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## Changing to help ensure all students have access to career counselling and personal support at school

For many years, Battle River School Division schools have allocated dollars to career counselling services through their school budgets. Bigger schools, with bigger budgets, have been able to allocate more funding to providing teacher / counsellor time, while smaller schools, with smaller budgets, have sometimes been unable to allocate any funding at all to provide a teacher / counsellor for their students.

In the coming school year, Superintendent of Schools Rita Marler is going to change that. "Services should be based on student needs, not on which school has the most funding available," she explains.

Traditionally, teacher / counsellors are teachers who have taken on the role of providing career counselling in addition to their teaching duties. Some teacher / counsellors have also taken specialized training and are able to provide personal counselling in addition to career counselling.

BRSD will be using the dollars that are currently allocated to each school to hire the equivalent of two full time career counselling positions which serve the entire school division. They will focus on being aware of post-secondary opportunities, processes and requirements; making sure students are aware of the choices available and have all the information they need to support their decision making. The major emphasis for career counselling is at the high school level, so the people selected for these positions will need to have experience with high school programming, as well a career / academic focus.

Schools will also be receiving more personal support for students. The school division currently funds the provision of Family School Liaison Workers, who are trained to support students and families experiencing personal issues, stress or trauma. FSLWs work with students at all grade levels, from Kindergarten to 12. BRSD intends to increase the number of FSLWs, in order to support more students and compensate for any decrease in service at schools that had teacher / counsellors providing personal support.

"BRSD is expecting to have fewer dollars available next school year, because our overall enrollment is projected to be down by about 100 students," explains Mrs. Marler. "By pooling the counselling dollars we have available, rather than doling them out based on specific school enrollment, we can provide a more equitable service which includes all students, no matter if their school is big or small."

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