



Raider News

(Prairie River Junior High School)

Principal's Message

Happy New Year Raider Families!

We hope that your Winter Break was filled with memorable moments with family and friends. Mother Nature is certainly giving us a “run for our money” with the snow, cold temperatures (and now meltdown), and challenging road conditions. In typical Canadian fashion, families are finding a way to make the best of this!

In January, we are hoping to officially shift gears as we leave behind interruptions from earlier in the year. Our Alberta Education Results Review has shown some significant progress in recent years in the programming and “Safe and Caring Schools” focus areas. As you will see in this newsletters, we feel that we can do even better, and are asking parents to partner with us as we embark on a determined effort to give Prairie River students a truly outstanding educational experience.

Our primary goal in Middle School is to provide a bigger picture of all of the possibilities that surround students as they continue their schooling. **Goals** (personal, academic, and career) become even more important as students begin planning for the future. Research consistently shows that setting goals often has a dramatic and profound impact on student motivation. We have a small amount of Academic Counselling available when we can work with students (1:1) to support their success in school, while encouraging goal setting. Goals can certainly change as students mature, but setting new goals is a part of life as well!

Finally, please see the following pages for information on changes that will improve Grade Reporting (Report Cards) transparency, as well as changes to our Honours Recognition program. We are looking forward to an experienced-filled 2nd half of the school year!

hpsd.ca

Contents:

- Principal's Message
- “Live Different” Circles Program
- Changes to “Honours List” Program
- Changes to achievement reporting
- School Division Priorities
- Family Feedback

January, 2026

LiveDifferent in Partnership with
Prairie River Junior High



What is Circles?

In just six weeks, through meaningful discussions, engaging video content, and a practical compassion-focused project, Circles helps young people build relationships while gathering around important conversations.

What is required?

Lots of heart!
A desire to make a difference.
A genuine caring for others.

While our overall school results in the 2024/2025 Alberta Education Annual Results Review were very encouraging, there is always room for significant improvement. One area of particular challenge identified by students in past years is the harmful impact on individuals and school culture when some students speak and act in disrespectful ways toward other students.

Prairie River has such a wonderful group of students and staff, and yet at times students feel uncomfortable with the language, disrespect, or behaviour directed toward classmates. We get it - Middle School years are famous for being a little “edgy” as students push for independence and identity. Our young people may not admit this, but adult influence on the lives of our maturing students is still critically important during this phase of a young person’s life, and families have never been more important!.

The “Live Different - Circles” program is designed to highlight the incredible potential within every single young person. Giving young people an outlet to showcase their decency and willingness to help make the world around them better is key to their development as valued community members!

Check out a Live Different Video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rGaviLF3FO8>



Honours Recognition Changes



Traditionally Prairie River has awarded students either Silver (75% - 84%) or Gold Honours (85% and above) based on a collective average of all core classes (Math, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies). Starting in January we are changing the format to the following:

- Honours will be awarded in each individual core class (the same percentage criteria)
 - Students who achieve honours in 2 - 3 core classes will be awarded Silver Honours
 - Students who achieve honours in all 4 cores will be awarded Gold Honours.
- Both Silver and Gold Honours winners will have an opportunity to take part in whatever honours activity is planned for a given quarter.

Student Achievement Reporting Transparency (Report Cards)



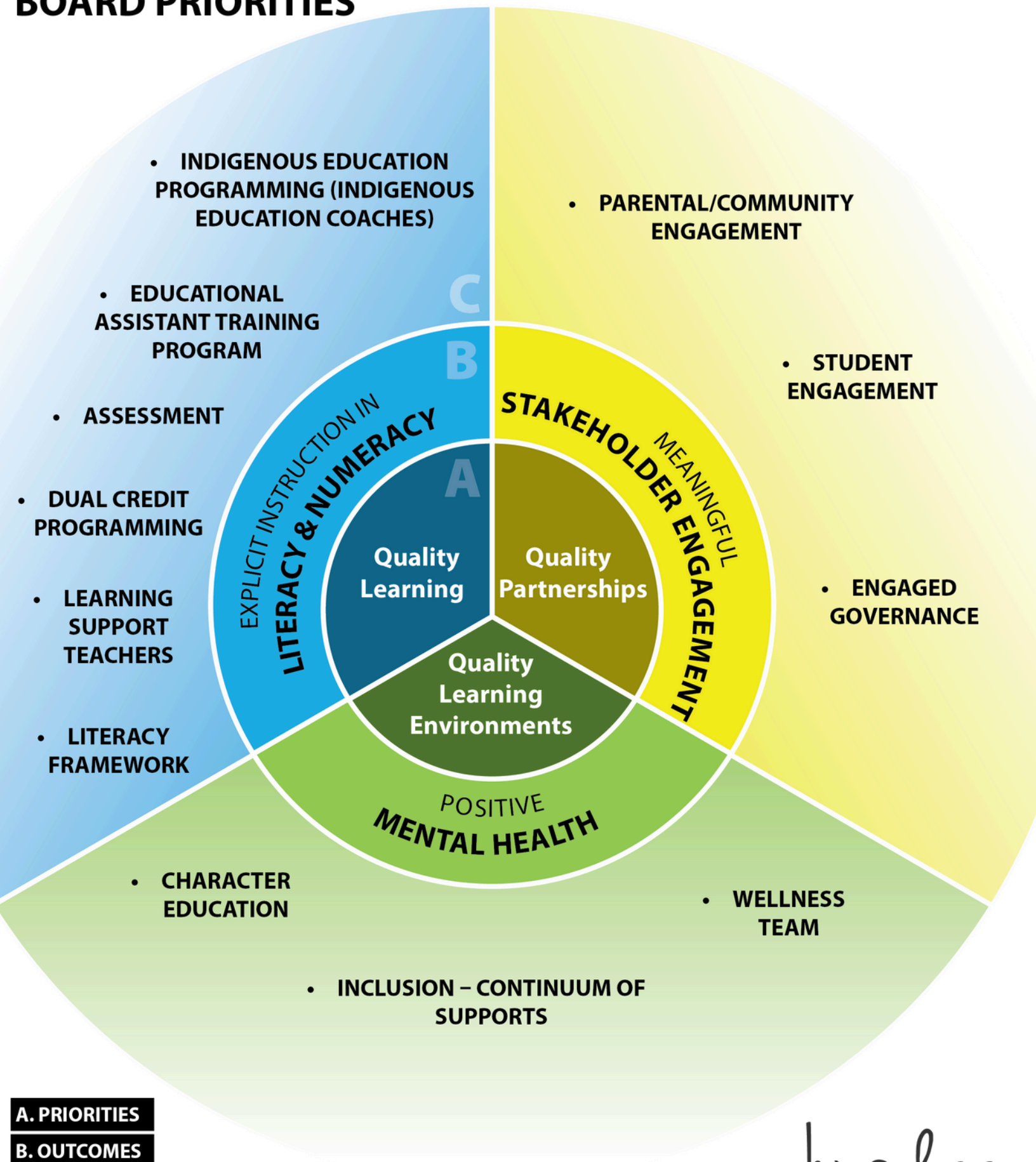
In order to give students, parents and guardians a more clear understanding of student achievement in each class, teachers will be more deliberate in reporting if work was done "independently," or "with support." The vast majority of students will have times where they may receive support, on their way to independently completed assignments. Significant portions of coursework that was heavily supported by teachers and Educational Assistants is important to the development of skills and knowledge, and is considered Formative Assessment. These supports naturally result in higher grades than would have been achieved had a student worked purely independently. Of course Summative Assessments (grades that are reported on Report Cards) must be done independently (accounting for universal strategies that may include a student's use of accommodations such as audio, Read/Write, oral responses, alternate assessment formats, etc).

Upcoming Events and School Information



- January 12th, 2026: Restart “Circles” Character Education Program (Health and Enrichment classes):
 - Authenticity (being your true self/connecting with others)
 - Empathy (understanding/helping others)
 - Growth (believing we can change/grow throughout our lives)
 - Resilience (becoming stronger from life’s challenges)
 - Altruism (becoming people who make a difference)
 - Values (what things in life really matter to me)
- January 13th: STEM Finals (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) - GPV. Prairie River Raider competitors:
- January 16th/17th: Sexsmith Sabres Basketball Tournament.
- January 27th/28th: PACE (Prevention of Abuse Child Exploitation) Presentations
- January 28th: School Council/Travel Association Mtg (6:00 PM)
- January 29th: Report Cards sent home (paper copies and digitally)
- January 30th: No School/Hillside Cougars (Valleyview) Basketball
- February 2nd: Start of Quarter III.
- February 4th - February 6th: Teachers’ Convention (no school)
- February 16th: Family Day (no school)
- February 16th & 17th: Parent Travel Association Casino (Grande Prairie). Parents/Guardians who are able to work a shift for this important fundraising please email Jocelyn at: prjhtravel@gmail.com, or call 780-850-0972.

HIGH PRAIRIE SCHOOL DIVISION BOARD PRIORITIES



A. PRIORITIES
B. OUTCOMES
C. STRATEGIES

hpsd.ca

We're Listening!



We want to hear from you! If you have any questions or thoughts about what's happening at the school, please write them down below and give this page back to the school or email us at prs@hpsd.ca. Thank you!

Please include your name and contact information if you would like a response.

hpsd.ca