

Celebrating diversity in our safe and caring schools

About 50 students and staff from five Chinook's Edge high schools gathered at Division Office for a meeting to discuss opportunities and challenges facing LGBTQ youth. The morning-long meeting was an important chance to connect with colleagues and students from across the division who are working to ensure safe and respectful spaces greet LGBTQ students each day.

"We know we have work to do, to ensure our students in the LGBTQ community have positive experiences in school - any and all schools in Chinook's Edge," said Wanda Christensen, Associate Superintendent of Student Services. "We want to make sure that students feel safe. We want to declare that students ARE safe. We want you to flourish right in your community and that's the work that lies ahead for us."



Collaboration - Lauren Alston, Provincial Coordinator at the University of Alberta's Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services, shared resources and information with students and staff. "I brag about the work you are doing in Chinook's Edge! There are good systems and strong support in place in this division, and everyone is open to continue learning all the languages involved in this important conversation."

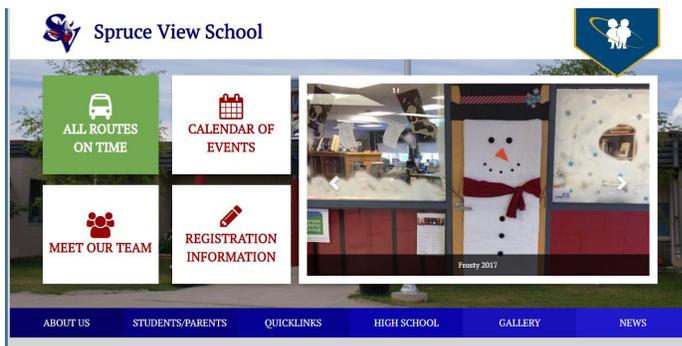
Pride - The Hugh Sutherland School community was proud to share the news that CBC was in town to interview two students in the LGBTQ community who are part of a Horse Therapy Program. Here is a link: <https://t.co/SVaMQFCD34>



Nominations extended! Alberta Children's Services has extended the deadline for nominations in their annual Great Kids Award to January 16, 2018. All nominees will receive a certificate of recognition, and award recipients will be invited to an awards ceremony with the Minister at Fantasyland Hotel - along with a night's stay for their families and West Edmonton Mall attractions passes. The award recognizes children and youth for helping and changing the lives of others, and helping to build strong communities often while experiencing life's challenges of their own. Visit www.greatkids.alberta.ca for more info.



Sharing - Emily, a student teacher at Olds High School who is working with Science/Biology teachers, surprised staff who were gathered for last week's Connecting with COLT meeting by sharing homebaked cookies as a thank you for their support. The Central Office Leadership Team (COLT) will be continuing the individual school visits as a team throughout the spring.



Thank you! Mandy, Sandy and Karyn are so grateful for the attention and effort - and kindness - that staff in our schools are investing in the School Website Refresh Project! We are guiding all schools through the process, which is focused but quick! With the expertise of PathFive and the cooperation of 40+ schools, this project is expected to be done by mid-January.