



Palliser Regional Schools

Palliser Centre

#101, 3305 - 18 Avenue North, Lethbridge, AB T1H 5S1

Phone: 403-328-4111 Toll-free: 877-667-1234

Fax: 403-380-6890 www.pallisersd.ab.ca

Update from the Minister of Education, May 6, 2020:

While teacher-directed at-home learning continues for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year, the province is engaging the education system on a re-entry plan.

With in-person classes cancelled, teachers continue to work from the at-home learning guidelines established on March 20, with subject matter and workload varying by grade level.

“I want to thank our teachers, school support staff, administrators, education partners and parents for quickly adapting to our current reality and helping ensure that their children continue to learn as best as possible under the circumstances. I know everyone is making the effort to connect students. I look forward to school returning when the time is right and health restrictions allow for it.”

Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Education

Schools are using multiple approaches to deliver content to students. More than 90 per cent of school authorities are offering online learning, while about half are also emailing, telephoning and sending paper-based work to students.

School authorities and the government have provided about 60,000 devices, including laptops, Chromebooks, tablets and iPads, to students as they learn from home. School authorities have prioritized providing devices to students based on need, focusing on students who do not have access to devices, have complex needs, or are high school students. Additionally, the Métis Nation of Alberta, in partnership with Rupertsland Institute, has purchased more than 2,200 devices for self-identified Métis students across Alberta.

“We are proud to provide our Métis students with devices so they can continue to engage and succeed with online learning and the digital classroom in the months ahead. We believe that working in partnership with the College of Alberta School Superintendents and school authorities reflects a best practice where no child gets left behind in these unprecedented times.”

Lorne Gladu, CEO, Rupertsland Institute – Métis Centre of Excellence

Supports for families and parents

Recognizing that many families have questions about at-home learning, a provincial education helpline is now available to parents through which Alberta Education staff will address their questions and direct them to their school authorities, where applicable. The intent is to provide advice to families, particularly to parents of children with disabilities, who have questions about their child’s program now that the traditional delivery process has changed. Parents can reach the helpline by calling 780-422-6548 (toll-free by dialing 310-0000, followed by the 10-digit phone number) or by emailing studentsupport@gov.ab.ca.

Even with the excellent work being done by teachers and school divisions supporting the learning and inclusion of students with disabilities, we know that the changes in how education is being delivered is affecting students differently. For families of students with disabilities, there may be questions about their child’s program now that the traditional delivery process has changed.

***Together we will ensure learning success for all students
to develop their unique potential as caring citizens in a changing world.***

Alberta Education has established the help line and email to assist families with their questions and connect them to their boards where appropriate.

This could include key members of the school district (teacher, principal, school district leadership, school board) to find collaborative solutions to meeting their child's learning needs at home.

The Parent Help Line will be answered Monday through Friday from 8:15 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Education

Additionally, more than 4,000 curriculum resources to support parents and students are available on the LearnAlberta.ca website. School authorities have also made various resources available on their own websites.

"The Alberta School Councils' Association believes that parents and guardians should have access to an independent, formal source of support and guidance when barriers prevent optimum learner success, especially for children with disabilities. The parent helpline will offer relief for families struggling to navigate a new learning environment.

We appreciate working with Alberta Education and partners on re-entry planning, given the complexity of a return-to-school plan that must consider the wide impact of COVID-19."

Brandi Rai, president, Alberta School Councils' Association

Re-entry plan engagement

No decisions have been made on school operations for the 2020-21 school year starting in September. The province is working with school authorities and education system partners on developing a comprehensive re-entry plan that considers three scenarios, which could exist by September. They are:

- Normal school operations are able to resume.
- Schools are partially re-opened, with some level of restrictions.
- Teacher-directed at-home learning continues.

The re-entry plan will prioritize the safety and well-being of our teachers, staff and students. In addition to the feedback gathered from the education system, the plan will honour collective bargaining agreements, and will be informed by Alberta's Relaunch Strategy and advice provided by Alberta's chief medical officer of health.

"The challenge of reopening schools is very complex. We appreciate the efforts of the minister and department officials to meaningfully engage us on these important issues. The health and safety of students, teachers, staff, families and the broader community are paramount in these discussions. We are using input from provincial ATA teacher representatives and a recent COVID-19 related survey of over 2,000 teachers to share the views of the profession."

Jason Schilling, president, Alberta Teachers' Association

"We appreciate government's efforts to engage the Alberta School Boards Association and Alberta's 61 locally elected school boards on the re-entry plan. As these are early days in the planning process, school boards will continue to work with government and provide input on a safe and appropriate re-entry plan and timeline. School boards are eager to welcome staff and students back into schools as soon as it is safe to do so."

Lorrie Jess, president, Alberta School Boards Association

"The College of Alberta School Superintendents is pleased to be working with Alberta Education as together we develop a re-entry plan for the 2020-21 school year. We understand that students, teachers and staff are anxiously awaiting to return to class; however, any return to in-person schooling must prioritize a successful transition for our students while ensuring the health and wellness of everyone attending our schools."

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Bevan Daverne, president, College of Alberta School Superintendents

This initiative is one element of Alberta's Relaunch Strategy that must be in place before Alberta can begin to safely remove public health restrictions. For more information, visit alberta.ca/covid-19.

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