



GOLDEN HILLS SCHOOL DIVISION

AGENDA

TYPE: Regular Board Meeting

DATE: 2/25/2025 **TIME:** 9:30 AM

LOCATION: Boardroom of the Golden Hills School Division

DETAILS:

"Powering Hope and Possibilities" Vision: Inspiring confident, connected, caring citizens of the world

Mission: Intentionally maximizing learning for all

1.0 Attendance

2.0 Call to Order

3.0 Acknowledgment

4.0 In Camera

4.1 In Camera Action

4.2 Out of In Camera Action

5.0 Approval of Agenda

5.1 Approval of Agenda Action

6.0 Welcome Public, Vision and Mission Statements

7.0 Presentation of Minutes

7.1 Regular Minutes of January 21, 2025 Action

8.0 REPORTS

A) Chair's Report

B) Board Committees

C) Board Representatives to External Organizations

D) Administration Reports

E) Round Table Discussion

9.0 NEW BUSINESS

A) Action Items

9.1 Budget Development Process (T. Sabir) Action

9.2 School Name (T. Sabir) Action

B) Information Items

9.3 Monthly Enrolment Monitoring Report - January 2025 (T. Sabir) Info

9.4 Transportation Monitoring Report 2023-2024 (T. Sabir) Info

9.5 Advocacy Planning (J. Grimsdale) Info

10.0 Round Table Discussion

11.0 School Monitoring Report Visit

11.1 George Freeman School

Info

11.2 Carbon School

Info

12.0 ADJOURNMENT



MINUTES

Golden Hills School Division

Regular Meeting of the Board of Trustees

Location: Boardroom of the Golden Hills School Division

Start Time: 9:30 AM

Tuesday, January 21, 2025 (9:30 AM)

1.0 Attendance

Present

- a) Chair
 - Laurie Huntley
- b) Vice Chair
 - Barry Kletke
- c) Trustees
 - Jim Northcott
 - Justin Bolin
 - Jen Mertz
 - Rob Pirie (via Zoom)
- d) Superintendent
 - Jeff Grimsdale
- f) Secretary Treasurer
 - Tahra Sabir
- g) Recording Secretary
 - Kristy Polet

Absent

- e) Deputy Superintendent
 - Wes Miskiman

2.0 Call to Order

Chair Huntley called the meeting to order at 9:31 AM

3.0 Acknowledgment

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge that we live, work and play on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai, Piikani), the Tsuut'ina, the Stoney Nakoda Nations, the Métis Nation (District 3 and 4), and all people who make their homes in the Treaty 7 region of Southern Alberta.

Chair Initials _____ Secretary Treasurer Initials _____

4.0 In Camera

4.1 In Camera

Recommendation: BD#20250116.1001

MOVED by Trustee Northcott that the Board of Trustees go In Camera at 9:32 AM.

Carried

4.2 Out of In Camera

Recommendation: BD#20250116.1002

MOVED by Trustee Mertz that the Board of Trustees rise from In Camera at 11:00 AM.

Carried

Recessed at 11:00 AM

Reconvened at 11:12 AM

5.0 Approval of Agenda

5.1 Approval of Agenda

Recommendation: BD#20250116.1003

MOVED by Trustee Kletke that the Board of Trustees approve the agenda as presented.

Carried

6.0 Welcome Public, Vision and Mission Statements

7.0 Presentation of Minutes

7.1 Regular Minutes of December 10, 2024

Recommendation: BD#20250116.1004

MOVED by Trustee Mertz that the Board of Trustees approve the Regular Minutes of December 10, 2024, as presented.

Carried

8.0 REPORTS

A) Chair's Report

Chair Huntley presented information on the following topics:

- All correspondence forwarded to Golden Hills Trustees
- Note: Discussed Rockyview School Division letter to the Minister of Education, Demetrios Nicolaidis regarding Charter School Process.
- December 20, 2024, Chair Huntley, Superintendent Grimsdale, the Chair and Senior Administration of Christ the Redeemer School Division, met together with MLA Chantelle De Jonge regarding charter application process.
- January 20 to May 2025, Provincial Satisfaction Survey.
- January 10, 2025, Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Zone 5 meeting, Dr. Vivian Abboud discussed the sustainability of the ASBA organization, discussed services they provide and what can be streamlined. After the meeting, she also provided a slide deck on ASBA Sustainability Engagement for the Zone Reps.

Chair Initials _____ Secretary Treasurer Initials _____

- January 23, 2025, at 1:00PM, Public School Boards Association of Alberta (PSBAA) is hosting a seminar via Zoom called, "What Every School Board Should Know About Alberta's Gender Policy Legislation".
- January 30, 2025, noon to 1:30PM, ASBA Advocacy session on Provincial Priorities with guest speakers, Janet Brown, Principal and Janet Brown Opinion research and Colin Aitchison, Director, Western Canada, Enterprise Canada.
- January 31, 2025, 1:30 to 3:30 PM, ASBA Public Bargaining and Compensation Office (PBCO) will be hosting a session on Communication and Contingency Planning.
- The Board of Trustees extend their congratulations to Corinna Hampson on acquiring the position as Associate Superintendent of Schools beginning August 15, 2025.

B) Board Committees

No information to report on at this time.

C) Board Representatives to External Organizations

Chair Huntley presented information on the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Zone 5 meeting held January 10, 2025, at Golden Hills School Division Office.

- Trustee Northcott wasn't able to attend the meeting due to a prior engagement.
- Discussion and presentation of reports were based around the following items:
 - PAT's and Diploma exam dates, Jordan's Principal, 4% membership fee increase, sustainability of ASBA services, Provincial Government Budget Survey, National Mental Health, Chartered Schools.
 - Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Vivian Abboud presented on ASBA Sustainability of services. Which are essential services that are important? Value of consultants, awards valuation, the Learning Centre and daily bulleting.

Trustee Kletke had no new information to present regarding the Public School Boards' Association of Alberta (PSBAA).

- Next Meeting: February 6-7, 2025

Trustee Northcott had no new information to present regarding the Edwin Parr Awards, they are in the process of setting up a meeting.

D) Administration Reports

Secretary Treasurer Sabir presented information on the following topics:

- Facilities Update:
 - Westmount Elementary Water Main Break - PowerPoint of pictures was reviewed and discussed with the Trustees. Maintenance, Gray's Limited and Dr Hydrovac worked on the water main break over night.
 - Trinity Christian Academy Parking Lot and Building Addition are complete.
 - Strathmore High School Modular - Development Permits have been approved, working with consultants on the drawings.
 - Utility Shut Offs - working with administrators to familiarize them with the locations of the main utility shut offs, maps of the main shut offs are included in the schools' safety binder.
- New Bills:

Chair Initials _____ Secretary Treasurer Initials _____

- Bill 33 - Protection of Privacy Act - this Act will introduce the "strongest protections in the country and the strictest penalties" and will establish rules for how public bodies can create and use personal information and data.
- Bill 34 - Access to Information Act - this Act aims to modernize FOIP's rules regarding access to information requests by recognizing electronic records.
- Transportation Update:
 - GHSD Transportation Motto - Driving Hope, Fueling Possibilities.
 - Two routes are being driven by a relief driver, three drivers passed their road tests in December and more drivers are currently training and will be tested in January and February.
 - Three new buses will be delivered end of January, the remaining buses will be delivered late March or early April.
 - New Technology System - Pilot Project, partnered with a company called Cal/Amp, they will provide new technology on our Three Hills and Carbon buses. The new system uses a barcode method and there will be an app for parents and students to use. All buses will start with the new system this spring.
 - Fuel Costs for 2024 are still coming in under budget at \$1.42.

Superintendent Grimsdale presented information on the following topics:

- Acme School Update - Presented videos of the Acme construction. Masonry, steel and plumbing are all in process.
- Working on a draft Strategic Artificial Intelligence (AI) Plan, updating and revising other administrative procedures (AP), and potentially developing a new AP and AI Responsible use document.
- Collaborating on projects with Doceo AI. Doceo AI is an advanced Technology Centre, they aim to make sense of data using Artificial Intelligence (AI). They use existing data, created and gathered in classrooms, schools, and districts, to predict challenges and successes and to suggest strategies and plans to support student learning.
- Process of submitting a proposal for Collegiate School Program for the 2025/2026 school year.
- Superintendent Grimsdale and Deputy Superintendent Miskiman are finalizing the Education Plan and Results review (AERR).
- Discussed The Education Amendment Act, 2024 (formerly known as Bill 27) - aims to support student success and well-being in Alberta Schools.
- Golden Hills is advertising for a Director of Learning and a Director of Human Resources for 2025-2026 school year.
- Human Resource Update:
 - Golden Hills is pleased to announce the appointment of Cori Hampson to the position of Associate Superintendent - Learning Services, effective August 15, 2025.

9.0 NEW BUSINESS

A) Information Items

9.1 First Quarter Financial Report (Sept/Oct/Nov) (T. Sabir)

Secretary Treasurer Sabir presented and reviewed the First Quarterly Financial Report for September 2024 to November 2024 to the Board of Trustees as information and for the record.

9.2 Monthly Enrolment Monitoring Report (December) (T. Sabir)

Secretary Treasurer Sabir presented information on the monthly Enrolment Monitoring Report for December 2024 to the Board of Trustees as information and for the record.

9.3 Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) Mileage Rate Allowance 2025 (T. Sabir)

Secretary Treasurer Sabir presented information on the new 2025 Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) mileage rates to the Board of Trustees as information and for the record.

9.4 School Summaries Monitoring Report (T. Sabir)

Secretary Treasurer Sabir presented the School Summaries Report 2023/2024 and Budget for 2024/2025 to the Board of Trustees. This report summarizes key information for each school which aids the Board of Trustees in decisions related to the annual budget and capital planning, it also presents key information for each school.

9.5 Inclusive Education Report (2023/24 and 2024/25 Plans) (J. Grimsdale)

Superintendent Grimsdale presented information on the Inclusive Education Report that provides support and services to ensure that our students with diverse learning needs receive a quality education thus ensuring them the opportunity to best achieve their potential.

10.0 Round Table Discussion

11.0 School Monitoring Report Visit

11.1 Strathmore High School (D. Raycroft, Principal and A. Barwacz-Riou (Vice Principal))

Superintendent Grimsdale welcomed Principal, D. Raycroft and Vice Principal, A. Barwacz-Riou to the Board of Trustees meeting to present their schools education plan involving dual credit courses, school involvement with the community and the introduction of new programs, such as incorporating a Flex Time slot into the day for students to collaborate amongst themselves or with teachers. Superintendent Grimsdale and Chair Huntley thanked them for their informative presentation.

11.2 Carseland School (L. Bartlett, Principal)

Superintendent Grimsdale welcomed Principal L. Bartlett to the Board of Trustees meeting, who presented her schools current education plan, how Powerful Learning is incorporated in the day to day lessons, the school's community connections/partnerships and new programs, such as, book study, Golf Program with Speargrass Golf Course, hosting community nights with local farmers. Superintendent Grimsdale and Chair Huntley thanked them for their informative presentation.

11.3 Westmount Elementary School (A. Pirie, Principal and A. Baxter, Vice Principal)

Superintendent Grimsdale welcomed Principal, A. Pirie and Vice Principal, A. Baxter to the Board of Trustees meeting to present their schools education plan and results, incorporating access to supports and services, expanding on programs such as their Strive Program for complex learners, incorporating Powerful Learning into daily use inside and outside of the classrooms and discussed their schools community involvement.

Chair Initials _____ Secretary Treasurer Initials _____

12.0 ADJOURNMENT

12.1 Adjournment

Recommendation: BD#20250116.1005

Adjourned at 3:05 PM.

Carried

Chair

Secretary Treasurer

Chair Initials _____ Secretary Treasurer Initials _____



BUDGET DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES and PROCESS

"Inspiring confident, connected, caring citizens of the world"

February 25, 2025

Background:

In accordance with the Education Act S. 139 (2) (a) the Board of Trustees is required to submit to the Minister an annual budget for the fiscal year beginning September 1st.

A budget is a process to achieve the vision and mission of Golden Hills. The financial goals and future of financial resources are aligned to the path of the Board's vision and mission. Quarterly reports are provided to the Board to monitor income and expenditures and evaluate progress to achieve the goals in the Education Plan.

The Board's most significant policy decision is the budget as it directs the resources of the division to achieve the Board's objectives and ensure a balanced budget. The Board of Trustees sets the policy and direction for the school division by which administration develops key budget assumptions.

Current budget principles are as follows:

The budget will be a balanced budget (may include restricted reserves).

1. Enveloped revenues will balance expenditures within the envelope.
2. The budget process is open and involves stakeholders.
3. The budget will address the goals identified in the Education Plan and the Priorities of Alberta Education.
4. Resources will be allocated to provide equitable and fair opportunity for each student to receive a quality education program.
5. The budget is guided by principles of transparency and public accountability for the use of resources and the results achieved.
6. The budget will reflect appropriate reserves that ensure financial health and meet encumbrances.

These principles have resulted in positive financial health for Golden Hills and also allows Golden Hills to be innovative and responsive to the needs of our students, manage enrolment fluctuations and support our powerful learning initiatives.

Proposed Planning Dates	Action	Responsible
February 25, 2025	Approve Process, Budget Principles, Priorities & Assumptions	Board
February 27, 2025	Budget Announcement	Minister of Education, Honorable Demetrios Nicolaides
March - April	Budget Review and Gather Information about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Challenges • Budget Challenges by Envelope • Analysis of Demographics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ enrolment estimates • Provincial Grants • Expenditure Estimates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ salary and cost benefits 	Executive Team
March-May	Budget Development Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget Allocations • Expenditure Decisions 	Administrators and Managers
February -May	Budget Consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where are we Now? • Where are we Going? • Where do we want to Go? 	Board Executive Team Administrators Stakeholders
April	Draft to Board	Executive Team
May	Education Plan and Budget Approval	Board

Recommendation:

That the Board of Trustees adopts the Budgeting Principles and a timeline for the 2025/2026 fiscal year subject to a potential review following a provincial budget announcement.

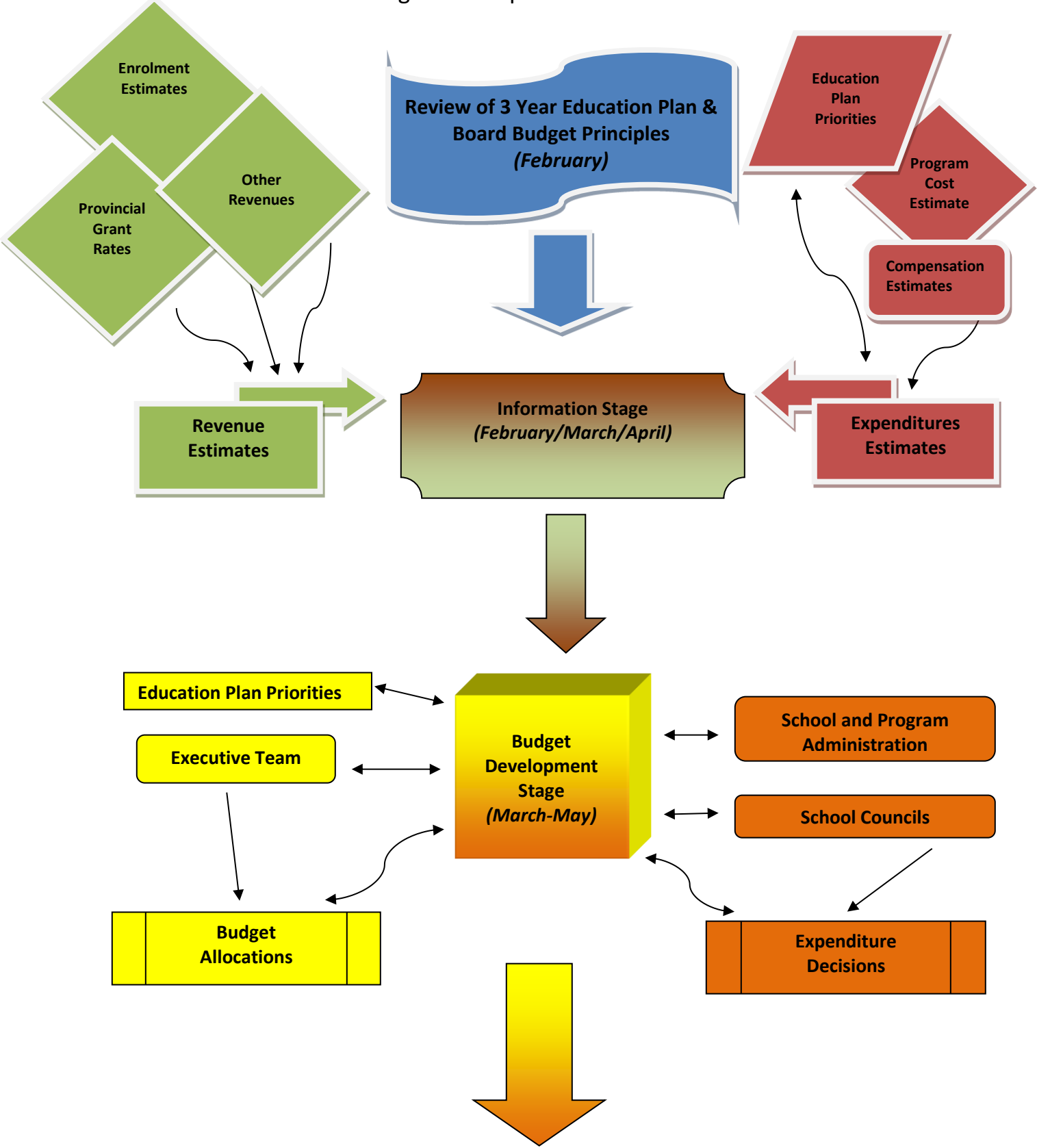


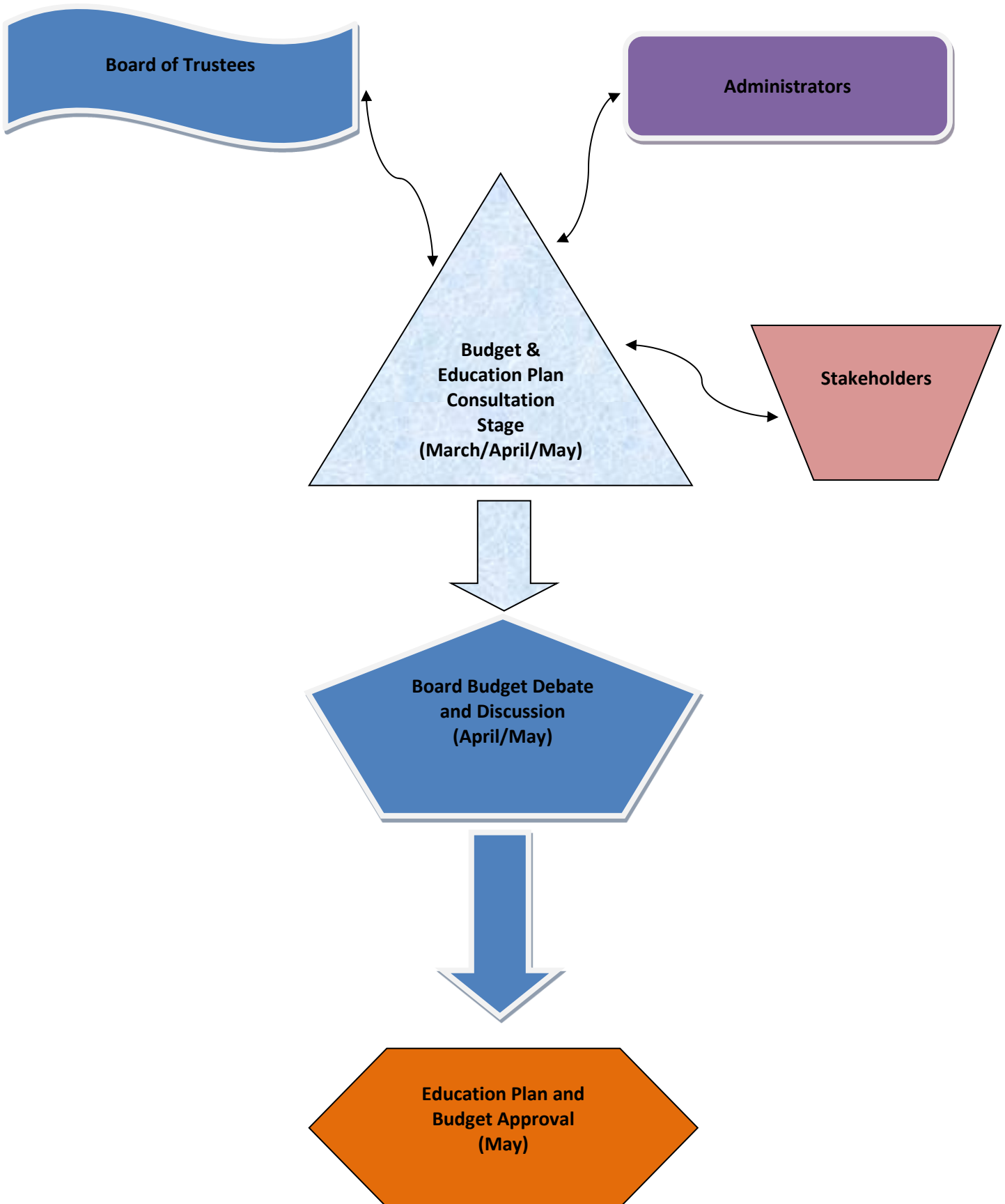
Jeff Grimsdale
Superintendent



Tahra Sabir
Secretary Treasurer

Golden Hills School Division Budget Development Process







SCHOOL NAME
Dr. Elliott Community School

"Inspiring confident, connected, caring citizens of the world"

February 25, 2025

Background:

Under Board Policy 2 (9.3) Board of Trustees responsibilities include naming schools, portions of schools, rooms within schools, school grounds and other Division-owned facilities and programs.

It was brought to our attention by Capital Planning (Bill 13), that Dr. Elliott School is documented in all Alberta Education and Infrastructure as Dr. Elliott Community School.

Golden Hills School Division has been referring to Dr. Elliott Community School as Dr. Elliott School for years and would like to officially change the name to reflect what it is referred to as, Dr. Elliott School.

To officially make the change, the Board of Trustees must make a motion to approve the name change.

Recommendation:

That the Board of Trustees approves the name change of Dr. Elliott Community School to Dr. Elliott School.

Jeff Grimsdale
Superintendent of Schools

Tahra Sabir
Secretary Treasurer



ENROLMENT BACKGROUNDER

"Inspiring confident, connected, caring citizens of the world"

February 25, 2025

Background:

The Board of Trustees regularly monitors enrolment and notes trends over time. Funding is primarily enrolment-driven, and monitoring and projecting enrolment trends informs the board's budgeting processes.

As per the attached monitoring report, information is provided on the September 30, 2024, enrolment of provincially funded students, Siksika funded students and International funded students.

Recommendation:

That the Board of Trustees receives the Enrolment Monitoring Report for information and for the record.

Jeff Grimsdale
Superintendent

Tahra Sabir
Secretary Treasurer

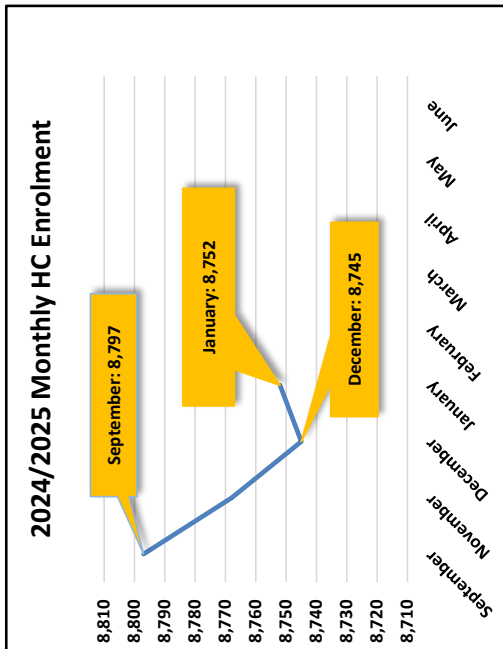
Golden Hills School Division Enrolment

Schools - Month to Month Comparison

Dec 31, 2024 to Jan 31, 2025

*Please note kindergarten adjusted to 1.0

* Enrolment information has been adjusted for the New Funding Model



Configuration	School	September 30, 2024*	January 31, 2025	December 31, 2024	Difference
K-6, 10-12	Acme School	225.00	221.00	218.00	3.00
K-9	Carbon School	60.00	58.00	60.00	-2.00
K-6	Carsland School	77.00	76.00	75.00	1.00
7-9	Crowther Memorial Jr. High School	466.00	469.00	468.00	1.00
K-9	Dr. Elliott Community School	191.00	193.00	192.00	1.00
7-12	Drumheller Valley Secondary School	364.00	363.00	363.00	0.00
K-6	École Brentwood Elementary School	186.00	186.00	186.00	0.00
K-12	George Freeman	476.00	473.00	468.00	5.00
K-6	Greentree School	361.00	370.00	365.00	5.00
K-12	Prairie Christian Academy School	316.00	314.00	314.00	0.00
10-12	Strathmore High School	694.00	692.00	697.00	-5.00
K-12	Three Hills School	449.00	448.00	449.00	-1.00
K-9	Trinity Christian Academy	247.00	240.00	245.00	-5.00
K-12	Trochu Valley School	270.00	269.00	269.00	0.00
K-6	Westmount School	372.00	368.00	368.00	0.00
K-12	Wheatland Crossing	326.00	326.00	325.00	1.00
K-6	Wheatland Elementary School	310.00	318.00	313.00	5.00
	Sub Total	5,390.00	5,384.00	5,375.00	9.00
7-9	Colonies	405.00	396.00	400.00	-4.00
7-12	Drumheller Outreach	12.00	17.00	16.00	1.00
1-12	Golden Hills Learning Academy	926.00	917.00	908.00	9.00
1-12	NorthStar Academy	394.00	394.00	394.00	0.00
7-12	Strathmore StoreFront	144.00	141.00	137.00	4.00
	Sub Total	1,881.00	1,865.00	1,855.00	10.00
	Homeschool	882.00	879.00	878.00	1.00
	Shared Responsibility	199.00	194.00	195.00	-1.00
	Sub Total	1,081.00	1,073.00	1,073.00	0.00
	Provincial Total	8,352.00	8,322.00	8,303.00	19.00
	Siksika	148.00	148.00	148.00	0.00
	International (Incl. Online)	297.00	282.00	294.00	-12.00
	Sub Total	445.00	430.00	442.00	-12.00
	Total HEADCOUNT	8,797.00	8,752.00	8,745.00	7.00



TRANSPORTATION MONITORING REPORT

"Inspiring confident, connected, caring citizens of the world"

February 25, 2025

Background:

Annually, administration provides a Transportation Monitoring Report for information. This report provides opportunity to consider the impact of Transportation Policy on the education of students in the jurisdiction.

Please see attached Monitoring Report.

Recommendation:

That the Board of Trustees receives the Transportation Monitoring Report for information and the record.

Jeff Grimsdale
Superintendent of Schools

Tahra Sabir
Secretary Treasurer



TRANSPORTATION MONITORING REPORT

Presented to the Board of Trustees by Tahra Sabir, Secretary-Treasurer

Resource Persons:

Wayne Funk, Transportation Manager

Meghan Johnson, Assistant Transportation Manager

Monica Giberson, Transportation Support

February 25, 2025

Transportation
Motto

Driving Hope
Fuelling Possibilities

REPORTING PERIOD: September 1, 2023 – August 31, 2024, and September 1, 2024, to current.

OVERVIEW:

Alberta Education provides funding to school boards to operate or contract transportation systems for Kindergarten to Grade 12 students.

SUMMARY & IMPLICATIONS:

- Safety is paramount and Golden Hills has made this a priority with success.
- Future Initiatives – Continue to increase efficiency with increased flexibility to support Golden Hills’ program initiatives while keeping costs within funding limits.
- Some recent initiatives are:
 - New Bus Driver recruiting strategies.
 - Continued Implementation of cameras on buses and a pilot project for new stop arm cameras.
 - New GPS provider for route and bus efficiencies
 - Division wide implementation of school bus passes
 - Additional Routes to help reduce Ride Times.
 - Choice Ridership continues to increase.

NEW FUNDING MODEL

As we move towards the 2025-2026 school year, the funding model has changed again. Beginning in 2025/2026, all grade 1 - 6 students who live 1.6 km or more away from their school of choice will be funded for transportation while grade 7 - 12 students who live 2.0 km or more away from their school will also be funded for transportation. Beginning with the 2023/2024 school year, we were funded for riders in grade 1 - 6 who were more than 1 km from their school of choice and 2 km from their school of choice for all students in grade 7- 12. Prior to that change, the funding model only paid for students who lived more than 2.4 km from their designated school. This will have a substantial impact on funding transportation moving forward.

Safety is our top Priority

Golden Hills transports over 3,250 students 177 days a year over an area of 8,400 square kilometers for a total of 1,891,000 km a year. Safety of transporting students is the number one priority and continues to be successful.

The Transportation Department works together with the bus drivers to identify hazards on any routes throughout our large and diverse district. Once any hazards have been identified by drivers the transportation department uses this information to either change or modify routes to make sure our students are traveling to school in a safe and efficient manner.

As well, Golden Hills has invested in a variety of software that provides real-time insights into bus locations, student ridership and driver driving habits. With all this information, we feel that we can make sure the safety of our students remains a top priority.

Safe Driving Program

For the past few years Golden Hills has met the criteria for an Alberta Transportation approved driving school. A formalized training and evaluation program is in place for all our professional school bus operators. The purpose of this program is to ensure the safety of passengers on Golden Hills buses and that Golden Hills operators are equipped with the skills they need to safely operate a school bus and manage the passengers. We want to elevate the perception of school bus operators with parents and the community. School bus operators are professionals who participate in ongoing training to safely transport extremely precious cargo. Please refer to **Appendix A** for detailed information on Bus driver training.

Driver Training Hours	GHSD Existing	S Endorsement
Classroom Training	20	19.5 hours
In Yard Training	5	9.5 hours
On Road Training	20 (25 if necessary)	24.5 hours
S Endorsement (Classroom)	17 hours	N/A
Total	62 hours	53.5 hours

*Prior to 2022 “S Endorsement” was more flexible, and the bus driver had a year to complete. Now it must be completed prior to driving a school bus.

Bus Driver Shortage Challenges

- While the province-wide bus driver shortage has been slightly reduced over the past 6 months, we continue to have to work hard to recruit new drivers and retain current employees.
- We have developed some strategies to manage this as follows:
 - Offer paid training to those interested in obtaining their bus driver’s license. \$1,200 plus mileage for trainees
 - Offer monthly Health Spending Account money to all current full time drivers.
 - Offer to pay for deadhead time if driver works more than four (4) hours per day
 - Create a bus driver mentorship program
 - Provide continuous support and training.
- We are using several strategies to advertise for potential drivers:
 - Word of mouth (drivers referring family members, friends, or parents of students)
 - Submitting advertisements to local employment services
 - Advertising online through local employment services
 - Posting on Facebook through local employment services and school social media

Since February 2024 we have trained eighteen (18) bus drivers, and we have approximately ten (10) more to train this school year.

In the past year, we have trained eighteen (18) drivers. This training is a total of approximately 62 hours for both classroom and on the road training. Additional training time (road and yard work) is provided should a trainee require it.

Drivers refresh their S Endorsement knowledge every five (5) years as per Golden Hills processes.

Once students complete their course, GHSD submits their completed certificate for review and verification by Alberta Transportation. In our experience, the driver training department has been able to complete this process within 24 hours. Once the course completion has been posted, the students will book their on-road evaluation online and it was usually very prompt. ***But things have changed, and we are now struggling to book the on-road part of their evaluation. At times, the wait is more than six (6) weeks.***

School Bus Operator Evaluations

Golden Hills performs three types of operator evaluations in addition to dexterity testing:

Scheduled Evaluation	Evaluations are scheduled for the following reasons: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Probationary<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Operators must complete a satisfactory on-road evaluation within three months of employment● Scheduled<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Operators aged under 47: Every 5 years- Operators aged 47-67: Every 2 years- Operators aged over 67: Annually● Remedial, for example<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Preventable Collision- Parent Complaint- Unsatisfactory Observation
On-Road Observation	Continuous monitoring involves creating a positive culture for drivers as yellow buses are monitored.

The Transportation department has conducted 16 evaluations during the end of the 2023/2024 school year and the first half of the 2024/2025 school year and has a five year cycle period to evaluate all our drivers.

Bus drivers have continued to work in the world of E-Learning as our S Endorsement training and S Endorsement Refresher training took place online using a combination of Google Classroom and Zoom.

An evaluation consists of the School Bus Supervisor/ Evaluator riding along on the route and assessing communication with passengers and passenger management as well as the operators' driving skills and abilities.

Route Risk Assessments

Route Risk Assessments are conducted at Golden Hills. Annually bus drivers fill out assessments for their route to determine any concerns that need to be addressed. Approximately **69%** of the forms returned had no issues. The other **31%** were returned with concerns such as sight distances, traffic volumes, and the need for parent/pedestrian education in bus loops. As drivers are learning more about

the risk assessment process, they are better able to assess and prepare for potential risks. Please see **Appendix B** for suggested possible solutions for risks reported by bus drivers.

The bus driver route assessment is an excellent process for all drivers to reassess their route each year. One of the many benefits of this process also facilitates collaboration with the Counties. An example of this would be the request for signage (School Bus Stop Ahead Signs).

Bus Route Inclement Weather - Administrative Procedure (AP) 131

The Inclement weather Administrative Procedure is constantly evolving as new weather trends and data come into play.

During the 2021/2022 school year we went through an extensive consultation process which included in person meetings with bus drivers, mechanics, and senior administration. A recommendation was made about temperature. We also discussed Golden Hills emergency rescue plan with drivers. To support this, we have provided cold weather emergency kits, and we are currently piloting engine warmers and cabin heaters.

Based on ongoing stakeholder feedback, the following change was approved in June of 2024.

- ***If road conditions and visibility are not of concern, bus routes will continue regular operation unless ambient temperatures drop below -35C or a windchill greater than -45C. Below these temperatures, bus drivers of rural routes may make a decision not to operate based on temperatures and other factors along their route.***

This change continues to allow bus operators to use their professional judgement on the safe operation of the bus route.

The AP contains three levels of school closures:

Levels	Description
Green Closure	Due to weather and travel conditions, some buses may not be running. School is open and regular classes will be offered.
Yellow Closure	Due to severe weather and travel conditions, no buses are running. School is open but regular classes may or may not be offered. Parents/Guardians make their own decisions about sending their students to school.
Red Closure	Due to the severe weather and travel conditions the school is closed. Do not send students to school. Due to the severe weather, we are unable to ensure the school doors will be unlocked, or any staff will be in the building.

- Bus drivers play a primary role in the decision-making process as they are the first to evaluate weather conditions and decide if it is safe to transport students. Bus drivers are to inform administrators, transportation manager and parents/students of any service interruptions/cancellations.

- Administrators will call the Superintendent for approval to declare either a yellow or red closure level.
- Parents, students, and staff maybe informed as early as 6:30 am. Cancellations are posted to school websites, Facebook pages, and other social media. Messages are also sent by email and phone via School Messenger.
- Golden Hills continues the practice of running an afternoon bus (when the weather conditions have improved significantly, and it is safe to do so) if the morning bus was cancelled due to weather conditions. This aligns with our commitment to ensure safe transportation of students to and from school.

AM Bus Cancellations		Bus Ran in PM	
September 2023 – December 2024	2022/2023	September 2023 – December 2024	2022/2023
328	306.5	*69 (21%)	55 (18%)

* For example, 21% of the 328 buses that did not run in the AM did run in the PM.

Between January 6th and January 31, 2025, we had 40 bus cancellations which is similar to the prior year.

No Child Left Behind

“No Child Left Behind” is a system that forces the driver to go to the back of the bus before it can be shut off. This prevents students from being left on a bus after a run. Currently all our route buses have this system.

A two-part “post-trip” inspection has been introduced which drivers perform shortly after drop-off at their last stop and then again when the bus is parked at the park-out to ensure that no students or belongings are left on the bus.

Budget / Financial Implications

The Chart below shows the Projected Revenue and Expenses for the Transportation Department for 2024/2025 and provides the 2023/2024 Audited Financial Statements.

Description	Budget 2024/2025	% of Budget	AFS 2023/2024	% of Budget
Revenue				
Grants	*\$ 5,383,750	91%	\$ 5,428,304	97%
Fees/Other Sales & Services	\$ 520,000	9%	\$ 139,610	3%
Total Revenue	\$ 5,903,750		\$ 5,567,914	
Expenses				
Salaries and Benefits	\$ 2,603,324	44%	\$ 2,387,640	44%
Supplies and Services	\$ 2,465,426	42%	\$ 2,311,666	43%
Amortization	\$ 835,000	14%	\$ 735,303	14%
Total Expenses	\$ 5,903,750		\$ 5,434,609	
Net Surplus	-		\$ 133,305	

*Just recently finalized the Transportation grant and the actual amount is \$5,051,092 as we dropped a funding tier due to the increase in the number of students that we have - approx. \$330K difference. We still anticipate a balanced budget as fuel costs and some other costs are lower than budgeted.

Points of Interest

- The funding model and kilometer criteria have changed. As a result of the funding adjustments, we are able to balance the transportation budget.
- Volatile fuel costs, that include escalating carbon tax rates.
- Sparsely populated Rural areas impact efficiency.

Diesel Fuel Costs

	2024	2023	2022
Average Fuel (\$/l)	\$1.42	\$1.29	\$1.27

Average Diesel Fuel Cost for the 2024 calendar year is \$1.42.

Fee Structure

Golden Hills eliminated all transportation fees as of the 2012/13 school year (over 10 years ago). We believe this has positively impacted our enrollment.

Fleet

Pursuant Administrative Procedure 555, *Bus Replacement*, it is desirable to replace buses on a timely basis for the safety and efficiency of the operation. Urban buses are replaced within 14 years and rural buses are replaced within 12 years. Golden Hills continues to ensure buses are replaced within the appropriate time periods while taking budget constraints into consideration. In the spring of 2024, we purchased 10 new International Buses. Moving forward, the plan is to purchase 14 new buses in the spring/summer of 2025 and a further 10 new buses in the spring of 2026. Our purchase in the spring of 2025 will include 7 Thomas buses to begin to diversify our fleet. These purchases will allow our fleet to experience an appropriate evergreening process.

Currently Golden Hills operates 72 routes with 83 runs.

Spare buses (18%) are needed for the fleet to operate efficiently while maintaining the current levels of service. Some of the challenges are:

1. Having buses and drivers available for field trips that overlap regular routes.
2. Golden Hills is a large geographical area. Spare buses are available locally to allow quick access as needed.

Age of Bus	2024/2025		2023/2024	
	# of Buses	% of Fleet	# of Buses	% of Fleet
0-2 years	23	23%	13	13.1%
3-5 years	4	4%	4	4.0%
6-10 years	57	56%	36	36.4%
11-17 years	18	18%	46	46.5%
18+ years	0	0%	0	0%
Total	102	100%	99	100%

Field Trips

Golden Hills Transportation supports all schools in the division with busing for students on field trips and extra-curricular events. The following table shows how many field trips occurred.

	2023/2024	2022/2023
In Town Field Trips	272 (30%)	246 (29%)
Out of Town Field Trips	312 (35%)	339 (40%)
Non GHSD Field Trips *	86 (10%)	26 (3%)
International	74 (8%)	81 (10%)
Alumni	148 (17%)	146 (17%)
Total Field Trips	892	838

* Sometimes we rent buses to HCC, Alliance Church, and other entities.

- We supply both operators and buses for school field trips.

We adjusted the per kilometre rate in the fall of 2024 to \$1.50 and the driver rate to a fee of \$21/hour (driving or waiting). This increase in rate charged to the schools will help cover more of the expenses associated with buses supporting field trips. Outside Agencies are charged \$2.00/km and \$31/hr (\$26 plus CPP and EI).

Bus Size

A common public misconception is cost savings associated with bus size. Contractors and Divisions often choose to purchase a bigger bus to maximize their flexibility (change buses from one area to another) and efficiency (schools can hire one bus for a field trip vs. two) and effectiveness (in an emergency evacuation for either a community or school).

The major cost associated with bus routes is the labour. Differential fuel, tire, and insurance costs for a small or larger bus is minimal. The benefit of a larger bus is the flexibility, efficiency, and effectiveness.

Staffing

Table below shows the staffing levels (total full time equivalent) in the transportation department.

	2024/2025	2023/2024
Administration	3.0	2.0
Trades	3.8	2.8
Full Time Bus Drivers	74.0	72.0
Full Time Bus Driver Trainer	1.5	casual
Total	82.3	76.8

Golden Hills has maintenance shops located in Strathmore and Trochu.

As of February 15, 2025, we have a total of 74 full time drivers and 82 employees

The purpose of the transportation shops is to provide mechanical services to the buses. Regular maintenance continues to be a priority to ensure safety. As per the Commercial Vehicle Program

requirements, inspections are performed at a minimum of twice a year. Oil changes are performed every 5,000 km or 10,000 km depending on the type of engine.

At the conclusion of the 2023/2024 school year, we transitioned to a full-time trainer position to address ongoing bus driver shortages. Previously, the trainer was compensated on an hourly basis rather than receiving an annual salary. Additionally, we have appointed one of our relief drivers as a part-time assistant trainer, with the objective of supporting their full certification. This initiative will enable our driving school to train more drivers within a comparable timeframe, enhancing our overall capacity.

Ridership Information

Currently (2023/2024) Golden Hills is transporting 3,252 students which represents 56% of our regular funded student enrolment. Alberta has approximately 600,000 students and about 50% of those students ride the bus on a daily basis.

Year	September 30, 2024	Students that ride the bus	% of Total
2024/2025	5,830	3,252	56%
2023/2024	6,261	3,054	49%
2022/2023	5,440	2,955	54%

Urban and Rural

The table below shows the distribution percentage of urban and rural funded students transported by bus for two years. (*These numbers do not include Siksika and International students)

Year	Totals	Urban	Rural
2024/2025	3,098*	885 (29%)	2,213 (71%)
2023/2024	3,054	860 (28%)	2,194 (72%)
2022/2023	2,955	848 (29%)	2,107 (71%)

Courtesy and Choice

Courtesy Rider - someone who lives less than 1 km (K-6) & 2 km (7-12) from their designated school and is meeting an existing route.

The Table below shows the percentage of courtesy riders who are urban and rural.

Courtesy Ridership	2024/2025	Percentage
Urban	209/885	24%
Rural	151/2,213	7%
International	133/229	61%

Please note that included in Courtesy Ridership may be choice ridership as they do not meet the criteria to their designated school, however we would not receive any funding to transport to their school of choice even if it was greater than 2 km. The kilometer criteria has changed so this will look different in the future.

Choice Ridership - someone who is meeting an existing route and is attending a school other than their designated school.

The Table below shows the percentage of choice riders who are urban and rural.

Choice Ridership	2024/2025	Percentage
Urban	406/885	46%
Rural	339/2,213	15%

In summary, there is additional demand to transport students who wish to attend their school of choice.

Special Needs Students

Currently Golden Hills provides transportation for 162 (increased by 32 students from last year) special needs students who are designated to programs unavailable in their attendance area. The following table breaks down the type of transportation provided and shows all three categories have increased in number of students.

Type of Transportation	Number of Students		
	2024/2025	2023/2024	2022/2023
Regular School Bus	123	109	127
Taxi or Handicap Bus	13	7	6
Parent Provided	26	14	18
Totals	162	130	151

Riders in Other Districts

Golden Hills School Division has entered into agreements with other school jurisdictions. This allows students to attend a school of another school authority and to allow students who in other school jurisdictions to be enrolled in Golden Hills Schools.

School Division	# of Students <i>Attending</i> GHSD from other Districts		# of GHSD Students going to other Districts that we have information on*	
	2024/2025	2023/2024	2024/2025	2023/2024
Grassland Public School Division	0	0	13	18
Palliser School Division	3	4	0	0
Prairie Land Public School Division	19	16	18	15
Chinook's Edge School Division	19	22	11	5
Rocky View School Division** Code 6	12	***4	0	0
Totals	53	42	42	38

*Only have student information from other divisions if there is an agreement. There may be other students leaving the division that we do not have any information on.

** New AB Education – Transfer of Student Transportation Funding Parent Declaration Form – Code 6 students transported but not on a “Schedule A” with other school divisions.

*** Not on 2023/2024 Transportation Monitoring Report and not included in this number.

Affect

Transportation Agreements allows Golden Hills to claim grant money for the students. Transportation Agreements enable Golden Hills to access grant funding for student transportation. While these grants may not fully cover all associated costs, they are offset by the allocation of education grants to schools, and support students to attend their school of choice. Ultimately, families continue to choose Golden Hills for their educational needs.

Rural Ride Times

Ride Times are monitored, and we try to keep the routes to a minimum taking into consideration geography. In town, ride times are an average of 20 minutes or less.

One new route (Wheatland Crossing) was added in January of 2024 and two additional routes will be added in Strathmore in April of 2025.

One Way Minutes	2023/2024
75+ Minutes	0 %
61-75 Minutes	7 %
46-60 Minutes	15 %
0-45 Minutes	73 %

Communication and Culture

Communication and “customer service” are two priority areas within the Transportation Department. We are committed to actively engaging with and addressing inquiries or concerns raised by any of our stakeholders, endeavoring to provide responses within the same business day whenever feasible.

With the goal of creating a cohesive and collaborative relationship between all stakeholders, our staff is continuing to evolve and grow the skill set needed to enhance the customer service experience when dealing with the GHSD Transportation Department.

Transportation Department Initiatives			
Date	Issue/Project	Action/Resolution	Date Complete
Apr 2025	GPS Software	We are partnering with a new GPS software provider to enhance flexibility and deliver more detailed, real-time information to drivers, parents, and office staff.	Ongoing
Sept 2024	Health Spending Account	To support driver retention, we have introduced an annual health spending account and compensate drivers for the time spent traveling to and from their routes. (longer commutes only)	Ongoing
Jan 2024	Stop Arm Camera Initiative	3 buses in Strathmore and 2 in Drumheller will be outfitted with stop arm cameras to help deter vehicles driving through flashing red lights. We will be working in connection with municipal bylaw and RCMP officers to	Ongoing

Transportation Department Initiatives			
Date	Issue/Project	Action/Resolution	Date Complete
		encourage drivers to obey the flashing red lights.	
Sept 2023	Driver Recruitment and Retention	Driver training is happening consistently, and our goal is to have all our routes covered by regular route drivers with an adequate number of relief drivers available in each region. We also strive to keep our routes at a reasonable ride time.	Ongoing

Stakeholder Issues

Issue	Summary	Resolution
Red Light Violations	Parents are concerned with the increasing number of drivers passing buses when red lights are flashing.	Installed stop arm cameras on a total of nine (9) buses that have this issue happen on a consistent basis. Once we have video evidence of a violation, the driver files a report, and we send the video and photo evidence for law enforcement to proceed as they see fit.
Run Times over an hour	Concerns with students (especially K – 1) being on the bus for long periods of time.	Review routes and wherever possible make changes. We have added one route in the Wheatland Crossing area and will continue to split long routes as drivers are hired.
Bus Driver Professional Growth and Mentorship	Need for drivers to continue to grow their skills and abilities relating to being a professional driver.	Ongoing professional development regarding student management, explaining behavior expectations and creating a positive climate on the bus. Alberta Education is providing grant money for a Driver Mentorship program. Any driver can be paid to drive with an approved mentor driver without students on the bus to improve driving skills.
Communication with Drivers	During periods of Inclement weather, it is imperative to reach as many drivers as possible on short notice.	We will be creating a new communication system through School Messenger that allows for Transportation to contact the drivers via a phone call and email digitally.

Summary

- Parent concerns are addressed within 24 hours of complaint or question being proposed. Always striving to improve the overall level of information and customer service.
- The Transportation funding formula is changing again for the fall of 2025, and this may negatively impact our ability to be funded for all of the students that we transport.
- GHSD does not implement any financial fee to parents for transportation services.

Proposed Areas for Advocacy

Funding for transportation has undergone significant alterations, marking the first instance in three years that we are required to complete a grant application, following a period of grant reprieve.

For many years Golden Hills has provided choice options to students who reside in larger towns. With the revised funding model, we may no longer be able to be funded for all of the students we transport.

Advocacy Points

1. **Equitable Access to Education:** Students in rural areas deserve the same access to education as those in urban areas. Transportation grants are crucial for ensuring that all students can attend school regularly, regardless of their geographic location.
2. **Safety Concerns:** Safe and reliable transportation for students in rural areas is crucial. Many rural students must travel long distances to reach their schools, often on roads that may not be as well-maintained as those in urban areas. The increases in the transportation grant have helped with our priority to ensure that buses are safe and well-equipped for these conditions.
3. **Educational Outcomes:** Regular, stress-free attendance is crucial for student achievement. Ensuring that students can get to school without difficulty supports better educational outcomes.
4. **Sustainability:** Carbon Tax is increasing each year, and this negatively impacts the overall Transportation budget.
5. **Flexibility and Adaptability:** We appreciate the flexibility in addressing the unique transportation needs of each of our rural communities.
6. **Leveraging Technology:** We continue to explore technology solutions, such as route optimization software, to make school transportation more efficient and cost-effective.
7. **Future Investment:** We consider the transportation grant as an investment in the future of Alberta's rural communities. Supporting students today will help develop the skilled, educated workforce needed to sustain and grow these areas in the future.

Appendix A

New Operator Training

<p>Dexterity Testing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A series of physical tests to ensure that the driver is physically able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Execute a full pre-trip inspection - Flexibility to move in the seat to minimize blind spots - Maneuver the bus safely - Evacuate the bus in an emergency situation.
<p>Classroom Training S Endorsement/MELT</p>	<p>MELT 2 – S training is now mandatory in Alberta. Required topics for classroom instruction are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Employment in the Busing Industry ✓ Vehicle Component & Inspection Activities ✓ Basic Driving Techniques ✓ Professional Driving Habits ✓ Off-Road Tasks & Maneuvers ✓ Documents, Paperwork & Regulatory Requirements ✓ Hours of Service Compliance ✓ Passenger Management, Loading & Unloading Passengers ✓ Handling Emergencies ✓ 18.5 Hours Required Classroom Training (New Program)
<p>In Yard Training S Endorsement/Melt</p>	<p>In-Yard training covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Pre-trip Inspection ✓ Yard Procedures ✓ Backing Procedures ✓ Parking Procedures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Health & Safety ✓ Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) ✓ School Bus Inspections and Maintenance ✓ Bus Manoeuvres and Defensive Driving ✓ Emergencies, Bus Evacuations, First Aid, Emergency Equipment and Mechanical Breakdowns ✓ Passengers with Disabilities, Mobility Aids and Child Safety Seats ✓ 11 Hours Required In Yard Training (New Program)
<p>On Road Training</p>	<p>This covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Pre-trip Inspection ✓ Yard Procedures ✓ Commentary Driving ✓ Backing Procedures ✓ General Driving ✓ Highway Driving ✓ City Driving and Procedures ✓ Town Driving and Procedures

- ✓ Country Driving and Procedures
- ✓ Student Pick-Ups and Drop-Offs
- ✓ Railroad Crossings
- ✓ “Turn Around” and various bus maneuvers
- ✓ Advanced Driving Techniques and the SMITH System (5 Keys):
 1. Aim High In Steering
 2. Get The Big Picture
 3. Keep Your Eyes Moving
 4. Leave Yourself An Out
 5. Make Sure They See You
- ✓ The Post Trip Inspection
- ✓ 24 Hours Required On Road Training

Appendix B

Issue	Analysis	Recommendation
Weather	Snow drifts, sleet, fog, rain and among other things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage drivers to follow inclement Weather Procedure. • Use the best practices to identify and avoid potential problems. • Attend the Winter Driving training session offered at staff/safety meeting.
Sight Distance	Visit location and review area	<p>Possible options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May change from gate service to yard service or vice versa; or • Installation of signs; or • Route reconfigured to change direction of travel for the bus; or • Re-locate stop to different location. • Encourage homeowners to prune trees, shrubs, among other things, to improve line of sight. • Communicate with counties to have trees/shrubs on public property pruned.
Traffic Volume	Picking up/dropping off on busy highway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warning lights on earlier and for longer periods of time. • Instruct students on safety and danger zones.
Left-Handed Stops	Review safety implications of left-handed stops	<p>Made changes for high traffic routes as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain permission from parents to have bus pick up student in yard, if possible. • Re-route bus route to change from left-handed to right-handed.
School Bus Loops	Review safety practices in bus loop	<p>Work with school administration to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase parent safety awareness. • Work with the Town of Strathmore and By-Law Enforcement to make drivers aware of parking zones. • Increase supervision in bus loops. • New Bus Loop at Trinity Christian Academy is a great improvement and should be the model that we strive for.



ADVOCACY PLANNING

"Inspiring confident, caring citizens of the world"

February 25, 2025

Background:

The Board's main priority is to advocate for quality education and equal programming opportunities for students at Golden Hills. To this end, the Board of Trustees maintains an Advocacy Committee with the purpose of developing advocacy priorities and a plan to share these concerns with the Golden Hills stakeholders and community, provincial authorities and other municipal officials.

Recommendation:

That the Board of Trustees consider potential updates of the Advocacy Plan for the 2024/2025 school year.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Grimsdale", is written above a horizontal line.

Jeff Grimsdale
Superintendent