



The Northland School Division (NSD)

Board Highlights Regular Board Meeting – May 22, 2020



Board of Trustees left to right: Back Row – Silas Yellowknee (Ward 6), Randy Anderson (Ward 3), Robin Guild (Board Chair, Ward 7), Jules Nokohoo (Vice-Chair, Ward 10), Louis Cardinal (Ward 5), Jesse Lamouche (Ward 4).

Front Row - Rubi Shirley (Ward 9), Loretta Gladue (Ward 8), Karen Telford (Ward 11), Cathy Wanyandie (Ward 2).

Mistassiniy School modernization revised into a replacement school project

The Board of Trustees approved that the Mistassiniy School modernization be revised into a replacement school project. In October, the Board originally passed a motion to move forward with the Mistassiniy School modernization. Recently, Alberta Infrastructure approached Northland with the replacement school alternative. The alternative is to build a new school for a 450 student capacity instead of a major modernization of Mistassiniy School.

“The Board is excited about a new education facility for Wabasca-Desmarais students,” said Robin Guild, Board Chair. “A replacement school minimizes disruption to student learning when compared to a modernization. It also provides an opportunity to build a brand new facility that meets the needs of students and the community.”

Once NSD has more information regarding the project we will be connecting with the community. Construction is slated to begin in 2021.

Board approved funding to upgrade housing for NSD staff

The Board of Trustees approved the expenditure of 1.9 million to renovate a portion of the teacher rental housing to be determined by administration. Within the [Board Positive Path Forward Action Plan](#), improving housing for staff is a priority for the trustees.

Northland Games cancelled due to COVID-19



With safety being a top priority in the Northland School Division, the Northland Games has been cancelled for the 2019-2020 school year due to COVID-19. The annual event brings hundreds of Northland student-athletes from across the division to one school community. Elementary students usually compete in events such as the 80-metre dash, ball throw, soccer kick and the three-legged race. Junior High and High School athletes compete in regular track and field events such as high jump, long jump, discus, shot put, and various running disciplines.

Board approved the Spring Budget



The Board of Trustees approved the 2020-2021 Spring Budget as presented. The budget, aligned to support the “Northland School Division Strategic Plan for Board Priorities” (**see chart below**), will see NSD invest in technology to meet software and hardware needs. With a reduction in travel expenses throughout the division, utilizing technology to support student learning will be the norm; which aligns well with NSD’s goal of enhancing and leveraging the use of technology, as well as engaging students in meaningful learning experiences. The budget also includes an increase to professional learning for staff. The professional learning aligns with our focus on literacy, numeracy and utilizing technology to support student learning.

NSD will continue to support families with providing food to their children as outlined in the budget. The School Food Services hot lunch program will remain in operation. The new funding framework has the calculation based on weighted average enrollment, instead of adjusted annual in the fall. Click on the website link for more information about the Spring Budget <https://tinyurl.com/y8ckqght>.

Northland School Division Strategic Plan for Board Priorities 2019-2020

Excellence in Leadership	Excellence in Relationships	Excellence in Learning	Excellence in Financial Practices
Priority 1: Through excellent leadership practices by everyone, everyone feels welcome and valued.	Priority 2: Actively develop and purposefully work to maintain healthy relationships.	Priority 3: Students achieve their potential in literacy and numeracy.	Priority 4: Northland has a balanced budget for 2020-2021.

Ward 1 Trustee vacancy update

The Board recently sent a letter to Minister of Education Adriana LaGrange about the Ward 1 Trustee vacancy and whether the Minister can appoint a trustee. In a letter of response, Minister LaGrange said she is unable to approve the request to permit the Board to appoint a trustee. The letter states that, “the *Education Act* does not allow the Minister to appoint a trustee for the board, or to authorize the board to appoint a trustee. The Board is looking for alternative solutions.

Board approved housekeeping changes presented by the Policy Committee

The Board of Trustees approved housekeeping changes to Policy 5 - Role of the Board Chair and Policy 6 - Role of the Vice-Chair.

Board approved Locally Developed Courses

The Board of Trustees approved the following locally developed courses for a one year extension:

- Forensic Studies 25-3 and 35-3.
- History Through Film: Fact and Fiction 25-3.

- Reading 15-3, 15-5 and 25-5.
- Workplace Essential Skills 25-3.

Board Chair Highlights - Meetings with community leadership



Board Chair Robin Guild discussed recent Zoom (video-conference) conversations the trustees had with community education partners. In April and May, trustees met with the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation, Métis settlements, Mikisew Cree First Nation and Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation. Guild said a lot of meaningful conversations took place and the tone of every meeting was positive. The meetings provided the Board and administration an opportunity to share how NSD is supporting students and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic and highlight success stories featured in the division's "[Continuing Student Learning Newsletter](#)".

Superintendent's Highlights - Professional Learning for staff



Dr. Spencer-Poitras discussed the success of staff during this challenging time in our lives due to COVID-19. When in-person classes were cancelled, NSD staff have been incredible in their flexibility and creativity in offering learning for the students.

While discussing the success of our staff, Spencer-Poitras highlighted the ongoing professional learning designed to support their growth. On May 8th, NSD hosted a division-wide professional learning via Zoom. The session, "Using Technology to Engage and Connect: A Divisional PD Follow Up", assisted NSD educators to be able to apply strategies for using technology to support student learning. Using Zoom allows NSD to host professional learning for staff regularly. To date, NSD has hosted 358 professional learning opportunities for all staff including teachers, school secretaries, educational assistants and central office employees.

Dr. Spencer-Poitras informed the Board that our Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) Local No.69 in partnership with NSD, purchased a division license so staff can access Dr. Jody Carrington's online course "How to Connect with Kids These Days". Dr. Carrington is a clinical psychologist who has spent most of her career working with children and families who have experienced trauma. Dr. Spencer-Poitras said this course will help our staff have a better understanding in working with the students and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic but also to use these skills in working with the students on the day to day trauma some experience. Click on the website link to view the entire Superintendent's Highlights <https://tinyurl.com/y7jwhzr8>.

She also presented the Education Quarterly Report. Click on the website link to view the entire report <https://tinyurl.com/ybk8hu73>.

Acting Area 2 Associate Superintendent's Report - Student Assessment, Literacy and First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learner Success update



Acting Area 2 Associate Superintendent Joe Pearce discussed the work he has been doing to support staff with assessment. On March 13th, Pearce invited Pat Lore from the Alberta Assessment Consortium to speak to NSD staff via Zoom on how to assess students when you don't have the daily connection. With respect to literacy, Pearce has been working with SMARTLearning to finalize more training dates for staff. Three webinars have been scheduled for the month of June. While working with SMARTLearning, staff are learning a teaching strategy to help students improve current skills and comprehend information easier.

Pearce, who oversees the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learner Success, updated the trustees on land-based learning projects schools have submitted. He shared that Chipewyan Lake School is working on developing a traditional boat project. Pearce also said the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learner Success team has been hosting Cree lessons via Zoom for staff.

Attendance Improvement update to the Board



Director of Student Engagement, Attendance and Completion Don Tessier updated the Board on progress being made to improve student attendance tracking; which is the number one strategy within NSD's Attendance Improvement Operation Plan. The report describes the work being done to support school staff with entering data accurately in our student information system PowerSchool. NSD's attendance focus is supported by Alberta Education. Tessier meets with the Alberta Education Attendance Oversight Committee on a regular basis to review the operation plan.

The report also includes attendance for the month of March. Due to COVID-19, the attendance data gathered from schools is for the period March 1-13, 2020. Click on the website link to view the entire report <https://tinyurl.com/y9ja799y>.

The next Regular Board Meeting is Friday, June 26, 2020.

Note: These writings do not constitute the official record of the Northland School Division. They are however, provided as general information relating to action taken at board meetings. For further information, please call 780-624-2060 or 1-800-362-1360.