

WRPS 2023-2026

Education Plan

"Inspiring students to become the best they can be."



June 2023 www.wrps11.ca

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This is our way

Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools (WRPS) is a learning organization which embraces a strength-based approach to student learning. We frame our work from an appreciative perspective which poses an overarching question, "How can we ensure that every student in WRPS can learn in a powerful learning environment?" This approach does not ignore the many learning challenges that exist; rather, we choose to focus on what is right with the world as opposed to what is wrong. We inquire into our peak experiences, and value the gifts each student and staff member brings to our schools.

WRPS has adopted *Powerful Learning Environments* to help communicate the goals and priorities in our three year plan for education. Listed below is a brief explanation of the elements of our model:

- Success for all Students it is our belief that students will receive a quality education in a
 culture that is inclusive, supports mutual respect, celebrates diversity, and honours the
 dignity of those we serve and for those who serve.
- Well Being- a priority for WRPS is to champion student and staff well being.
- Relationships we know the importance of fostering effective relationships with our students, parents, and community members through thoughtful and meaningful interactions.
- **Culturally Responsive-** WRPS acknowledges and honours the diverse lived experiences, beliefs, practices, customs and rituals that reflect the diversity of our families and students
- Medicine Wheel "the circle shape represents the interconnectivity of all aspects of one's being, including the connection with the natural world" (Indigenous Corporate Teaching Inc., 2022)
- Student Voice and Choice We recognize the importance of partnering with students and
 parents to engage in effective processes that allow our student's voices to be heard. We
 provide students meaningful opportunities to make choices related to their learning
 experiences.
- High-Yield Instructional Strategies Research based strategies that have the greatest positive effect on student achievement for all students, in all subject areas, at all grade levels (Marzano, 2001.)
- Innovative and Creative Programming Innovative and creative programming creates learning opportunities that engage our students in a personalized, flexible, student-centered manner based on the needs of 21st-century students.
- Rigorous and Relevant Curriculum Rigorous and relevant curriculum challenges students to integrate and apply their learning to real world situations. Students are

- challenged to use higher order thinking skills and to demonstrate mastery of discipline-specific concepts and skills.
- Purposeful Assessment Assessment is merely the means of gathering information about student learning (Black, 2013). Purposeful assessment is using that information to inform instruction, guide student learning, and provide feedback.
- Personalised and Flexible Learning Environments Our staff recognizes that all learners are unique, have distinct interests and this requires individualization in both programming and in the learning environment.

Accountability Statement

The Education Plan for The Wetaskiwin School Division for the three years commencing September 1, 2023 was prepared under the direction of the Board in accordance with the responsibilities under the Education Act and the Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act. This rolling plan was developed in the context of the provincial government's business and fiscal plans. The Board used its performance results to develop the plan and is committed to implementing the strategies contained within the plan to improve student learning and results. The Board approved the Education Plan for 2023-2026 in June 2023.

Karen Becker, Board Chair

Karen Becker

Message From Our Board Chair

The 2022 - 2023 school year has been one of change and growth. The Board has been working with Superintendent, Mike Wake, to bring a new vision to WRPS. The Board has worked diligently to update policies, committee structures, and to revise our priorities, not only to meet the needs of our students, staff and communities, but to work toward a common vision for WRPS.

The priorities that we believe will lead us to our goals are to:

- Demonstrate our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation and the spirit of the Calls to Action both which represent the beliefs and natural laws since time immemorial.
- Honor that parents/guardians/caregivers are essential partners and the primary voice in the lives of students.
- Demonstrate integrity and transparency in our stewardship of public education.
- Demonstrate a commitment to rural sustainability by providing innovative programming in modernized facilities that support 21st Century learning.
- Align our policies, processes, and practices to meet the needs of our community.
- Commit to learning about how Treaty language and the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action should guide our governance decisions, practices and relationships.

We are also committed to bringing new and innovative programming to our schools, and to connect with the community, local businesses and non-profit organizations to create new and unique opportunities for our students.

The Education plan for 2024-2027 reflects the Board priorities, expanded opportunities for student learning, and hope and optimism for the future.

Karen Becker, Board Chair

Message From Our Superintendent

Our Education Plan for the next three years showcases WRPS's unwavering commitment to offering learning opportunities that ensure success for every student. Page 2 features a compelling visual representation of our learning environment, which we expect to be present in all our learning spaces. This representation recognizes the importance of fostering a sense of belonging among students and staff as a fundamental element of our achievements.

Our dedicated staff actively engage in building positive relationships within our learning community, paving the way for successful learning experiences. The Education Plan is founded on the belief in collective efficacy, as WRPS utilizes collaborative inquiry as a pedagogical practice in our ongoing commitment to improvement. It is the product of the combined knowledge and insight of the Board of WRPS Trustees and the Leadership Team, including administrators from both Central Office and our schools.

The plan endeavors to encourage all WRPS staff members to actively participate in professional development, fostering our collective effectiveness in supporting student learning. The priorities set by the Board play a vital role in guiding our strategic plan. These priorities are carefully determined after considering the needs of the learning community we serve. In Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools, we place great emphasis on inclusive practices, including strengthening our collaboration with Indigenous communities to embrace Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing.

At WRPS, we are fully devoted to the success of all our students. Our schools remain adaptable and responsive to address the academic, social, and emotional needs of the students. We recognize that achieving educational success requires a partnership between students, caregivers, and staff. Providing opportunities for students and caregivers to voice their thoughts and make choices is crucial as they actively participate in their children's educational journeys. By fostering social and academic growth, we aim to create a positive and lasting impact as a school division, ensuring that our students thrive in all aspects of their lives.



Mr. Mike Wake, Superintendent of Schools

Our Division's Profile for 2023-2024

Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools (WRPS) serves 3448 students in 17 schools located in the City of Wetaskiwin, the County of Wetaskiwin, and the Town of Millet.



The schools range in size from approximately 12 students in one of the two Hutterite Colony schools to over 812 students in a high school in the City of Wetaskiwin. 967 of our students identify as Indigenous. By geographic area, seven schools are located in the City of Wetaskiwin, seven rural schools in the County of Wetaskiwin, two colony schools, and one school in the Town of Millet.

WRPS provides a high quality of education to its students within a safe and caring environment with various program supports. We have enhanced our services related to counselling services, special education, career counselling and student mental health.

WRPS offers a broad range of programming options for students. These include, but are not limited to: Indigenous Education, Mental Health Capacity Building, and Outreach Programs. WRPS offers a range of fitness, health and wellness, art, drama, music and sport options for students throughout the Division.

WRPS' extracurricular programming allows students opportunities to become involved in music and drama productions, special interest clubs, and athletic teams, contributing to a student's well-rounded education.

WRPS employs approximately 231 certificated teaching staff and 200 support staff. WRPS is governed by an elected Board of six trustees, and one Maskwacis First Nations Trustee who is appointed to the Board by the Maskwacis Four Bands. Each school is represented by a school council or parent advisory committee where parents and teachers work together to enhance student learning and well-being.





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Alberta Education Business Plan

Our education plan is mindful of the <u>2023-26 Ministry Business Plan: Education</u>. Its first outcome is that Alberta's students are successful. High school completion is a critical metric for our students' success. We agree that experiential learning with links to employment opportunities after high school are pathways to the achievement of this goal.

We are deeply committed to the success of our Indigenous students. An ongoing commitment to the retention of Indigenous support workers in our schools and the development of Cree programming are critical strategies. As is our trauma informed approach to supporting all students. Maintaining partnerships with MESC and the re-imagining of the Maskwacis Education Council are priorities moving forward.

We recognize that teacher learning is inexorably linked to student learning. Our strategies focus on the professional learning of our teachers, school and school authority leaders.

Alberta Education Assurance Model Required Measures

Alberta Education assesses performance broadly and consistently across all school authorities. School authorities report their performance on the AEAMs in their AERR and use the results to develop their education plan.

In addition to the AEAMs, school authorities provide results from local measures and descriptive information aligned with the assurance areas. This local component complements the provincial measures, enabling a balanced assessment of school authority progress and performance.

Student Growth and Achievement	 Provincial Achievement Test results Diploma Exam results Early Literacy and Numeracy results High School Completion results Citizenship Student Learning Engagement
Teaching and Leading	Education Quality
Learning Support	Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environment and Access to Supports and Services
Governance	Parental Involvement

Our Trends and Challenges

Declining Enrollment

WRPS acknowledges the significance of choice and the potential for division when the school learning community is affected. Based on data from the Canada Revenue Agency and Stats Canada Census, which was presented by Barager (a planning software for school districts), it has been observed that there is a decline in birth rates and enrollment within the defined boundaries of WRPS. According to projections for 2026, there is an estimated decrease in enrollment of 332 students since 2015. A comparison of birth rates between 2017 and 2020 reveals a decline of 30%. It has been observed since 2016 that 12 out of 14 schools within WRPS are operating at less than 75% capacity. Additionally, there are 5 schools with a total population of fewer than 155 students.

Mental Health

Post - pandemic, we are experiencing an increase in mental health concerns for our students overall. The increased stress experienced by families and students had an adverse effect on the mental and emotional well-being of our community. Our Mental Health Capacity Building team continues to be focused on promotion and prevention in each of our schools. The team supports skill building for our students and our staff. Our school counsellors and family school liaisons support our students and families when crises arise and work collaboratively with community agencies to support the mental health needs.

Equity

Equity in programming, being culturally responsive and supporting the needs of all students continues to be an area of focus for our school division. Our education plan on equity prioritizes support to schools based on their needs and strives to provide access to a diverse range of programming across our geographically large division. We are committed to addressing Truth and Reconciliation calls to action and aim for culturally responsive programs that honour Indigenous cultures and traditions. We recognize that the ability to provide support is dependent on available resources, and we will continue to advocate for additional resources to ensure that all students have the support they need to succeed.

Alberta Education's New Curriculum Implementation

Alberta Education implemented three new curriculums in September of 2022. The new curriculums implemented were English Language Arts and Literature, Mathematics in Kindergarten to Grade Three. Additionally, a new Physical Education and Wellness curriculum in grades Kindergarten to Grade Six was also implemented in September of 2022.

In September of 2023 new curriculum in English Language Arts and Literature and Mathematics for Grades Four to Six will be implemented. It is also anticipated that a new Science and Fine Arts curriculum for Kindergarten to Grade Three will be implemented in the Fall of 2023.

WRPS staff will be fully supported in these new curriculum areas in a variety of ways with consultative services and professional learning opportunities through the Central Alberta Regional Consortia.

Over the 2023-2024 school year, administrators and teachers will be provided multiple opportunities to enhance competence and confidence with the new curriculums being implemented in the fall of 2023.



Our Collaborative Inquiry

Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools administrators and teachers have worked to successfully implement and establish a culture of Professional Learning Communities along with structures to Response to Intervention which has now evolved into the Collaborative Response Model to meet our students' needs. Our district-wide focus builds on quality classroom instruction and teacher expertise. Through Collaborative Planning Time, Collaborative Team Meetings and Professional Learning Days, staff are engaged in an inquiry process that positively impacts student achievement and soundly addresses the priorities of the Board.

We know that together we are better learners and teachers and that all staff in WRPS work in the best interest of every student. At the heart of that work are four core beliefs of the Collaborative Response:

- All students can succeed.
- Teachers make the greatest impact on student learning.
- Schools cannot achieve high levels of success when adults work in isolation.
- Leadership is responsible for ensuring structures for collaboration.

Our education plan builds upon previous plans and leans on educational research which identifies best and promising practices. Framing our goal as a question invites our staff to participate in action research and to be fully engaged in their learning.



Our Strategies and Measures

Collaborative Response

Mâmawohkamâtowin - working cooperatively and collectively to serve our students; realizing the vision will require everyone's efforts to achieve.

Collaborative Response (CR) is a school framework that values collaborative, action focused responses, data-informed discussions, and timely support to ensure all students can experience success. It is a natural extension of the Professional Learning Community work that WRPS has been working on for a number of years. Schools teams dedicated time, established in our Learning Calendar, which is approved by our Board of Trustees, to learn about, and focus on the structures of CR. The dedicated time allows our teams to also focus on the related topics to support CR such as, professional learning communities, response to intervention, universal design for learning, differentiated instruction and formative assessment. Collaboration among teachers must be purposeful and structured; these structures and processes allow staff members to come together to develop a layered approach to responding to the needs of students, as well as ensuring collaborative time for teams. The structures that will be utilized are: Collaborative Team Meetings, Collaborative Planning, School Support Team Meetings and Case Consult Team Meetings.

Strategies

- 1. Continued partnership with <u>Jigsaw Learning</u> to provide professional learning to leadership and schools on Collaborative Response August 2023 and continuing through to June 2024.
- All School Teams create a School Learning Success Plan which dovetails with Collaborative Response.
- 3. All School Teams follow our Division Wide Collaborative Response Implementation Strategic Plan.
- 4. Schools establish a schedule of collaborative team meetings, collaborative planning meetings, case consult meetings, school support team meeting.
- 5. All schools will utilize the **Dossier CR Module software** to support school-wide efforts.
- 6. Division Office and schools will Inform their respective communities of the Collaborative Response approach for the school.

Performance Measures

1. School staff will complete the CR Questionnaire by September 30, 2023 in order to measure growth in collective efficacy.

Well Being

Well-being takes on a different meaning for each person. Well-being evolves and changes over time.

In WRPS, well-being is defined as "tipi pimatisistamowin", living life to its fullest, both individually and collectively. Well-being nourishes a sense of belonging, respect, trust, and healthy choices.

The WRPS Well-Being Guiding Coalition has set the focus for staff well-being through reflection and analysis of the data gathered from staff throughout the school division. The Well-Being Guiding Coalition represents support staff and certificated staff with a member from each site being part of the team. Our division focus is on regular intentional acts to support well being especially in the areas of trust and physical and psychological safety. The well-being of all is essential to support healthy adults who are at their best to support our students.

In the spring of 2023 data was gathered from Grade 4 to 12 students across the school division via a survey. Our Well-being working group will meet with students from across the school division to contextualise the survey results, which will support our direction forward.

Strategies

- 1. Development and implementation of strategies identified by school teams to support the school communities well being. Small, regular intentional acts.
- 2. Meet with students across the school division to hear what we need to focus on and how.
- 3. Analyze and use the data to develop strategies and plans to intentionally nourish well-being in WRPS (or work plan for the school division).
- 4. Review strategies annually through a survey and if appropriate focus groups will meet virtually.

Performance Measures

- 1. Data set collected from students across our school division.
- Feedback and reflections from the Well-being Guiding Coalition at the end of each school year focused on staff well being.
- 3. Focus areas and plan developed for 2024 for students and staff.

Commitment to Truth and Reconciliation and the Spirit of the Calls to Action

A deep understanding of the "Calls to Action" of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission will be our guide. The work of truth begins with understanding of the history of our Indigenous population, Indigenous perspectives and experiences, treaties, agreements and the history and legacy of residential schools. Reconciliation is building and strengthening our relationship with each other. Each person has a role to play in understanding our collective past and in our future together, as we are all Treaty people. We acknowledge there are layers of complexity in local, provincial and national contexts.

Our relationship with the Maskwacis community has a rich history which is collaborative in nature. We continue to engage with families and the community - focused on what has been helpful so far and what else we need to consider.

Strategies

- 1. Wahokotwin: focused on supporting and connecting with our families and students.
- 2. Cultural Experiences: Providing space and place to engage in and honour being culturally responsive.
- 3. Foundational Knowledge and Understanding: Continuing our journey of learning in the truth and honouring indigenous perspectives for all staff and students within WRPS.
- 4. Connection to curriculum: Honouring the curricular connections to the program of studies and furthering the connection to be meaningful to our students, which includes understanding the barriers for our students and removing those barriers.

Performance Measures

- 1. Increased engagement with families which is meaningful for families.
- 2. Space provided for all to be culturally responsive smudging rooms, land based learning.
- 3. Attunement to foundational knowledge and understanding teaching and sessions by all staff (River Walk, Elder teachings, ceremony).
- 4. Professional learning offerings to all staff across the curriculum to support and honour the challenges and success of all students.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

In WRPS, we believe in creating powerful learning environments in all schools and classrooms that are flexible and personalized for students, providing a rigorous and relevant curriculum that is both innovative and creative. Our expectation is that these elements are visible and vibrant throughout each day and across all subject areas.

We believe that a strong connection between curriculum, instruction and assessment are the key drivers at the core of our work as educators.

School administrators affirm and are accountable to division-wide collaborative commitments to support best practices in bringing the curriculum to life for all students. Our skilled, caring and committed teachers and administrators strive to ensure that quality, researched-based and evidenced-informed high-yield instructional strategies alongside targeted intervention practices are provided daily to all students. All staff strive to know the strengths and interests of our students and use this information to plan and deliver a rigorous and relevant curriculum that also embodies student voice and choice.

Communication of student learning to all stakeholders is key to an effective learning experience for our students. WRPS continues to focus on improving the quality of assessment practices and the information provided to students, parents, and caregivers. Assessment information is

provided on an ongoing basis as we focus on "real-time reporting" to allow students and families to understand expected outcomes and achievement towards the achievement of them.

We acknowledge that literacy and numeracy are the foundational building blocks of all learning. Literacy is the great enabler and the foundation for all other learning to occur allowing students to understand the world around them, create meaning, and engage in lifelong learning opportunities. Strong literacy and numeracy skills allow students to participate fully, responsibly and meaningfully in a democratic society. We are committed to relentlessly pursuing a solid foundation in literacy and numeracy skills. We recognize that these skills are integral to a successful trajectory for current and future learning.

In WRPS, we believe that nurturing the identity development of our students as readers, writers, speakers and viewers is an overarching goal of literacy instruction encompassing skill development, intellectual development, critical thinking and joy. We believe that a 'literate' and 'numerate' graduate will possess a wide range of literacy and numeracy competencies that will allow them to think critically, communicate effectively and solve problems in a variety of contexts to pursue and achieve their personal goals. Literacy and numeracy is developed daily across all subjects.

We view student learning and success in school as a community endeavour and as such we foster effective relationships with parents and community stakeholders as integral partners in pursuit of each student's success.

Strategies

- Maintain active divisional guiding coalitions for literacy and numeracy who will provide feedback and guidance in these two important areas and will annually review guiding frameworks.
- 2. Provide ongoing literacy and numeracy professional learning for school administrators to enhance instructional leadership capacity.
- 3. Provide ongoing quality professional learning opportunities focused on high-yield instructional strategies for best results.
- 4. Maintain a divisional schedule for literacy and numeracy assessments and use this data strategically for the benefit of student learning.
- 5. Maintain the use of consistent screeners and assessments across the division to inform instruction and intervention.
- 6. Support and enhance administrator and staff understanding of data generated for specific instructional and intervention planning.
- 7. Support administrators and teaching staff to successfully implement new curriculums.
- 8. Revise our Assessment and Reporting Administrative Procedures to strengthen our teachers' ability to apply a current and comprehensive repertoire of assessment practices

- to meet the learning needs of every student. (<u>AP 360 Classroom Assessment</u> and <u>AP 361 Reporting Student Progress</u>)
- 9. Collaborate with teachers and administrators to establish common standards for grade books in PowerSchool.
- 10. Provide opportunities for teachers to access professional learning related to assessment practices to meet the learning needs of their students. Included in this will be the creation of a repository of assessment resources that all teachers, parents and leaders can access.

Performance Measures

- 1. Progress in that teachers, parents and students are satisfied with the overall quality of basic education.
- 2. Reading data for students in Grades K 9 will be collected and analyzed at the school and division level to identify successes and areas for growth.
- 3. Numeracy data from all schools will be collected and analyzed at the school and division level to identify successes and areas for growth.
- 4. A writing assessment strategy will be determined for the division.
- 5. Progress in the percentage of PAT and Diploma achievement particularly for our Indigenous students.
- 6. Progress in the percentage of students completing high school.
- 7. Progress in the percentage of teachers and parents who agree that students are engaged in their learning at school.
- 8. Administrative Procedures related to assessment are revised and subsequently approved for usage.
- 9. The Assessment Handbook is reviewed and updated annually at June Leadership Team and is published.

Innovative Education: Explore and develop innovative programming opportunities

Innovative education is about creativity at all levels of the system. Innovative classrooms, schools and districts strive to provide flexible structures and support for all students to succeed. Using student interests and backgrounds as a catalyst for maximum engagement, innovative teachers strive to personalize each learner's journey.

Schools will strive to create powerful learning environments that cultivate a growth mindset for our students. These learning environments will be culturally responsive, focused on relationships and mindful of our students and staff well being. Instructional practices in our schools are personalized, flexible, student-centred, and aligned with the needs of 21st-century students.

Strategies:

- 1. Provide programming and support that focus on personalization, flexible learning environments, rigorous and relevant learning opportunities and mastery learning.
- 2. Provide educational programming and opportunities that create high levels of student engagement.
- 3. Provide learning opportunities in and outside the classroom that focus on transitioning students into the workplace.
- 4. Offer technology CTF courses that develop robust student skills in grades 7 and 8 to bridge into high school CTS and future technology careers.
- 5. Create opportunities for students to adopt design and problem-solving thinking.
- 6. Organize collaborative PLC discussions with same-grade teachers and subject areas to share best practices, strategies, and creative ideas.

Performance Measures:

- High School Completion Results
- 2. Student Engagement Results
- 3. School Dropout Rate
- 4. Diploma and Provincial Achievement data
- 5. Number of work experience and RAP placements for high school students

Our Stakeholder Engagement

In January 2023 Trustees engaged in a workshop to review the Board Priorities. Through that generative process, Trustees identified <u>six key priorities</u> to inform the development of the 3 Year Education Plan.

Throughout the school year, leadership continued working with their guiding coalitions to refine strategies and measures which linked explicitly to the Board's Priorities.

The WRPS Board of Trustees actively collaborates with consultant Jordan Tinney to align policies and priorities. Through this collaboration, they identified six key priorities that would shape the development of the 3 Year Education Plan.

Throughout the academic year, the Board leadership, in close collaboration with their guiding coalitions, continuously refined strategies and measures that were directly linked to the Board Priorities.

The Board's priorities, along with essential elements of the education plan, were shared with the Council of School Councils to ensure transparency and broad involvement. School education plans are developed in coordination with the Division's plan, utilizing a WRPS template to ensure consistency and alignment.

Our Budget

The Wetaskiwin School Division's approved budget for 2023-2024 is located on our website.

The 2023-2024 budget reflects a projected deficit of \$2,180,904. While this budget draws down the Board's operating reserves, it includes a number of new programs and enhanced services which the Board believes will benefit students. Some of these include:

New Hockey Academy Grades 5-8

Drone Program at WCHS, Pigeon Lake and Buck Mountain Schools

Outreach Programming Grades 7-9

Cree Language Program at Parkdale School

Calmar Trades Program for Pigeon Lake

Enhanced Low Class Size Average

Band Programming

- Parkdale, Norwood, Queen Elizabeth, Clear Vista and Griffiths Scott Schools
- WCHS Jazz band after school for credit

Increased Clinical Services

Enhanced Career Focused Programming

Transportation Reduced Walk Limits

- 1 km ECS to Grades 6
- 2 km Grade 7 to 12

No Transportation Fees for Ineligible Riders

Our Capital Plan

The Board of Trustees approved the list of capital priorities to be included in the <u>2024-2027 Three</u> Year Capital Plan as follows:

Priority

- 1. Norwood Replacement School
- 2. Buck Mountain Replacement School
- 3. Modernization of CTS Spaces (Pigeon Lake & WCHS)
- 4. Clear Vista Sprinkler System Replacement
- 5. Winfield Replacement School

