

Livingstone Range School Division #68

Superintendent Report

2019-2020 School Year



Darryl Seguin
For the Month of: April

Highlights

Functions & Meetings

- Pandemic Planning—The entire school jurisdiction came together in a very short period of time to enable education continuity for our students while at the same time working hard to ensure student and staff safety. We are so proud and grateful for the incredible work by so many during this unprecedented time.
- Held daily admin council meetings for close to two weeks to keep communication lines open with administrators. Questions asked, answers provided as soon as possible. Likewise, many school administrators held regular staff meetings to relay information from Division office to staff and to receive staff questions and pass them along to senior administration for clarification when needed.
- Increased communications with parents from Division office – common jurisdiction messages.
- Monthly Admin. Council meeting: Budget training provided by Jeff & Anthony—Leadership Quality Standard #8 Managing School Operations and Resources.
- Regular monthly Board meeting.
- Board Policy Committee—Worked on BP 3, 9 & 13.
- Audit Committee Meeting.
- Interviewed and hired the new administration (principal and assistant principal) at both Livingstone School and J.T. Foster School.
- Wrote Eye on Education article—School Closures and COVID-19.

Key Areas for Next Month

- L2L Steering Committee Meeting--Virtual
- ASBIE Strategic Plan Meeting—Virtual
- Staffing conversations with school based administration—Virtual
- Evaluation write ups (principal and associate superintendents)
- Admin Procedures work continued
- Easter Break

Lethbridge Herald
Eye on Education Article for March 18, 2020
School Closures and COVID-19

It has been one week since COVID-19 was declared a pandemic. A lot has happened since then. The situation is unprecedented and fluid, and we are fortunate to have Alberta's Chief Medical Health Officer, Dr. Hinshaw, guiding the provincial response. In cooperation with Alberta Education Minister, Adriana LaGrange, Dr. Hinshaw met with Alberta Superintendents, School Boards and other stakeholders on Saturday, March 14, 2020 via teleconference to provide direction and answer questions regarding elementary and secondary schools' response to COVID-19.

I found this meeting reassuring and extremely helpful in answering many of the questions Albertans had concerning the operation of schools during this time. I was grateful that the Ministry of Education as well as Dr. Hinshaw were receptive to hear more from School Boards and Superintendents regarding the logistical impact of the practice of zero tolerance for ill students and staff.

Although Alberta had put in place many aggressive measures to try to prevent the spread of, or at least "flatten the curve," of COVID-19, many Albertans were left wondering why schools were initially to remain open in our province. As you can imagine, the decision to keep schools open or closed is complex. In order for school closures to be effective, Dr. Hinshaw suggested that school closures would be in place for months rather than weeks. On March 15, 2020 information regarding the nature and scope of the spread of COVID-19 in Alberta changed such that Dr. Hinshaw announced a stoppage of all regular operation of daycares, playschools and K-12 schools which would take place immediately. For the time being, K-12 schools remain open to healthy staff, however classes are cancelled.

Seventy-four percent (74%) of children in Alberta do not have a stay at home parent/guardian. Schools play a critical role in the provincial response to public health issues as medical experts balanced public health risks with actions that significantly impact society as a whole. When classes are cancelled, parents/guardians who do not have regular childcare in place may be forced to stay home from work. If parents are home, who is handling the hospitals, grocery stores, pharmacies, utility companies and the host of other venues that we as a society depend on? For parents/guardians who have no choice but to work, who will care for their children? How are the almost 750,000 K-12 students in our province going to receive their education?

These are very real problems that we are facing currently in our province. The decision to cancel classes was not entered into lightly given the difficulties that will inevitably arise, however, the health and safety of Albertans is of paramount importance. Over the next several days, school divisions will review how education can still be delivered to students who are not physically in the building. Many online platforms and virtual strategies exist and will be used in the continuing education of our children but other options will need to be explored for those without internet or devices.

I have the highest respect and appreciation for all our professionals who spend hours each day teaching, supporting and caring for our children. I have full confidence that Alberta's professional educators will continue to be collaborative, creative and innovative as they do all they can to make the best of education in these challenging times.