
Thorsby Junior-Senior High School Assurance Plan 2023-2024



Thorsby Junior-Senior High School Assurance Plan - 2023-2024

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 ranges from 175 to 210 students from grades 7-12, split fairly evenly between junior and senior high. About 38% of students live in the town with the rest attending from the surrounding rural area. 46% of our students are transported to school by bus. The school currently has 13 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 the regular core classes and options that include: Cosmetology; Industrial Arts; Band; Film Studies; 3D Printing & Design; Art; Yoga; Foods; Computer Studies; and Guitar. To offer a broader range of academic options our high school cycle physics (even starting year) and chemistry (odd starting year) as our student population cannot support running those courses each year. We offer the following options during the 2023/2024 school year at the High School level: Art; Cosmetology; Esthetics; Yoga; Foods; Industrial Arts; 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 which 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 the 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

- 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.
- 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.
- Our breakfast program has returned and serves our students at the start of the day; this includes a grant from PC Financial to support our program.
- We now have a daily lunch program that also supports our student body.
- We have a strong relationship with the Leduc Food Bank that supports our Breakfast Program, Snack Attack Program and Lunch Program.
- All staff are extremely engaged and care about each other and the school community.
- Teachers' completion of the 2T, HLAT, and MIPI assessments for screening student needs for literacy and numeracy went well at TJSHS.

Academics

- Semestered options now with a Day 1/Day2 schedule continue to provide an opportunity for more depth within our option classes as well as a more even distribution of time for each option.
- Projects in industrial arts such as pens, clocks, pepper mills, glass etching, and fishing lures are keeping students engaged.
- Excellent personalized, hands-on guidance counselling for post-secondary school is provided for each grade twelve student.
- Math Olympics and Problem of the Week have been started to support numeracy within the building.
- A Post-Secondary Fair through ELAA was held in October and was attended by students from Thorsby, Warburg and Calmar. It was well attended and well received by all students (with requests for it to happen again next year).

Co/Extracurricular

- Sports participation has returned to pre-covid levels
- THS Students Spirit Council is meeting again; decorating the Crash Area for holidays, and organizing theme days.
- Increased work with the BGSD MHC team (Angela DeFrancesco) on Thursdays. This has grown to include lunchtime activities to increase positive school culture.
- Our GSA is running again and is well attended.
- Ski Club continues to grow
- Intramurals are back and popular during lunch.
- Field trips are in planning and implementation stages.

Challenges:

- We continue to have low completion rates for the Assurance Survey by parents
- There are larger class sizes at grade 7, 8, and 12 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.

- EA support from Jordan's Principle has not been awarded (as of October 2023) has increased our challenges with supporting some of our most vulnerable students.
- There are some struggles ensuring students are in the correct stream despite prior course marks and teacher recommendations.
- The music program was on hold while our music teacher was on leave. We are offering a guitar option this year, and are seeking to rebuild the band by partnering with the elementary to introduce band back into the school.
- Grade seven and eight classes, while separated for science, Language Arts, Math, and Social, are combined for Physical Education.
- Students continue to struggle with making connections between their current schooling and long term aspirations.
- Chronic and compounding mental health challenges continue to present themselves, exacerbated by the lack of easy-to-access community-based support.
- Chronic tardiness of a handful of students
- Student cell phones continue to be a distraction for some students.
- Balancing student mental health with teacher mental health and their finite capacity.
- Assurance Survey dissonance in some areas e.g. the satisfaction level of students and teachers and the perceived levels of parents
- Encouraging students to use their time free from instruction for accessing tutoring or guidance counselling.

School Council Message

Our school Council is a group of volunteer parents, guardians, and caregivers who work together to enhance students' school experience. School is more than a place for learning- it is a place where our children develop their talents, make friends, learn about the community and are able to express themselves with a caring environment. This happens through social events, workshops, facility upgrades and much more.

Our Council works with school administration, teachers and school trustees to provide a welcoming school community in which our children can succeed. We as a council participate in discussions at the administrative level, such as our council meetings, giving feedback on school calendars and providing input into the future direction of Black Gold Schools at the Council of School Communities gatherings each year. We provide a space for the parent's, caregivers and guardians voices and work with school staff to ensure the best experiences for our children.

Our council also raises 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. We try to be an advocate for our children and schools when the need arises to ensure the best support for our children's education, whether this is with the division or different levels of government. The school council hopes to continue to encourage effective parent involvement, participation and engagement with our school community.

We want to thank all the school staff for their continued commitment to connecting with students and families by creating space for discussion and ideas.

School Council Chair: Cheryl Filipic

Supplemental Alberta Education Assurance Measures - Overall Summary

Spring 2023

School: 3222 Thorsby Junior Senior High School

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
Diploma Exam Participation Rate (4+ Exams)	0.0	n/a	38.1	3.5	n/a	56.6	n/a	n/a	n/a
Drop Out Rate	2.4	1.6	2.1	2.5	2.3	2.5	Very High	Maintained	Excellent
In-Service Jurisdiction Needs	69.2	82.6	72.8	82.2	83.7	84.3	Very Low	Maintained	Concern
Lifelong Learning	92.1	76.5	88.3	80.4	81.0	76.8	Very High	Maintained	Excellent
Program of Studies	73.7	73.8	76.2	82.9	82.9	82.6	Intermediate	Maintained	Acceptable
Program of Studies - At Risk Students	90.4	76.6	83.1	81.2	81.9	83.4	High	Improved	Good
Rutherford Scholarship Eligibility Rate	73.1	74.2	69.5	71.9	70.2	68.3	High	Maintained	Good
Safe and Caring	89.9	88.0	88.7	87.5	88.8	89.1	Very High	Maintained	Excellent
Satisfaction with Program Access	81.3	73.2	78.7	72.9	72.6	73.9	High	Maintained	Good
School Improvement	87.0	58.1	66.0	75.2	74.2	77.9	Very High	Improved Significantly	Excellent
Transition Rate (6 yr)	61.9	65.4	55.0	59.7	60.3	60.2	Intermediate	Maintained	Acceptable
Work Preparation	90.0	80.8	90.4	83.1	84.9	84.5	Very High	Maintained	Excellent

Instructional Support Team Support

Wellness Instructional Support

During the 2022-2023 school year, we chose to focus on healthy eating, active living and positive mental health. Initiatives and improvements included: increasing student access to breakfast, snack and lunch programs through community partnerships, a grant from PC Financial and pairing with our Foods program to increase food availability to support healthy eating. We also worked to improve the spaces in which our students eat, which included replacing two tables in our crash area (now circular and promoting social interaction), as well as moving seated benches into high tables with stools for additional seating. For active living, we increased open gym at lunch (while encouraging staff to join) and brought intramurals back. Additionally, with regards to positive mental health, we continued our partnership with MHCB; we were able to partner with them in numerous classrooms, for lunch time activities, and for two small groups that focused on relationships between students.

For the 2023-2024 school year, we will continue to focus on healthy eating, with a stronger focus on nutrition, as well as improving the social/physical environment by educating students about vaping and working to eliminate it in our school. We will be exploring nutrition by giving our students opportunities to try healthy recipes and by partnering with PC Financial. As well, we will be seeking to increase our partnerships with our Community Addictions nurse and the RCMP to help educate our students about the impact of vaping on health and in turn the social and physical environments within our school.

Literacy Instructional Support

During the 2022-2023 school year, we began to explore several strands that would help improve literacy that we will continue with for the 2023-2024 school year. On a global level, we began to pull key vocabulary from curriculums to ensure we were creating a solid base for students at each grade level in each subject; as well, we are seeking to ensure a common vocabulary among staff when we are teaching concepts. On a targeted level, we began pulling students for literacy intervention using Informal Reading Inventories to support our struggling readers. Additionally, we are seeking to empower students by creating a continuum of writing support from grades 7-12.

Mathematics Instructional Support

During the 2022-2023 school year, we chose to focus on differentiating instructional math material, build student confidence with basic numeracy facts and challenged students with National Math competitions and the Math problem of the week. Differentiated instructional materials (foldables, games, and activities) were often used to engage learners to support appropriate math outcomes at all grade levels. Cumulative reviews were used to build confidence and retention over the semester, and Math problem of the week challenged students to extend their learning and knowledge.

In 2023-2024 we will continue to challenge students by implementing routines, adding vertical learning spaces to classrooms, and including increased active review activities. Using these tools, we hope to engage students, improve number sense and practice reasoning. We will continue to differentiate instructional materials, increase confidence in mathematics through games and activities to meet the needs of our students.


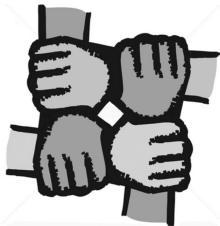
School Goal 1: Improve communication with parents about positive student attributes, resources available to students at the school, and enhancements to school culture.

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: 2023-2025

Rationale: Based on a lack of engagement on the Assurance Survey and continued feedback from Parent Council, which we take to be indicative of the school community as a whole, we are seeking to continue to improve parent knowledge of programs and services within the school, along with positive parental engagement on the whole.

Timeline	Strategies	Supporting Data
<p>Year 1 (22/23)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff will send a letter of introduction and communicate course information at the start of each semester • Weekly communication to parents of school events communicated through the weekly newsletter and an increased social media presence. • Our weekly newsletter will focus on highlighting the programs and services within the school, as well as highlighting post-secondary opportunities such as Open Houses, application deadlines, scholarships, and other relevant content. • Continue 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. • Use social media, the weekly newsletter, school council and School Messenger to encourage completion of the Assurance Survey • At each staff meeting, take the first 10 minutes to get teachers sending home positive contacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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"> ◦ Access to Supports and Services ◦ Parental Involvement ◦ Satisfaction with Program Access • 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. • 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 support and services. • Look for an increase in the overall completion rates of the Assurance Survey by parents
 <p>Year 2 (24/25)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with all the strategies of year 1 • A staff meeting item each month will focus on students who are achieving growth and success. • Each staff member will make four positive contacts with home each month. • The principal's message at the parent council will highlight one program or school service each month. • Rural Schools questionnaire to gather supplementary data (in development) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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"> ◦ Access to Supports and Services ◦ Parental Involvement ◦ Satisfaction with Program Access • Look for an increase in the overall completion rates of the Assurance Survey by parents

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 of 2020-2021, we noticed that our 4-year and 6-year transition rates are areas of concern. Since that time, we have seen a positive trend in these results, a signal that our efforts are proving fruitful. That said, this data 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"> Monthly staff meetings will have an agenda item that focuses on making connections between school learning and careers. Require staff to build a meaningful lesson into two of their units which focuses specifically on career connections to the material being learned. Host a virtual University/College info night for students to find information about post-secondary options. Monthly, refresh the career board which displays career options for students. Continuing to use opportunities with RAP and Work Ex employers. Create a Google Classroom to share information with students and guardians about post-secondary opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Assurance Survey results will be reviewed for an increase in the following metrics. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work preparation 4-year transition 6-year transition 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. Implement a student survey that explores whether students value their school learning and see connections to life outside school.

<p>Year 2 (22/23)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with the items from year 1. • Create a section in the weekly newsletter to highlight students who have pursued unique careers. • 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. • Communicate to parents the career counselling support we provide in the school through a section in our monthly newsletter. • Provide additional information in the monthly newsletter about career options to provide this information to parents. • Host a career fair to highlight the jobs available after post-secondary • Incorporate My Blueprint into grade 9 health to get students starting to focus on career possibilities. • Have staff build a meaningful lesson into all of their units that focus specifically on career connections to the material being learned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Assurance Survey results will be reviewed for an increase in the following metrics. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work preparation ○ 4-year transition ○ 6-year transition • 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. • Implement a student survey that explores whether students value their school learning and see connections to life outside school. Compare the results to year one.
<p>Year 3 (23/24)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with the items from year 2. • Through Visible Learning, staff will intimate career connections to the material being learned. • Increase familial connection to MyBlueprint through newsletter inserts, sharing of family account webinar, and register family accounts on grade 9 orientation night for all incoming grade 10 parents. • All students at TJSHS will have accounts. In grades 7-9, it will be introduced and utilized in health for career exploration. In grade 10, it will be utilized in CALM for career exploration. In grades 11 and 12, students will utilize MyBlueprint to explore post-secondary options and work on their transition planning. This will also be supported by providing staff with PD through the “Train the Trainer” presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Assurance Survey results will be reviewed for an increase in the following metrics. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work preparation ○ 4-year transition ○ 6-year transition • 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. • Implement a student survey that explores whether students value their school learning and see connections to life outside school. Compare the results to year two. • Measure MyBlueprint familial access by accessing how many accounts we have. Measure MyBlueprint student access through confirmation of accounts by teachers.

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 on Goal:

SCHOOL GOAL 3: Visible Learning Focus: We will strive to improve teacher clarity by focusing on learning and progress through the three essential questions of “What am I learning?”, “Why am I learning this?”, and “How will I know if I have learned it?”

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

Timeline: 2023-2025

Rationale: We chose this focus as it is the cornerstone of Visible Learning. It is when this is established that we can springboard to other elements within Visible Learning.

Timeline	Strategies	Supporting Data
October 4-5, 2023	Build foundation Knowledge and Awareness of Visible Learning concepts.	All administrators can identify the Ten Mind Frames along with researched evidenced high-yielding practices for student achievement.
Oct 5- Dec 19, 2023	Data collection on the three essential questions related to teacher clarity.	Will return to the next Visible Learning PD session with evidence related to teacher clarity.
Jan 8- June 28, 2024	Using the data collected, formulate an action plan on how to improve teacher clarity within the school. Strategies to support this can include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For numeracy: the addition of vertical learning spaces in our classrooms • For numeracy: increasing active review activities • For numeracy: creating opening routines in classrooms that will foster critical thinking and shared thinking to diversify • For literacy: continue with individual literacy intervention for those below grade level • For literacy: focus on pulling out key terminology from the curriculum to create a stronger focus within out teaching • For literacy: create a continuum of writing support for grades 7-12, including rubrics. 	Will re-administer the survey process to identify if strategies have made a positive impact.
2024-2025	Further steps will be determined following data gathering from the 2023-2024 school year.	Further steps will be determined following data gathering from the 2023-2024 school year.
2025-2026	Further steps will be determined following data gathering from the 2024-2025 school year.	Further steps will be determined following data gathering from the 2024-2025 school year.

School Goal 3: We will strive to improve teacher clarity by focusing on learning and progress through the three essential questions of “What am I learning?”, “Why am I learning this?”, and “How will I know if I have learned it?”

Review, Reflection, and Progress update: