

August 19, 2024

Dear Parents:

The leadership and staff of Grande Yellowhead Public School Division are thinking of you during this difficult time. We know you are eager for more information about when the Jasper schools will begin welcoming students back, and we are pleased to share that they **will be open and ready to welcome students back to class on Tuesday, September 17.**

While we still have some steps to complete before we reopen, we are confident that we will be able to meet this timeline, barring any unforeseen circumstances.

Inspections of the school buildings have indicated that there is smoke and ash inside, and the air quality is poor. We have since been working closely with the Alberta government to expedite the cleanup process and ensure the buildings are safe for students, teachers, and staff when they return.

The buildings are currently being deep cleaned, and remediation contractors have 24/7 access to the sites to:

- replace ceiling tiles,
- clean air ducts,
- go room-by-room to wash desks, computers and furniture, and
- put air exchangers in place to circulate fresh air.

The health, safety, and well-being of students, teachers, and staff remain the highest priority, and the air quality will be re-tested before the schools open.

With schools in Jasper set to open on September 17, families have many **options to start the school year:**

- Families can start their children in **school in Jasper on September 17.**
- High school students can start the school year online on September 3. They will then join classes in Jasper on September 17.
- Families staying **outside Jasper can register their children to attend school in any community** by contacting the local school authority, and these students will be able to join classes in Jasper once they can return.

We recognize you may have additional questions and are pleased to provide the attached frequently asked questions for your information. We also invite you to an **online parent information session from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 21, 2024**. To join, please <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84220960041>.

You can also contact us anytime at 780-723-4471.

Resources are available to help you and your loved ones cope with healthcare needs and stress during this difficult time. For information, please visit Alberta Health Services' [2024 Wildfire Resources](#).

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we continue to work towards a safe return to class for Jasper students, teachers, and staff. I hope to see you in our parent information session and send my best wishes to you and your family. We are here to support you and your children in having a successful 2024-25 school year.

*Carolyn Lewis*

Dr. Carolyn Lewis  
CEO/Superintendent  
Grande Yellowhead Public School Division

Cc: Board of Trustees





## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – BACK TO SCHOOL IN JASPER**

**Q: When will students return to École Jasper Elementary and Jasper Junior/Senior High School?**

- Students will return to in-person, in-school learning on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**Q: What steps are required to clean up the school? Can this work be completed more quickly?**

- The health and safety of your children and staff is a top priority at GYPSD, and that's why we're taking the necessary steps to ensure safe, quality spaces for our school community.
- As you may know, although our schools stood up well to the fire, an assessment of the building found that smoke, ash and dust were present. This has necessitated thoroughly cleaning all areas to ensure the health and safety of students and staff. This is a normal and necessary procedure when school buildings are exposed to such situations.
- The cleaning required goes beyond what is usually associated with janitorial work and requires remediation specialists to ensure the safety of the spaces. For example, all ceiling tiles need to be replaced, as they may be absorbing ash particles. All ventilation systems require inspecting and cleaning exposed components to ensure air quality.
- Grande Yellowhead School Board (GYPSD) has been working with the Government of Alberta to expedite procuring resources such as cleaning contractors so that the Jasper schools can reopen as soon as possible.
- Remediation work is underway, and pending any unforeseen circumstances, the building will open on September 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Teachers can access their classrooms on the weekend before the 17<sup>th</sup>.

**Q: Will air quality tests be conducted in the building before students return?**

- Yes, expert air quality assessments will be carried out before the students and staff return.

**Q: How will teachers catch up on instruction time if students return on September 17<sup>th</sup>?**

- Instructional hours at Jasper schools normally provide for a higher number of hours than ministerial requirements.
- With the change to the start date, we will make one adjustment. We'll extend the ÉJES school day to 3:03 pm, beginning September 17<sup>th</sup>, to the end of the school year.
- No changes are required for the Jr/Sr High School schedule.

**Q: Will the school calendar for 2024-2025 remain the same, with the exception of the September 17<sup>th</sup> back-to-school date?**

- Yes.



**Q: My child is in high school (grades 10-12). Is it possible for them to connect with their teachers prior to the in person learning beginning on September 17<sup>th</sup>?**

- Yes. High school students will be contacted by their teachers via their GYPSD email with information and details.

**Q: We're planning to temporarily be in Hinton for the start of the school year. What are our options?**

- A short-term transportation service will be offered from Hinton to Jasper beginning on September 17<sup>th</sup>.
- More details on how parents register for bus service to Jasper and the centralized pick-up location in Hinton will be shared in the coming days.

**Q: We won't be in Jasper when school starts on the 17<sup>th</sup>, and we are not sure when we can return. What is our option?**

- If you are residing in another municipality for the foreseeable future, with **no known return timeline**, please arrange for your child to attend a school where you are living.

**Q: What is the government doing to help teachers find permanent housing in Jasper?**

- Housing for school employees has been identified as an important issue for the schools' reopening, and the Government of Alberta has indicated that it is expediting resources such as accommodations for teachers and support staff.

**Q: Will the school or Division offer psychological support and resources to staff and students?**

- Yes, in addition to the employee services available to staff, our students will be supported internally by our BEST coach, Wellness Navigator, and Division Psychologist; the schools will connect with Community Resources as needed.
- The Alberta government will also be providing additional support to students through the Department of Mental Health and Addictions.

**Q: Where can I get more information?**

- Attend the online Parent Information Session on Wednesday, August 21<sup>st</sup>:
  - 7 - 8 pm
  - Via ZOOM
  - Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84220960041>
- GYPSD information is regularly updated on the GYPSD website: [www.gypsd.ca](http://www.gypsd.ca)
- School offices are open on August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024.