



Stakeholder Engagement  
What We Heard

Spring 2022



Buffalo Trail Public Schools is committed to maximizing student learning, in a safe and caring environment, supported by a highly effective team.

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## History

In early 2019, BTPS educational stakeholders came together to develop the educational direction for the *Four-Year Education Plan*. Engagements included three face to face sessions and one online session. Almost 300 people participated in this process. Planning focused on the desired states in five domains. A desired state is a view of what success will look like and what will be accomplished within the five Domains. Resulting from the engagements was the *BTPS Four Year Education Plan 2019-2023* that is available on our [website](#).

Assurance is seen as an approach to inspire a school jurisdictions' performance and ability that goes beyond accountability and includes the achievement of desired states and stakeholder engagement. BTPS provides assurance in the following five domains:

1. Student Growth and Achievement
2. Teaching and Leading
3. Learning Supports
4. Governance
5. Attending to the Local and Societal Context

## Process

After the completion of the *Four-Year Education Plan*, evidence was gathered from schools across BTPS to provide assurance on each of the five domains. This evidence is compiled and shared yearly with stakeholders as part of our annual updates. These reports are available on our [website](#).

As part of the stakeholder engagement process, Board-student engagements are held monthly. Students from every school across the division were asked questions related to the assurance elements and shared these responses with the Board.

In addition, staff are presented with the combined division evidence and asked questions about the next steps in providing assurance. In March of 2022, four online stakeholder engagement sessions were held for staff, parents and community members. Two online sessions were held for students to provide input and many of our schools engaged students, staff and parents at a local level. Results from the previous year were shared along with questions to provide direction for the upcoming 2022-2023 school year.

These questions focused on:

- What are some of the strengths of BTPS?
- What are some of the challenges affecting BTPS schools?
- What do we need to continue to do in our BTPS Schools?
- What domain areas should BTPS focus on for the coming school year?

## Responses

Board-student engagements included over 100 students throughout the school year. The online engagement survey had over 300 responses from staff, students, parents and community members. Respondents to the survey were asked to identify a school they most closely are affiliated with and it was notable that every school was identified.

## Results

### Strengths of BTPS

Stakeholders have identified several strengths across BTPS. Dominating the strengths of BTPS were the collaborative, helpful and caring aspects of our schools. Other strengths included the staff, the community feel a helpful, safe and caring environment, technology learning supports, and athletics.

Below are some representative statements:

#### Staff

- Amazing teaching staff, wonderful admin team who are very supportive of students and staff.
- The relationships our staff have with our students and each other.
- Many good teachers and I like that they talk about mental health.
- The heart of our staff and their care of students are strengths.
- Caring teachers and support staff, that are willing to reach out to parents and help struggling students.
- Our teachers are all concerned about our welfare and focused on providing a high-quality education.
- Good supportive leadership and staff.
- Teachers are willing to help out kids who struggle during lunch hours or after school.
- Caring, empathetic support staff, teachers and administration that give 110%.
- Great maintenance staff and custodians.

#### Community Feel

- Some of our strengths are that we are a small, caring school, our staff is close and I believe we build strong growing relationships with our kids.
- Inviting atmosphere, great communication with parents, students.
- Family oriented; we work together as one.
- Closer interpersonal connections between the community, staff and students.
- Excellent connection with students, parents and community in a small rural setting.
- Community relations, close knit.
- I love the size of the schools as most every staff member gets to know your child, they understand their strengths and weaknesses and are more than willing to work within their individual parameters.

#### Helpful, Safe and Caring

- Very caring, supportive, and welcoming for our learning.
- School feels warm and welcoming.
- Very good at supporting each other.
- Always looking out for the best interests of students.
- Extremely caring and supportive staff members (to students and to staff).
- Commitment of many staff to provide a safe environment that emphasizes strong values and student-centered learning.
- We work together for success.
- There are many good people in BTPS helping.

## Learning Supports

- Health and wellness for staff and students.
- The wellness challenges.
- Meeting the needs of all students.
- Supports to families in need, hot lunch program.
- The curriculum initiatives in math (Mathology).
- Literacy and numeracy programs.
- The school is doing a great job in making sure every student can understand the material.
- The breakfast program and school lunches.
- Helping everyone who needs help, teaching the important things.
- Extra mental wellness support, learning supports, student learning and achievements.
- Our teachers are all concerned about our welfare.
- The schools have very good supports for mental health.

## Technology

- Commitment to advances in technology and delivery methods.
- Great access to technology.
- BTPS does a great job at working with small schools to provide Distributed Learning options for students to take courses they would not have access to.
- We have an excellent support team for when the technology is not working.
- Learning online from a teacher at a different school.

## Athletics

- We have our own athletics in Junior High.
- We have sports teams for both Junior and Senior High.
- Athletic tournaments.
- Can get on sports teams easier.
- Sports and good coaching.

## Challenges Affecting BTPS

When asked about the challenges facing BTPS stakeholders overwhelmingly mentioned the challenges brought about by living, teaching and learning in a pandemic. Further challenges identified included funding for rural schools, programing and learning supports, and student wellness.

Below are some representative statements.

### COVID/Pandemic

- The pandemic has been a challenge for all students, staff and schools.
- COVID has taken some of those opportunities away from me and my classmates.
- Having a connection with parents and students when no in person meetings are allowed.
- Still coming out for the pandemic and meeting the kids where they are at with their learning

### Funding and Enrollment

- Decreasing enrollment means decreasing funds.
- Budget is a challenge. The schools do a fantastic job with the resources allocated.
- Small schools with declining populations.

- BTPS does a great job supporting each school no matter their student population but as budgets become less this will be a challenge that may become harder and harder with more student decline.
- Provincial funding is inadequate.
- Continued depopulation of rural areas and decreased funding.

### Programing and Learning Supports

- More STEM courses and various options including languages.
- Continuing to offer all courses/teachers in High School in a declining school community.
- Reduced specialized supports for students.
- Meet the needs of the struggling students.
- SLP and OT staff are usually in more demand than the time they have available at each school.
- Providing ample and appropriate support for students in need.

### Student Wellness

- Support services – counseling.
- Mental Health - More youth continue to face mental health issues and we simply cannot keep up with the demand, despite our best efforts.
- Available Social-Emotional Coach time for students.
- Lack of outside services for students.

### Continuing at BTPS

Stakeholders provide many aspects of practices in BTPS that need to continue. These include being student focused, wellness supports, advocating for rural funding and learning and program supports.

Below are some representative statements.

#### Student Focused

- Continue to make students a priority.
- Continue to be very kind and positive toward every student  
Staff showing up with great attitudes and always being there for students to rely on.
- Make personal connections with kids and making sure they know the person and not just their actions.
- We need to continue to focus on the students.

#### Wellness Supports

- Keep the children's wellness (physical and mental) at your highest priority.
- Mental health support for staff and students.
- I believe we should continue the supports for student wellness.
- Breakfast Program.
- Being able to access specialized consultant services has been invaluable.
- It is also nice to see support systems within the schools.
- Bring services to school, make services accessible and timely to students and families.
- Wellness challenges are great for staff.

#### Advocating for Rural Schools

- Engage the community, utilize local resources and community experts.
- Continue to fight for the importance of rural education.
- Advocate for opportunities for rural schools.

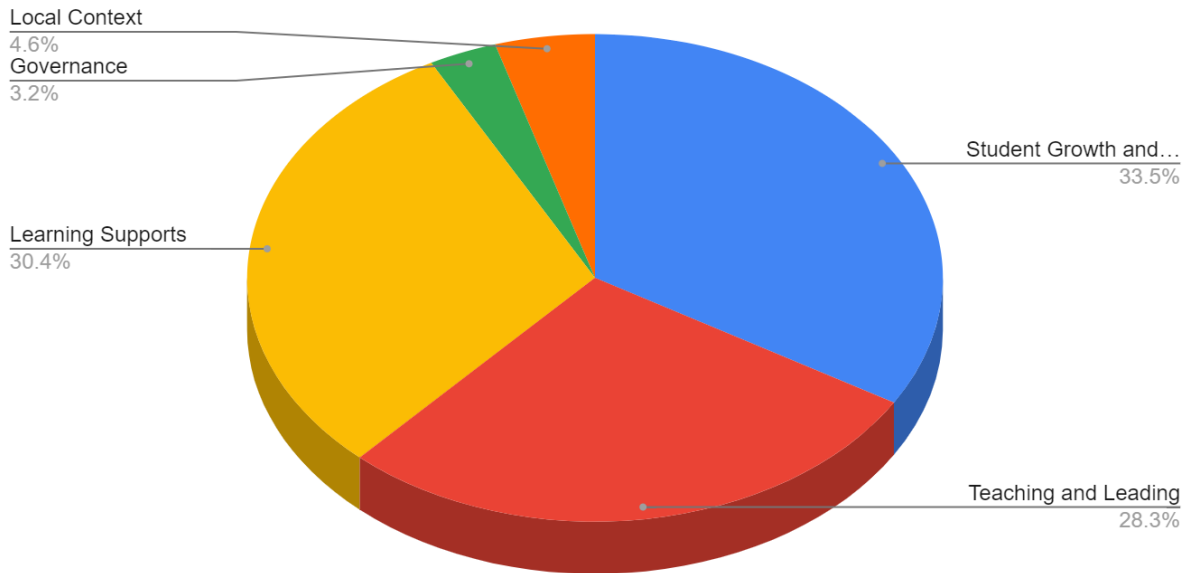
- Promote the benefits of rural living and the value of growing up in smaller rural communities.

### Learning Supports and Programing

- Diversify our educational opportunities.
- Lakeland College partnership for the trades should be continued.
- Learning supports for helping people with their challenges.
- Continue to have occupational therapists, speech language pathologists, psychologists, and other supports available to schools.
- Continued focus on technology use in the classroom.
- Make learning fun.
- Offer option classes and after school activities.
- Support all students in academics, arts, athletics, and socially.
- Focus on literacy and numeracy.
- Promote inclusive learning environments.

### Domain Focus Areas

Stakeholders were asked to identify two of the top domains that should be a focus in the coming school year. The following chart represents responses. Student Growth and Achievement, followed closely by Learner Support and Teaching and Leading are the priorities.



## Actions

### Identified Priorities for the Coming Year

Based on Stakeholder input the priorities set for the coming year will include:

#### Student Growth and Achievement

- Support students in addressing learning needs and any unfinished learning.
- Continue to explore alternative ways to expand programming across a rural context.

#### Teaching and Leading

- Continue the focus on literacy and numeracy.
- Continue to build staff and leadership capacity to meet the learning needs of diverse learners.

#### Learning Supports

- Continue to prioritize wellness supports for staff and students.

#### Governance

- Continue to advocate for funding and supports that address the unique needs of small schools and the rural context.
- Advocate for increased external supports to be available to Education and in the rural setting.

#### Adhering to Local & Societal Context

- Continue to support connections with the local community and capitalize on our rural context.