms

Peace Wapiti Academy is currently 79.2 per cent utilized, and is projected to reach 100 per cent by 2022, based on current enrolments at its five junior high feeder schools – Bezanson, Clairmont Community, Harry Balfour, Penson and Whispering Ridge Community Schools.

Beaverlodge Elementary School: Four modular classrooms

PWPSD will request replacement of four aging modular units that were constructed on site in 1980 and are well past their projected 30-year lifespan.

School Council members present proposal to educate ECS-Grade 12 students in Beaverlodge

Beaverlodge Elementary School Council members Stacey Korzenowski, Chair and Lana Clark, Treasurer presented on the current structure of PWPSD education in Beaverlodge that sees Grades 7-9 students bused to Hythe Regional School after completing Grade 6 at Beaverlodge Elementary School. Following completion of Grade 9, students then return to Beaverlodge Regional High School for Grades 10-12.

The pair presented a proposal that would see Grades 7-9 students educated in the Town of Beaverlodge by merging the three grades into the existing elementary and high school structures in the interim, until a new ECS - Grade 9 school facility could be built.

Reasoning behind the proposal includes ending the need for out-of-town busing to Hythe, improved student and family access to extracurricular activities, relationship continuity among students, greater academic success due to fewer school transitions, and as a response to declining enrolment at the elementary school.

The Board received the report as information, noting that it will be added to a future Committee of the Whole meeting agenda.

Mental Health and Wellness Report



Left-right: Heather Putio, PWPSD Assistant Superintendent; Ashley Mercer, PWPSD Mental Health Clinical Lead; and Heather Craigdallie, a Psychologist with Peace Collaborative Services.

In her annual report to the Board, Assistant Superintendent Heather Putio expressed thanks to the County of Grande Prairie FCSS, the M.D. of Greenview and the Municipalities of Saddle Hills and Birch Hills for their ongoing provision of mental health and wellness supports within the classroom.

Ms. Putio's co-presenters, Ashley Mercer, PWPSD Mental Health Clinical Lead and Heather Craigdallie, a Psychologist with Peace Collaborative Services are responsible for leading the mental health and wellness services provided to PWPSD students.

In light of the current public health guidance around COVID-19, Ms. Mercer reviewed a visual explaining the continuum of mental health in a pandemic, highlighting the different phases a population experiences and the need for support throughout each one.

Ms. Craigdallie noted that overall, PWPSD students are doing well with the adjustment to COVID-19 guidance, whereas some staff are expressing exhaustion and a feeling of disconnect from their colleagues. She also reviewed targeted supports that are designed to meet four tiers of increasingly complex needs of students.

In reviewing the PWPSD Mental Health Professional Team roles and responsibilities – assessment; risk assessments; treatment and evaluation; and consultation, psychoeducation and collaboration – Ms. Mercer said that she and her team focus on suicide risk and have selected a research-based assessment protocol, adding to it a tailored list of resources available in the Grande Prairie area. This suicide risk assessment protocol offers online training, requires no specialized mental health training, and can be used by teachers who are often the ones who have the greatest connection with the student.

Research emphasizes that using the right words is necessary when assessing a student in

need. The protocol is centred on six key questions that use plain language, with additional follow-up questions based on the student's responses.

Ms. Mercer explained that the protocol's simplified colour-coding ranking system helps teachers convey standardized results to the Mental Health Team, and the speed in which the assessment can be conducted means that a student is able to receive rapid specialized support through Children's Mental Health Services.

"No risk assessment is foolproof, but we know that when we ask the right questions, we can get the right answers," adds Ms. Mercer.

Policy Review Committee Report

The Board approved the Policy Review Committee Report from the meeting held on October 13, 2020, including the regularly scheduled review of:

- *Policy DFA – Investments*: no changes required.
- *Policy IFA – Appeals Concerning Student Matters*: no changes required.
- *Policy IHCG – Nutrition Policy*: no changes required.
- *Policy IECC – Student Re-Entry Under Special Circumstances*: minor changes to update the language and reflect the current process.

All PWPSD policies are available in the online [PWPSD Policy Handbook](#).

Memorandum of Agreement

The Board ratified the Memorandum of Agreement for ATA Local Bargaining between Peace Wapiti Public School Division and the Alberta Teachers' Association, dated September 21, 2020.

Committee and Meeting Reports

- Trustee Kelm, Chair of the **Audit Committee**, shared a report from the meeting held on October 19.
- Trustee Knull presented the **PSBAA AGM Report**.

Upcoming Events

- **November Diploma Exams begin:** Thursday, October 29. [See schedule.](#)
- **Leaders of Tomorrow Awards – Nomination Deadline:** Monday, November 2, 4:30 p.m. Nominate students, ages 13-15 and 16-18, in four award categories: [Leadership](#), [Volunteering](#), [Perseverance](#) and [Advocacy](#). Hosted by the GP Volunteer Services Bureau Leaders of Tomorrow Awards. Presented by ATCO. [Nomination info.](#)
- **Mamawhitowin “Coming Together” 2020 Indigenous Learning Series:** Click or tap the links to register for sessions through the NRLC.
 - [Richard Van Camp, Reclaiming our Stories:](#) Mondays, November 2, 9 and 16, 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.
 - [Jason BigCharles, Infusing Traditional Land-Based Learning into Curriculum:](#) Wednesday, December 2, 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.
 - [Teacher Feature – Infusing Indigenous Knowledge into Curriculum:](#) Tuesdays, January 12 - February 16, 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.
- **[Virtual Take Our Kids to Work Day:](#)** Tuesday, November 3.
- **Remembrance Day:** Wednesday, November 11. No school. PWPSD offices and shops closed.
- **Public School Boards' Council Meeting:** Friday-Saturday, November 13-14.
- **Rock Your Mocs:** November 15-21
- **National Child Day:** Friday, November 20.
- **Professional Learning Day:** Friday, November 20. No school.
- **[Next Board Meeting:](#)** Thursday, November 26, 10:30 a.m., PWPSD Central Office.

[Media: Request an interview](#)





PEACE WAPITI
PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION

Educating Today for Success Tomorrow

PWPSD BOARD NEWS

**A report on news from Peace Wapiti Public School Division,
published following each Board Meeting.**

Content and Design:

Angela Sears, Communications Officer, angelasears@pwpsd.ca
Peace Wapiti Public School Division,
Central Office, 8611A-108 Street, Grande Prairie, AB T8V 4C5

For more good news, see the News & Announcements section on our website at www.pwpsd.ca.