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## **Thorsby Junior-Senior High School Assurance Plan 2021-2022**



## Thorsby Junior-Senior High School Assurance Plan - 2021-2022

### School Profile:

- Thorsby Junior-Senior High School (TJSHS) is located 40 minutes southwest of Edmonton in the Town of Thorsby, AB, and is a part of the Black Gold School Division. The school's enrollment has been pretty steady over the past few years, ranging from about 175 to 190 students. The school currently has a population of 188 students from grades 7-12. 185 students are currently attending in-person with 3 students attending Black Gold Regional Schools Distance Learning. There are 91 students in grades 7-9, and 97 students in grades 10-12. About 38% of students live in the town with the rest attending from the surrounding rural area. 46% of our students are transported to the school by bus. The school currently has 12 teachers and 10 support staff.
- TJSHS offers a wide range of courses at both the junior high and high school levels. At the junior high level, we offer regular core classes and options that include: Cosmetology; Industrial Arts; Band; Film Studies; 3D Printing & Design; Art; Yoga; Foods; Computer Studies; and Guitar. Our high school course offerings do change minimally from year to year. We cycle physics (even starting year) and chemistry (odd starting year) as our student population does not necessarily support running those courses each year. We offer the following options during the 2021/2022 school year at the High School level: Art; Computer Science; Cosmetology; Esthetics; Yoga; Forensics; Foods; Industrial Arts; French; General Music; Sports Performance; Registered Apprenticeship Program; and Work Experience. We are supported via our in-reach opportunity where we are able to offer: 47 core classes; 30 options; and 114 CTS credits. TJSHS also operates a Dual Credit program through Black Gold School Division who has partnerships with Olds College; Northern Lakes College; Lakeland College; Portage College; and SAIT.
- **School Mission Statement:** In creating a positive and productive learning environment, Thorsby Jr. Sr. High School, together with students, parents, and community will strive to have students reach their potential.
- **Vision Statement:** To create an atmosphere where students, staff, parents, and the community are engaged in learning.
- **Core Values:** Staff, students, and the learning environment at TJSHS are to be:
  - Safe
  - Accountable
  - Bold
  - Respectful
  - Engaged
  - Student-Centered



## **Celebrations:**

### **Overall**

- Students have done well in returning to in-class learning, flexibility with changes to Covid Protocols, and cancellation of Diploma Exams.
- Student movement to Distance Learning (DL) was lower this year and many of the DL students returned to live classes.
- Student attendance has been strong.
- The movement to more digital assignments and the use of Google Classroom has made it easier to manage student work throughout absences this year.
- The entire staff maintains a continued focus on supporting mental health and building relationships with students from a trauma-informed perspective as described in our [mental health plan](#).
- Overall school communication has increased; focussing on positive student experiences and events in the school.
- We have increased the number of courses that students could take (additional options courses)
- We have increased the number of teachers to reduce class sizes.
- We have increased the number of Educational Assistants to provide optimal support for students who are complex as well as general classroom support.
- All staff are extremely engaged and care about each other and the school community.
- A new curtain in the gym has increased visual appeal when used to divide the gym.
- On the Assurance Survey, our 3 year and 5 year completion and our dropout rate all improved and ranked as excellent.
- Our results in all domains of the Assurance Survey surpassed the provincial results.
- Although Measure Evaluations were not completed for many domains of the Assurance Survey when analyzing school data we continued to improve in the majority of areas in relation to previous years.
- Teachers' completion of the 3T, HLAT, and MIPI assessments for screening student needs for literacy and numeracy went well at TJSHS.

### **Academics**

- New option programs were further embraced by students this year. We saw growth in student interest in the junior and senior levels for yoga, fitness, forensics, and film studies.
- Quartered options allowed for more variety for junior high students. This was carried forward from last year but was embraced by both students and teachers.
- Increased quartered options have allowed for maintaining overall low-class sizes.
- New projects in industrial arts such as pens, clocks, pepper mills, glass etching, and fishing lures are keeping students engaged.
- Sr. High Art has increased enrollment.
- Excellent personalized, hands-on guidance counselling for post-secondary school is provided for each Grade 12 student.

### **Co/Extracurricular**

- The return of sports was greatly appreciated and we saw a number of students participate in various sports offered, with a marked increase at the junior high level.
- THS Students Union began meeting again; decorating the Crash Area for holidays, organizing theme days.
- Increased work with the BGSD MHC team (Angela DeFrancesco) on Wednesdays. This has grown to include lunchtime activities to increase positive school culture.
- GSA has begun running again and is well attended.
- A Jack Chapter to support positive student mental health is the process of being created.
- We started a painted mural program in the front office windows of the school.

### Challenges:

- We have a relatively low completion of the Assurance Survey by parents
- Enforcing masking rules at all times creates some strain between staff and students.
- There are larger class sizes at the grade 10 and 11 levels which have students with various learning needs. This has resulted in some split grade classes which can cause some difficulty in providing instruction to multiple groups at a time.
- The challenge of not being able to offer extracurricular sports last year may have led to some lower participation numbers in senior high sports teams this year.
- We have observed decreased motivation and work completion with our senior high students throughout the pandemic.
- There are some struggles ensuring students are in the correct stream despite prior course marks and teacher recommendations.
- The music program is continuing to see the effects of being limited by COVID-19. We are seeing lower enrollment numbers in grades 8-12.
- There is evidence of some academic COVID gaps this year. There are also challenges with the level of socialization and maturity with our junior high classes.
- We are increasingly aware of the mental health challenges of our students. There is a lack of easy to access support for this in the community.
- We have challenges with some students being chronically late.
- Student cell phones continue to be a distraction for some students.
- It is challenging to find a balance between student mental health and teacher mental health.
- On the Assurance Survey there appeared to be a dissonance in some areas between the satisfaction level of students and teachers and those perceived levels of parents in some of the metrics.
- The other challenge is the low completion rates of parents of the Assurance Survey with only 6 completing it this year.
- The measure of 6 year transition rate was a concern this year for the first time.
- Students often prefer to take their spare for socializing instead of accessing tutoring or guidance counselling.

### School Council Message

Our school council continues to meet online using Zoom to stay connected with the school and provide a parent voice during these challenging times. As a council, we work to support the school in a few different ways. We participate in discussions around the school calendar and have provided input into the future direction of Black Gold Schools at the Council of School Councils evening last year. We provide a voice for parents and work with school staff to ensure the best experiences for our children. We also raise money through our fundraising body to purchase items to enhance student experiences in learning - something we wouldn't be successful at without the support of our amazing community.

In addition to the current challenges of the pandemic, the province released a new curriculum for Kindergarten to Grade 6. Although this doesn't directly affect our school, future repercussions of this sub-par curriculum were very obvious. Our council, along with the Thorsby Elementary School Council wrote a letter on behalf of parents to the Minister of Education and MLA to outline our concerns about the curriculum. The need to support our children's education in all ways as a council is clear and sometimes done through advocacy on behalf of our schools in a way they may not be able to do.

The pressure on our school staff has been incredible in having to deal with the pandemic. Adding the new curriculum, budget cuts and an unsupportive government on top of this has increased this pressure exponentially. Our council is extremely proud of the way staff continue to persevere, find creative solutions and deal with everything thrown at them with grace and always the best interest of our children in mind. We want to thank them for this. We know moving forward, with strong and caring leadership, this determination to provide the best experiences for our children will continue.

**School Council Chair Name: Kimberley Chung**

**School Assurance Plan shared final revision Date: January 26, 2022**

## Spring 2021 Required Alberta Education Assurance Measures - Overall Summary

Assurance Domain	Measure	Thorsby Junior Senior High Sch			Alberta			Measure Evaluation		
		Current Result	Prev Year Result	Prev 3 Year Average	Current Result	Prev Year Result	Prev 3 Year Average	Achievement	Improvement	Overall
Student Growth and Achievement	Student Learning Engagement	90.2	n/a	n/a	85.6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Citizenship	83.5	75.8	74.5	83.2	83.3	83.0	n/a	n/a	n/a
	3-year High School Completion	90.0	79.7	74.7	83.4	80.3	79.6	Very High	Improved	Excellent
	5-year High School Completion	93.9	71.0	82.3	86.2	85.3	84.8	Very High	Improved	Excellent
	PAT: Acceptable	n/a	n/a	71.0	n/a	n/a	73.7	n/a	n/a	n/a
	PAT: Excellence	n/a	n/a	17.6	n/a	n/a	20.3	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Diploma: Acceptable	n/a	n/a	70.4	n/a	n/a	83.6	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Diploma: Excellence	n/a	n/a	9.3	n/a	n/a	24.1	n/a	n/a	n/a
Teaching & Leading	Education Quality	92.5	91.7	87.7	89.6	90.3	90.2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Learning Supports	Welcoming, Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environments (WCRSLE)	89.1	n/a	n/a	87.8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Access to Supports and Services	87.2	n/a	n/a	82.6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Governance	Parental Involvement	83.9	90.6	89.7	79.5	81.8	81.4	n/a	n/a	n/a

## Notes:

1. Data values have been suppressed where the number of respondents/students is fewer than 6. Suppression is marked with an asterisk (\*).
2. The 2020/21 administration of the AEA survey was a pilot. The Citizenship measure was adjusted to reflect the introduction of the new AEA survey measures. In addition, participation in the survey was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Evaluations have not been calculated as 2020/21 survey results are not comparable with other years.
3. Participation in the 2019/20 Diploma Exams was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the absence of Diploma Exams, achievement level of diploma courses were determined solely by school-awarded marks. Caution should be used when interpreting high school completion rate results over time.
4. The "N/A" placeholder for the "Current Result" for PAT and Diploma Exam measures are included until results can be updated in the Fall.
5. Aggregated PAT results are based upon a weighted average of percent meeting standards (Acceptable, Excellence). The weights are the number of students enrolled in each course. Courses included: English Language Arts (Grades 6, 9, 9 KAE), Français (6e et 9e année), French Language Arts (6e et 9e année), Mathematics (Grades 6, 9, 9 KAE), Science (Grades 6, 9, 9 KAE), Social Studies (Grades 6, 9, 9 KAE).
6. Participation in the Provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma Examinations was impacted by the fires in 2016 and 2019, as well as by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Caution should be used when interpreting trends over time.
7. Aggregated Diploma results are a weighted average of percent meeting standards (Acceptable, Excellence) on Diploma Examinations. The weights are the number of students writing the Diploma Examination for each course. Courses included: English Language Arts 30-1, English Language Arts 30-2, French Language Arts 30-1, Français 30-1, Mathematics 30-1, Mathematics 30-2, Chemistry 30, Physics 30, Biology 30, Science 30, Social Studies 30-1, Social Studies 30-2.




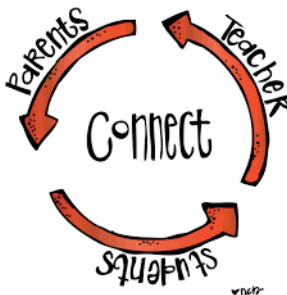
**School Goal 1:** Improve communication with parents about positive student attributes, resources available to students at the school, and enhancements to school culture.


**Alignment with Division Priorities** ([Engagement and Partnerships](#))

*Priority 3 - Engagement and Partnerships- Goal 1 - Families and school communities are engaged in their children's education.*

**Timeline:** 2-year goal: 2021-2023

**Rationale:** After reviewing our Assurance Survey results we noticed a number of areas where both teachers and students rated what was happening within the school as significantly higher than what parents were reporting. This was confirmed in meetings with the school council when discussing endeavours within the school, positive school culture, and various areas of support. In this discussion, the parents on the council (our most involved group of parents) did not have a lot of knowledge about the supports and services the school provides to the students. We also only had 6 parents complete the Assurance Survey which indicates lower engagement.

Timeline	Strategies	Supporting Data
<p>Year 1 (21/22)</p>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff will send a letter of introduction and communicate course information at the start of each semester</li> <li>• Weekly communication to parents of school events communicated through the website and an increased social media presence</li> <li>• The monthly newsletter will focus on highlighting the programs and services in the school</li> <li>• We will begin sharing the monthly newsletter using both the website and SchoolMessenger</li> <li>• A counsellor's section in the newsletter will focus on services available to students</li> <li>• Start to encourage staff to contact each student's parent by phone or email with positive communication about something their child is doing well at in school.</li> <li>• Use social media, the website, school council and School Messenger to encourage completion of the Assurance Survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Assurance Survey results will be reviewed for an increase in parents' knowledge and understanding of the following metrics. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Access to Supports and Services</li> <li>○ Parental Involvement</li> <li>○ Satisfaction with Program Access</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Anecdotal information will be documented from the school council about their knowledge of the supports and services available to students at the school early in the school year.</li> <li>• The school council will be surveyed at the end of the school year about their knowledge of the supports and services available to students. Information will be gathered about how they became aware of the supports and services</li> <li>• Look for an increase in the overall completion rates of the Assurance Survey by parents</li> </ul>

<p>Year 2 (22/23)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue with all the strategies of year 1</li> <li>• A staff meeting item each month will focus on students who are achieving growth and success.</li> <li>• Each staff member will be given 5 student guardians to contact with a positive message about the student.</li> <li>• The principal's message at the parent council will highlight one program or school service each month</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Assurance Survey results will be reviewed for an increase in parents' knowledge and understanding of the following metrics. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Access to Supports and Services</li> <li>○ Parental Involvement</li> <li>○ Satisfaction with Program Access</li> </ul> </li> <li>• A final survey will be given to the school council to measure if they have an increased understanding of the resources available to students.</li> <li>• Look for an increase in the overall completion rates of the Assurance Survey by parents</li> </ul>
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**School Goal 1:** Improve communication with parents about positive student attributes, resources available to students at the school, and enhancements to school culture.

**Review, Reflection, and Progress update:**


**School Goal 2:** Increase students' and parents' understanding of the impact of school learning on careers and life after high school.

**Alignment with Division Priorities** [\(Success\)](#)


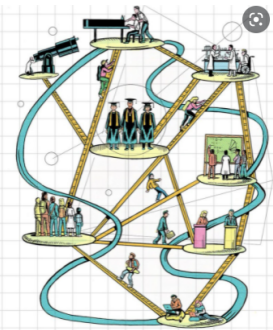
*Priority 1 - Success - Goal 3 - A greater number of students achieve learning outcomes and have the knowledge and skills they need to make informed education and career/life choices.*

**Timeline:** 3-year goal: 2021-2024

**Rationale:** In reviewing the assurance survey results, we noticed that our 4 year and 6-year transition rates are areas of concern. This indicates that many of our students do not pursue or complete post-secondary programs. Further, parents' results were notably lower than staff and students in the area of work preparation. This may impact students' perception of the value of their school work. We would like to increase students' intrinsic motivation, and increasing students' perception of the value of their school learning is one strategy we will pursue. Our hope is that increasing our focus on career and life connections will inspire students to see how the curriculum connects to their goals and to pursue further learning after high school.

Timeline	Strategies	Supporting Data
<p>Year 1 (21/22)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly staff meetings will have an agenda item that focuses on making connections between school learning and careers.</li> <li>• Require staff to build a meaningful lesson into two of their units which focuses specifically on career connections to the material being learned.</li> <li>• Host a virtual University/College info night for students to find information about post-secondary options.</li> <li>• Monthly, refresh the career board which displays career options for students.</li> <li>• Continuing to use opportunities with RAP and Work Ex employers. Have Careers NextGen present to the students on trade programs.</li> <li>• Create a Google Classroom to share information with students and guardians about post-secondary opportunities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Assurance Survey results will be reviewed for an increase in the following metrics. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Work preparation</li> <li>○ 4 year transition</li> <li>○ 6 year transition</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Survey the school council about their perspective on how well the school provides opportunities for students to explore a broad variety of possible careers and how well the school prepares students for post-secondary.</li> <li>• Implement a student survey that explores if students value their school learning and see connections to life outside of school.</li> </ul>



<p>Year 2 (22/23)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue with the items from year 1.</li> <li>• Create a section in the monthly newsletter to highlight students who have pursued unique careers.</li> <li>• Staff will make a concerted effort to regularly encourage students to think about what they want to do and to seek out support from the guidance counselling staff.</li> <li>• Communicate to parents the career counselling support we provide in the school through a section in our monthly newsletter.</li> <li>• Provide additional information in the monthly newsletter about career options to provide this information to parents.</li> <li>• Host a career fair to highlight the jobs available after post-secondary</li> <li>• Incorporate My Blueprint into grade 9 health to get students starting to focus on career possibilities.</li> <li>• Require staff to build a meaningful lesson into all of their units that focus specifically on career connections to the material being learned.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Assurance Survey results will be reviewed for an increase in the following metrics. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Work preparation</li> <li>○ 4 year transition</li> <li>○ 6 year transition</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Survey the school council about their perspective on how well the school provides opportunities for students to explore a broad variety of possible careers and how well the school prepares students for post-secondary. Compare the results to year one.</li> <li>• Implement a student survey that explores if students value their school learning and see connections to life outside of school. Compare the results to year one.</li> </ul>
<p>Year 3 (23/24)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue with the items from year 2.</li> <li>• Require staff to build regular lessons into all of their units that focus specifically on career connections to the material being learned.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Assurance Survey results will be reviewed for an increase in the following metrics. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Work preparation</li> <li>○ 4 year transition</li> <li>○ 6 year transition</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Survey the school council about their perspective on how well the school provides opportunities for students to explore a broad variety of possible careers and how well the school prepares students for post-secondary. Compare the results to year two. This will likely be the first year that we will start to get an indication in our 4-year transition if we are making improvements.</li> <li>• Implement a student survey that explores if students value their school learning and see connections to life outside of school. Compare the results to year two.</li> </ul>

**School Goal 2:** Increase students' and parents' understanding of the impact of school learning on careers and life after high school.

**Review, Reflection, and Progress update:**