



## GYPSD Kicks Off a Great New Year!

**September 11, 2018** - Grande Yellowhead Public School Division (GYPSD) began the 2018/19 school year with its first annual **KICK-OFF**. The professional learning event brought together almost 600 staff from the five communities of Jasper, Grande Cache, Hinton, Edson and Lobstick areas. The GYPSD Board of Trustees honoured almost 100 staff members for their long service commitments. Kick-Off 2018 focused on the board's new vision of *One Team, One Goal, One Vision* and was hosted at Parkland Composite High School and École Pine Grove Middle School in Edson. The day's agenda included over 100 professional development sessions offered throughout the day, and were designed to address the professional development needs of bus drivers, office and central division staff, facility services staff, educational assistants, administrators, and teachers.

The keynote speaker, Dr. Jody Carrington, began the day with a highly engaging speech. Dr. Carrington, who is a clinical psychologist, has spent most of her career working with children and families, and is a, "believer in the power of the relationship in assisting kids and their families who are struggling with emotional dysregulation". GYPSD's Board Chair, Brenda Rosadiuk, noted, "The board heard Dr. Carrington speak at the Rural Education Symposium this past spring in Edmonton, Alberta. Dr. Carrington is very passionate about her work with school divisions; her words left us feeling very inspired and motivated as a board. It was our privilege to invite Dr. Carrington to share that passion and motivation as our guest speaker for our staff's at Kick-Off 2018."

The professional development sessions provided teachers and school leaders with a range of topics that included approaches for improving students' reading and writing skills, building capacity in mathematics and understanding data. Support staff attended sessions on finance, PowerSchool and office management while bus drivers had the opportunity to participate in hands-on sessions such as bus maintenance and evacuations, as well as a special session with Dr. Carrington. The post-event survey identified that 93 per cent of staff felt that the sessions provided excellent learning opportunities.

Superintendent of Schools, Carolyn Lewis, was incredibly pleased with the positive response to the day. She shared that the GYPSD priorities are, "Student Learning, Teaching and Leadership Excellence and Community Engagement". The Kick-Off event was the first of six professional development days that will occur throughout the year.

GYPSD is grateful to the many sponsors who supported the day by contributing their time, money, product, and expertise to this wonderful event. A number of local organizations also provided door prizes and donations totalling over \$21,000.

Please visit our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/gypsd](http://www.facebook.com/gypsd) to see more photos from this exciting day. Welcome back to another great year of learning excellence for all!