

Successful school start-up

The Board of Trustees is pleased with the calm and patient approach that has been evident throughout Chinook's Edge during our [re-entry to school](#). The general sentiment is that start-up was smooth and successful in our schools. For Board comments, please listen to an [Olds Radio interview](#) with Board Chair Holly Bilton. The Central Office team has spent considerable time connecting with staff to garner input from a variety of voices, including reflection time with all school administration teams, members of the Teachers Matter Committee and the Superintendent's Advisory Team. As well, school staff discussed details around start-up during the September 11th Organizational Day.

Staff feel 'overwhelmingly thankful' for the staggered entry, which provided multiple benefits in addition to the priority of safety. It created opportunities for staff to build routines, expectations and connections with students as they arrived in smaller groups. The addition of daytime custodians was also repeated as a bonus. Reflecting on some of the challenges, staff reported some pressure regarding the need to increase supervision due to the staggered drop-off/pick-up of students. As well, they are aware of a heightened need to observe students through a mental health and wellness lens. Given the complexity of returning to school during this time, Trustees are aware that the majority of students and families are excited to be back at school, and thank the enormous efforts of all staff in creating a safe and welcoming environment for Chinook's Edge students.

"Students are excited to be back! They seem so appreciative of the importance of school in both social and academic areas, and are very willing to follow the new safety rules. They are amazingly adaptable, flexible and happy."

- Just a few of the many positive comments from the Teachers Matter Committee

Responding to COVID-19 Symptoms

In his most recent [letter to parents](#), Superintendent Kurt Sacher shared a two-page [document](#) which outlines how families can help minimize disruptions at school and reduce the chances that anyone needs to self-isolate. [COVID-19 updates](#) are continually shared to ensure the safest learning environment possible in each of our schools.

Federal Government COVID funding

The Chinook's Edge portion of the federal funding amounted to just under \$4 million, which Superintendent Kurt Sacher called tremendous for the division. "These funds help create stability in our classrooms, as well, and safety in our schools. We are very appreciative, although a great deal of money has been spent on hand sanitizers, masks and other additional supplies that go beyond what the government has provided. We are tracking these ongoing and unanticipated costs," said Superintendent Sacher.

Carstairs Elementary Expansion

With a new school year underway, we are pleased to report that construction on the Carstairs Elementary School [Expansion Project](#) is about to begin.

Student Services Coordinators

As part of a re-visioning for how Chinook's Edge can most efficiently and effectively serve students, the Student Services Department has established a three-zone coordinator approach. Rather than the previous structure where each coordinator was responsible for different portfolios of work (Early Year Intervention, English as a Second Language, Assistive Technology), each coordinator will now provide specialized support in all areas within a zone of schools across the large division. Each zone (South, Central, North) will be served by a coordinator.

For students, this means the zone coordinator is able to provide direct intake and work with transitional supports from elementary to high school, and inclusive information can then be promptly assessed and triaged by the full Student Services team to determine how best to meet that student's needs. The team involves Occupational Therapy, Speech Language Pathology, Psychologist, Coordinator Consultation, Family School Wellness programming and the Associate Superintendent Student Services, who provide interventions, supports, or further community referrals for quick response as needed. At a time when schools and communities across the continent are facing a growing number of complexities by a larger number of students, this data-informed decision making will ensure efficacy through swift interventions and caseload management.



Chinook's Edge Student Services

Coordinators: Sharon Collin (south zone), Giselle Meyer (central zone) and Tannis Wright (north zone). All three are accomplished educators, administrators and mental health professionals.

Working towards solutions

The Chinook's Edge Superintendents Team reports they are connecting more than ever with peers in other divisions, and feel the approach to learning is aligned more closely as a province. For instance, the six day staggered re-entry decision was made with multiple divisions and all chose to proceed with the slower re-entry plan. As complexity goes up, the need to collaborate increases and this is also leading to positive impacts on other school business beyond dealing with COVID-19. The College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) is sharing re-entry plans and helping one another. It's creating greater innovation from our Superintendents.

[Media Release: A small but mighty team of new teachers join Chinook's Edge](#)

The annual three-day orientation and mentorship program involves teachers who are either new to the profession or new to the division, and is broadly considered to be one of the most extensive programs of its kind in Alberta.

[Celebrating Chinook's Edge](#)