



## SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

November 23, 2021 Board Meeting

### WRSD Average Class Size Data (# of students per class):

|                          | 2021-22 | 2020-21 | 2019-20 | 2018-19 | 2017-18 | 2016-17 | 2015-16 |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Div 1<br/>(K-3)</b>   | 18.9    | 18.5    | 19.8    | 20.2    | 19.7    | 19.5    | 19.9    |
| <b>Div 2<br/>(4-6)</b>   | 21.9    | 20.9    | 24.0    | 24.6    | 23.8    | 23.9    | 23.6    |
| <b>Div 3<br/>(7-9)</b>   | 21.3    | 20.7    | 26.5    | 25.3    | 24.5    | 24.9    | 24.3    |
| <b>Div 4<br/>(10-12)</b> | 23.1    | 19.5    | 21.9    | 22.5    | 23.0    | 22.6    | 21.3    |

From 2015-16 to 2019-20 WRSD average class sizes were quite consistent:

- Division 1 (K-3): approximately 20 students per class
- Division 2 (4-6): approximately 24 students per class
- Division 3 (7-9): approximately 24 to 26 students per class
- Division 4 (10-12): approximately 21 to 23 students per class

In 2020-21 our average class sizes were significantly lower. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the development of an at-home learning program for 450 students staffed by 10 teachers and 1 educational assistant funded by the federal COVID-19 grant. We also lost approximately 300 students compared to the 2019-20 school year due to families moving or choosing home education during the pandemic. Not having these students in our schools resulted in significantly lower class sizes during the 2020-21 school year. Although we missed having these students in our schools, the lower class sizes were helpful given the need for greater physical distancing in our schools during the pandemic.

In the current 2021-22 school year, we are no longer operating an at-home learning program (due to lack of interest) and we also saw the return of some students that had enrolled in home education the year before. As a result our class sizes have increased slightly. However, the “hold harmless” funding we received from Alberta Education has resulted in average class sizes that can continue to be lower than usual, with the exception of grades 10-12 which has returned

to pre-pandemic levels. If this “hold harmless” funding is no longer available for the 2022-23 school year, we anticipate class sizes will continue to increase at all grade levels.

**Early Learning Disruption Grant (Gr. 2-3):** Wild Rose School Division has received government funding to support our grade 2 and 3 learners in Literacy and Numeracy. Based on receiving \$490 for 486 students, \$238,140.00 is being distributed across our nine elementary schools. The distribution is based on the number of students each school tested out as at risk in Literacy and Numeracy. In conjunction with the Learning Services department, schools are making decisions about how best to use these dollars based on local context and needs. All schools are purchasing resources, some schools are adding extra teacher time, some education assistant time. Schools are also providing release time to teachers to learn more and build their own capacity. Grade 1 students will be tested just after Christmas break and more grant funds will be applied for to support their learning needs.

**Land Based Learning Cart Pilot:** The Learning Services team is piloting a land based learning cart full of learning tools and supplies to get students outside and learning. The ideas and resources for the project were developed in conjunction with curriculum and Indigenous education leaders from Elk Island Public Schools and Edmonton Public Schools. Land based learning recognizes the deep connection and relationship of Indigenous Peoples to land and place. It is grounded in Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy for the benefit of all. Students spend time outside setting goals, exploring strategies and curricular outcomes to learn from the land. Land-based learning enhances traditional and cultural values such as identity, kinship, language and ceremonies. By exploring their relationship with the land and community, students make their own meaning and create their own stories. We are starting with Aurora Elementary and hope to soon expand to all schools.



**New Curriculum Review:** The Learning Services team, with the support of key teachers and other senior leadership team members, submitted feedback to the CASS K-6 new curriculum review project. The Learning Services team then assisted with the compiling progress, leading the Science subject section of the project. The interim report has been submitted to the Minister of Education by CASS.

**Professional Learning:** With the impact of COVID-19 stretching into a second year, Learning Services has been shifting its Professional Learning delivery model. With a shortage of substitute teachers and an inability to bring teachers and staff together face to face we have been trying different approaches. We are offering short, 45 minute Wednesday after school sessions on literacy and numeracy topics. Our own teachers are presenting and sharing the excellent work going on in WRSD schools. These topics aren't tied to the current curriculum, but

intentionally looking at board topics to align with the upcoming curriculum shift. We have had over 25 teachers take part in just the first two weeks. A second project is helping to build understanding of First Nations, Métis and/or Inuit culture and history with a slow drip approach to learning with a once a week ten minute lesson via email. The lessons are aimed at building background and foundational knowledge in any staff member. 60 staff members are currently signed up!

**New Funding Announced for Alberta Students with FASD:** The Government of Alberta recently announced the return of the Wellness Resiliency and Partnerships (WRaP) project to help students with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). The province will be allocating \$1 million per year for five years to launch the project and partnering with the 12 FASD networks across Alberta. Alberta's FASD networks and school authorities will work together to deploy new tools across the province to help educators create learning environments that support and engage students with FASD. In terms of WRSD, the FASD network has used this money to hire 2 mentors that are able to support our teachers with any question or training that they may need to better support their students with FASD. They are able to attend on PD days, during prep time or after school if that is helpful. The support is virtual and referrals can be made directly to their emails or through their [website](#).

**Capital Projects Update:**

Charlotte Small Elementary - The gym walls have been completed and the erection of the structural steel is well under way. The installation of the roof decking has begun and roofers are expected to begin in the next two weeks. Installation of plumbing and other underground services is to begin soon.

David Thompson High School Replacement - The construction of the gym walls continues and foundation work is nearing completion. This site will continue to focus on reaching a point where they can heat the structure so winter work can continue.

While both sites made considerable progress due to favorable weather this fall, winter construction processes such as hoarding and heating are now in place which means a more normal construction pace for this time of year.

HW Pickup School Replacement- Tenders have closed and proposals will be reviewed by Alberta Infrastructure. Mobilization dates will be determined after the award of the contract.

**Early Learning** Our Prekindergarten teachers have worked diligently over the last 4 months to develop division wide curricular outcomes for our programs. Since Prekindergarten does not have a set curriculum from Alberta Education we have developed outcomes that demonstrate a continuum of skills from ages 3 up to ages 5. This continuum allows teachers the flexibility to easily personalize the learning for all students.

**Student Services:** To replace Non Violent Crisis Intervention protocols, we have had two people trained as Trainers in Studio 3 This is a low arousal, preventative approach that helps teachers identify triggers and implement strategies to prevent escalations. Currently two schools have accessed this support.