

BACK TO SCHOOL | AUGUST 2021

THE MOUNTAINEER

Updates for the parents, guardians & students of Buck Mountain Central School



MISSION:

At Buck Mountain Central School, we passionately engage our diverse students every day by genuinely connecting and supporting them on their learning journey towards high school completion and life beyond our doors.

Message from the Principal

Dear Buck Mountain Central School Community,

We have an exciting and productive school year ahead and the staff at BMC have been eagerly planning for the return of students. During the summer months I hope you and your families enjoyed some rest and relaxation with loved ones and are entering the school year with fresh enthusiasm. We have a great year planned for our students, staff, and families and are excited to continue on our learning journey with you all. As this is my first year as Principal of BMC, it will be a learning experience like none other for me!

In preparation for a great school year ahead, teachers have been working hard on planning engaging learning experiences and setting up their classrooms as welcome environments for all. Our custodial staff, Mrs. Glenn and Mrs. Friesen, did an excellent job shining up the school during the summer deep clean -- we ask that when you see them in the halls, please show your gratitude for keeping our school looking its best. The office staff have also been busy: fielding questions, signing up new students and families, and setting up for a new year diligently addressing tasks 'behind the scenes' over the past week. And, our much-appreciated Parent Advisory is gearing up to welcome families, provide volunteer opportunities, and offer other exciting events.

Each year brings change and opportunity. This includes a few additions to our staff. We are delighted to welcome Mr. Cristian Vesa, our new math and science teacher. Miss Kaitlyn Erickson will be joining us for the full year in ELA, Art and Drama. Mrs. Morgan Spruyt will re-join us for Band and ELA in Semester 2 (February). Miss Candace Torgerson will be covering Mr. Durose's classes at the start of the year in ELA and Health. Additionally, Mrs. Susan Hilstad will be joining BMC as an educational assistant, primarily in math and science classes. Miss Katie Cowan will also be at BMC throughout the year as a Wellness coach. We are also fortunate to have Mrs. Judy Miller at the school full time this year, as she continues in her role as Success Coach, which includes helping students plan for life beyond our doors.

Continued

As we welcome so many new faces to our staff, we bid farewell to Educational Assistant Mrs. Denise Murray. Over her 20+ years of service to this community she has taught us all that kindness and compassion are the recipe for success. She has become a regular touchstone for many staff and students and will be greatly missed. We wish her well as she embarks on her next adventure.

This year BMC, along with all other WRPS schools, is operationalizing a Collaborative Response model, which will ensure all students have a team of dedicated professionals advocating for and supporting them on their learning journey. One key component of collaboration for BMC staff is dedicated time within the school day to work with students, as well as to meet with other staff members to engage in learning of their own. That is why we are excited to return to using Directed Learning time, in period 3, dedicating a half an hour each day to engaging with this model. This also means the re-introduction of Teacher Advisory Groups (TAG) during this time, which will be a greater opportunity for students to connect with each other and staff to promote a positive and productive school culture, optimizing student learning. More details will be given to students and staff in school during our first few weeks back in the classroom!

At Buck Mountain Central School, we believe that the relationships staff have with students, parents, and the greater community are the foundation of the work we do. A partnership with parents means that students know they have a group of adults advocating for their success, which we know is critical for our students. We encourage parents and guardians to reach out and let us know how we're doing as individuals, as a staff, and as a whole school community. Your feedback will inform us as we learn together throughout the school year.

Our school mission is to passionately engage our diverse students everyday by connecting and supporting them on their learning journey toward high school completion and life beyond our doors. We are committed to this mission and will continue to work toward our vision of a school community where all learners feel safe, supported, and celebrated. Relationships for the foundation of what we do, empowering individuals to reach their full potential as lifelong learners.

We are excited to start this year off strong, and while we certainly have a lot to learn, we are committed to connecting with students and families along the way.

Thank you to the staff, students, and families of Buck Mountain Central School for being a part of my learning journey,

Nicole Townsend

PowerSchool

We strongly encourage all students and guardians to enable their PowerSchool accounts, both on the internet browser and PowerSchool mobile application. Students will be guided through the web platform in the first few weeks of school, using their student account information (the same username and password as their Gmail). Parents can activate their accounts by contacting the school and walking through the process with our administrative assistants. This is valuable for families who have multiple students in our school (or any WRPS school!).

PowerSchool is certainly valuable to see how students are doing academically in their studies, however it is also an asset for monitoring student attendance, accessing school fees, seeing school daily announcements (via the Daily Bulletin), and the email hotbutton for contacting teachers.

This school year, we will be using PowerSchool to communicate students' grades at reporting intervals (each quarter). Traditional report cards at these times will only be printed upon individual requests. We strongly believe that student progress is best communicated through regular feedback, rather than only at reporting dates. PowerSchool is an incredible tool that will increase the effectiveness of feedback on student learning. We are happy to help students and families learn the platform, so please contact the office with any questions.

Inclusion Coach Update

Welcome back, students, families, and staff!

It is hard to believe that summer is over already, and we are thrilled to see everyone in person once again. After the interesting past year, many parents and students will have a plethora of questions and should call or email whenever one may arise. We know that there may be uncertainties and will help in any ways that we can. Feel free to reach out to the office staff or directly to teachers.

I am incredibly excited to be returning to Buck Mountain Central in my new position as Vice Principal, and cannot wait to see familiar faces and meet new ones as well. On top of this, I have also taken on the role of Inclusion Coach, in which I have been tasked with supporting students with unique learning needs. At BMC, we believe that all students have the potential to learn and a partnership between students, parents, and staff will encourage communication of planning, resources, and commitments to helping students reach their personal learning goals. Through my work with learning support I hope to help bridge these relationships. If the school is already aware of your child's learning needs, you can expect that I will reach out to both them and you in the coming weeks, just to make sure that they are taken care of. In some instances, I may even ask for an in person meeting so that we can ensure the best possible care for our students.

Passion for learning is a priority to our staff because we know that students are only as excited as we are. One only needs to walk our halls to immediately see the enthusiasm they bring to classrooms, and the commitment they have to inspiring students daily. Although students may have anxiety and hesitation after the past year, we encourage families to let a period of adjustment pass and give themselves time to settle. We are confident that, before long, students will be just as excited to return. For our new grade 7 students it may seem even more challenging, but we will do everything to make them feel safe, cared for, and welcomed.

Should you feel that your child requires additional learning support, or if you have questions about available resources, please do not hesitate to contact me through email or the school's phone number.

Mr. Michael York

Return to School

As we come back to school, it is important that staff, students, and visitors continue to complete the [Daily Covid-19 Self Assessments](#) prior to entering the school. We trust each individual to stay home if they are sick and follow the recommendations from AHS, based on the symptoms they are experiencing. We also ask that visitors to the school call ahead to let the office know they are coming in, prior to entering the school.

Additional measures and specific information is outlined in the [WRPS School Plan "Return to Near Normal"](#), which includes the choice for staff, students, and visitors to wear a mask. The exception to this is that students are expected to wear masks on school busses until at least September 27th, 2021, as laid out by Alberta Education. Our 2021-2022 "Return to Near Normal" plan is based on Alberta Education's [2021-2022 School Year Plan](#).

More information will be sent to parents and guardians in the next few weeks regarding potential opportunities for students and staff and, in some instances, family members to participate in the provincial vaccination program for Covid-19. Parents and guardians who have children who would like to participate will be required to provide consent for their student(s).

Furthermore all staff, students, and visitors will continue to observe respiratory etiquette and good hand hygiene practices as BMC custodial staff will continue to clean high touch surfaces frequently.

Thank you to everyone for their attention to this information, ensuring a smooth transition back to school under near normal circumstances. If you have any questions regarding returning to school, please direct them to Nicole Townsend via phone 780-388-3900 or email nicole.townsend@wrps11.ca.

Career Councilor

Welcome back!

I am looking forward to another exciting year at Buck Mountain Central School. I will once again be filling the role of Career Counsellor at the school. I will be meeting with Grade 12 students in the first month to review timetables and credits. At this time, we will make a graduation exit plan and discuss any post secondary plans the students are considering. It is important that these meetings happen quickly since applications to most programs open on Oct 1, 2021. I will communicate with parents your student's path to graduation and any post secondary plans discussed.

If students or parents would like to come in and discuss post secondary education opportunities, please feel free to contact me to set up a meeting. I will update the open house dates as they become available this fall. I would encourage students to attend an open house as it gives them the opportunity to ask questions and tour the campus. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at the school.

Mrs. Judy Miller

WRPS Board of Trustee Elections 2021/22

Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools promotes and encourages its interested citizens to run for the office of elected school board trustee.

The nomination period for the 2021 general election in October is open and runs until NOON on nomination day, which is Monday, September 20, 2021.

Links to nomination forms and additional details are on our [webpage](#).



MARK YOUR CALENDERS

SEPTEMBER

- 1 - First day of classes, Grade 7 Orientation
- 6 - No School - Labour Day
- 15 - School Council Meeting
- 17 - No School - PLC Day
- 22 - Terry Fox Run
- 30 - Orange Shirt Day

OCTOBER

- 8 - No School - PLC Day
- 11 - No School - Thanksgiving Day



WETASKIWIN REGIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"Inspiring students to become the best they can be."

FORM 335-1

Date: August 30, 2021

Dear Parents:

Re: Fair Notice

The safety of our children is a top priority for us all. We, as a school system, have been involved in intensive safety training with our community partners - the police, Mental Health and Child and Family Authority. Together we have developed a plan for responding to all situations in which students may be posing a threat to themselves or others.

This letter is to inform you that we, as a school system, now have a policy that requires principals to complete a "risk assessment" in all cases of students making significant threats to harm themselves or others. The purpose of the assessment is to determine the level of risk the student poses, and how best to support high-risk students so that their behavior does not become hurtful or destructive. Information may be collected from online sources and is only obtained from open source sites. In all cases where staff know that a student has behaved in a threatening way please be assured that your principal will be taking measures to address the situation in a positive and proactive manner. If your principal invites you to a meeting to discuss safety concerns about your own child, please understand that policy is being followed and that the goal is safety, not punishment.

This letter is intended to serve our community with fair notice that we, as a school community, will not accept "no response" to a serious threat or high-risk behavior. Our goal is to respond to all high-risk situations in a professional manner that provides for a healthy and caring learning environment.

We are proud to be able to provide this level of support to our school communities and are most fortunate to have our community partners at our side.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Barron".

Peter Barron
Superintendent of Schools




August 27, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

At Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools, one of our greatest priorities is ensuring that all our students arrive safely at school each and every day.

To enhance our existing absence-checking procedure, we are introducing **a new, more efficient** student absence reporting system called **SafeArrival**. This new system will reduce the time it takes to verify student attendance, make it easy for you to report your child's absence and easy for staff to respond to unexplained student absences.

With **SafeArrival**, you are asked to report your child's absence in advance using any of these 3 convenient methods:

1. Using your mobile device, download and install the **SchoolMessenger app**  from the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store (or from the links at go.schoolmessenger.ca). The first time you use the app, select **Sign Up** to create your account (will need to be verified via your email). Then select **Attendance** then **Report an Absence**.
2. Use the SafeArrival website, go.schoolmessenger.ca. The first time you use the website, select **Sign Up** to create your account. Select **Attendance** then **Report an Absence**.
3. Call the toll-free number **1-833-525-9071** to report an absence using the automated phone system.

These options are available 24 hours/day, 7 days a week. Future absences can be reported at any time.

In addition, we will use the **SchoolMessenger Communicate** automated notification system to contact parents whose child is absent when the absence was not reported in advance. The automated notification system will attempt to contact parents at multiple contact points until a reason is submitted for the absence. If our system is unable to reach the designated contacts, office staff will follow up.

If you report your child's absence in advance using the **SafeArrival** toll-free number, website or mobile app, you will **NOT** receive these notifications.

Starting **Wednesday, September 1, 2021**, please report absences in advance using **SafeArrival** instead of sending notes or calling/emailing the school. Staff will use the **SafeArrival** notifications to let you know if your student is absent (when you haven't reported the absence in advance).

Thank you for your patience and cooperation as we implement this new system. Please contact Shirley via email at shirley.barton@wrps11.ca with any questions.