



Battle River School Division

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To: BRSD Parents and Guardians

From: Lee Ann Ashby-Girard and Brenda Herder, Directors of Learning - Inclusion

Many things are different in Battle River School Division this fall. Some of those changes are related to the pandemic, but others are related to the levels and kinds of services we are able to provide in support of students' specialized learning needs.

Due to a number of changes in the provincial model of how support is being offered to students, BRSD has had to make changes. The changes have included reducing the number of Educational Assistants, speech language pathologists and speech assistants, as well as the occupational and physical therapy supports we employ or contract. We will continue to be contracting support from AHS and Eastern Edge Low Incidence Team for our students with Hearing and Vision impairments.

We met with our Alberta Health Services partners several times during the month of September to learn about the changes to services they are able to provide to our students. We have also met with Eastern Edge to discuss hearing and vision supports.

Alberta Health Services will no longer be working within our schools in the same way they did before. They will occasionally come into schools to provide consultation to our staff and rehabilitation services to students who experience significant changes due to injury, surgery, illness and/or a new medical or neurological impact. AHS staff have been contacting families who previously received services or were referred to them in the spring, to let them know whether or not their child will still be receiving AHS services and how those services will be provided in the future.

To support the move to a new model, AHS has transitioned student information to us during the past two months. We are fortunate to have a good relationship with our AHS colleagues and know they are committed to working with us to make the transition as smooth as possible by sharing student goals, achievements and needs of the students they have served.

Although we are in the early stages of putting together a new model of service for our students, you need to know that our priority continues to be ensuring students get what they need in order to succeed. BRSD's Inclusive Learning team will continue to collaborate with AHS and the revamped Eastern Edge Low Incidence team to put plans in place for students. Right now, those plans are not finalized and schools are not able to answer specific questions about what services will look like for our students at this time.

We recognize that there will be an adjustment period as this model of support is developed and our service providers are given direction about the new model. School will be updated as the new service delivery model evolves and will be able to share more at that time. We appreciate your patience as we continue to work with our AHS and Eastern Edge partners.

*Lee Ann Ashby-Girard and Brenda Herder
BRSD Directors of Learning - Inclusion*