



Buffalo Trail Public Schools - New Wainwright School delayed due to Alberta Government priorities

Media Release – March 22, 2024

Buffalo Trail continues to advocate for a new school for Wainwright as the Government prioritizes putting capital dollars into growth in cities.

In the most recent announcements from the Alberta Government, Wainwright Elementary School will continue to be on the waitlist for a new school. The elementary school for kindergarten to Grade 6 students has been the first priority for Buffalo Trail Public Schools since 2018 and a capital priority since 2008.

Wainwright Elementary School has been going through a design process over the past year and was on schedule to be approved for a new school facility. Trustees and leadership, including school staff, have been working with consultants and the Government to ensure they were ready for approval in 2024.

“We both understand and are frustrated. Wainwright Elementary School has been a first need for our division for many years and to hear we need to wait again is not what is best for our students and community. The Alberta Government knows this is needed and yet still we are waiting for full funding. The Board of Trustees accepts this as an opportunity to speak even louder for our students and our communities.”

- Board Chair Kara Jackson

In 2020, the Alberta Government conducted an extensive review of the current elementary school building including structural, mechanical, electrical, and building envelope, followed by the Alberta Government approving a design process in 2023 for the new school to be built.

The new school for Wainwright Elementary School will be located on the same lot on the east-side of Wainwright where the Rotary All-Seasons park will be built. Conversations and planning also include Wainwright’s early childhood providers to build a new daycare centre next to the new school. Together, these would all be great additions for Buffalo Trail families as well as Wainwright and surrounding communities.

Because of the continued delays in the new school, dollars that can go to supporting other schools in the division will now need to be used to maintain the aging infrastructure of the current building. Maintenance and additional costs for the current school have been well over \$150,000 over the past

four years and are expected to increase the longer the division must wait. Further, a new school facility would offer enhanced learning opportunities for the students of Buffalo Trail which was generating excitement with school staff.

“We have been working with the staff at Wainwright Elementary School to design a school that would be even more fantastic for our students, including learning spaces that are modern and reflect current learning practices. I am so proud of what the school has done so far. While we appreciate the Government’s support for helping to design the school, we need this school built today for our community, and I look forward to working with the Board of Trustees on how we can advocate strongly for our students.”

- Superintendent Michelle Webb

On March 20, 2024, the Board of Trustees approved Wainwright Elementary School as their continued first capital priority, representing a new school building estimated to be built for at least \$20 million. When approved, a new school can be expected to open within one to two years.

The Board of Trustees will be finding ways to ensure strong communication continues with the local MLA, Alberta Education, and the Alberta Government.

Families that would like for their voices to be heard by the Alberta Government are encouraged to reach out to MLA Garth Rowsell at 780-842-6177 or Vermilion.Lloydminster.Wainwright@assembly.ab.ca, as well as E-mail the Minister of Education at Education.Minister@gov.ab.ca.

For more information or questions, please E-mail buffalotrail@btps.ca.