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## NSD looking forward to ongoing relations with Bigstone Cree Nation

**March 6, 2018** - Northland School Division No.61 (NSD) is committed to inspiring students to be the best they can be by providing holistic educational opportunities, quality staff and strong partnerships with families and communities. NSD believes a strong relationship with Bigstone Cree Nation is an important step to ensuring these commitments are achieved.

“We believe in a positive working relationship with Bigstone Cree Nation,” said Maddy Daniels, Board Chair, Northland School Division. NSD and Bigstone have worked together to provide additional land-based education opportunities, counseling services, health and wellness services and collaborative discussions to improve student attendance and achievement. We have also made progress on an Education Services Agreement, and a Reciprocal Tuition Agreement. NSD looks forward to continuing the momentum.”

The new [Northland School Division Act](#), which was proclaimed May 5, 2017, requires NSD to develop formal relationships and it encourages families to participate in the education system.

“The new act ensures we establish and maintain relationships with First Nations such as Bigstone,” said Daniels. “The Northland Act guarantees First Nation members can run freely for election, and families are able to vote in the trustee elections and participate in the education system. Two of our elected trustees are Bigstone members.”

The Board of Trustees drafted an updated [Policy 1 – Foundational Statements](#) for NSD. The draft aligns with beliefs and values in the school communities and education outcomes. They have also drafted [Policy 3 – Role of a Trustee with Appendix A and B](#) and [Policy 21 – Community Voice and Community Engagement with Appendix A](#).

“A lot of work goes into making these policies,” said Daniels. “We need support from Bigstone Cree Nation to ensure we are staying true to the thoughts of families with respect to these policies. NSD and Bigstone working side by side is in the best interests of students.”

NSD agrees there is room for improvement with respect to graduations rates. That's why the division is committed to engaging with families and communities to create positive change.

“If Bigstone wants to see change they have to be part of the solution,” said Daniels. “Improvement will happen if everyone is working together in the spirit of student success.”

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