



# The Northland School Division (NSD)

Board Highlights Regular Board Meeting – November 28, 2020

## Skye Durocher officially sworn in as Ward 11 Trustee



During the Regular Board Meeting, Skye Durocher was officially sworn in as Ward 11 Trustee. Durocher, a Fishing Lake Métis Settlement resident, was declared the new trustee by acclamation. As Ward 11 Trustee, Skye will represent the Fishing Lake Métis Settlement and the Elizabeth Métis Settlement.

Skye was born and raised in the Fishing Lake Métis Settlement. She attended J.F. Dion School from Kindergarten to Grade 6. Following high school graduation, Skye obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Cree Language from Blue Quills University. Durocher is also an accomplished author. She wrote and self-published her first book [Spirits of the Northern Lights](#), which follows the life of a girl named Cora and the lessons her grandparents teach her.

Skye comes from a large family of five brothers, two sisters, and many nieces and nephews. She speaks highly of her mother's strength and resiliency and the support she receives from family and friends. Skye says the support she receives from her family provides an important foundation in her work with the youth in the community.

## Board approved 2020-2023 Three Year Education Plan and 2019-2020 Annual Education Results Report



The Board of Trustees approved the 2020-2023 Three Year Education Plan and 2019-2020 Annual Education Results Report (3YP/AERR), as presented. The 3YP/AERR is one-way NSD communicates priorities, accomplishments, and student achievement results to students, parents, community members, and school division partners. The 3YP outlines the Board priorities and how they align with the outcome statements for NSD. The AERR portion highlights annual results from the Accountability Pillar Survey.

Click on the website link to view the 3YP/AERR <https://www.nsd61.ca/download/315661>.

Click on the website link to view the 3YP/AERR Summary <https://www.nsd61.ca/download/315655>.

## MLA for Peace River Dan Williams met with Board of Trustees via Zoom



Source:  
[www.assembly.ab.ca](http://www.assembly.ab.ca)

MLA for Peace River Dan Williams met with the Board of Trustees to discuss successes and challenges in the Northland School Division. First, Mr. Williams learned more about the Board's accomplishments to improve staff morale. Teacher satisfaction drives student learning. Board Chair Robin Guild said the ongoing efforts to upgrade housing for staff and implementing staff wellness initiatives is helping the division retain staff. This year, NSD only had to hire 15 school-based staff. In previous years, the division had to replace 35-45 school-based positions. Feedback from a recent University of Calgary research study revealed staff are pleased with the support they are receiving from Northland School Division.

Dr. Nancy Spencer-Poitras, Superintendent of Schools shared NSD's success in advancing its use of technology to improve student learning. The division has been raising the standard of technology infrastructure and hardware as well as supporting the development of staff and students to leverage the use of technology in the classroom. In 2019-2020, NSD hosted approximately 600 professional learning sessions virtually. The technology investment is also helping NSD enhance its community engagement. Using virtual technology (Zoom) allows the Board and Administration to connect with the communities we serve and with our education partners regularly instead of once a year.

On the topic of challenges, Board Chair Guild spoke to Mr. Williams about internet connectivity in NSD communities, how the geography impacts the division's budget. With respect to internet connectivity, Guild said the Board has been conversing with community leaders about the internet and how they can advocate together to address connectivity challenges.

Guild and Spencer-Poitras also provided clarification to Mr. Williams about the division's funding. They explained while the division's budget appears larger than other school divisions, NSD incurs costs other school divisions don't have. Examples shared include:

- Increased shipping costs due to geography (40% of the province's size).
- In Fort Chipewyan, supplies have to be flown in or barged. The ice road is only available for a few months for driving supplies into the community.
- Operating water treatment plants for some NSD schools.
- Using propane to heat our schools.
- Purchasing extra buses for remote communities because of the increased cost to bring in someone for repairs.

Mr. Williams concluded the conversation by congratulating the Board on what they have accomplished in a short period of time.

## Capital Maintenance Renewal Projects Report

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Nancy Spencer Poitras and Secretary-Treasurer Douglas Aird updated the Board on school maintenance projects supported by the Capital Maintenance Renewal funding NSD received from the province. The table below provides a progress report on the approved projects:

Project Name	Project Description	Additional Comments
Building Envelope Repairs	Partial roof repairs, replace skylights, window, door and siding repairs.	Projects complete at Calling Lake and St. Theresa. Repairs to Mistassiniy and Pelican Mountain completed.
Drainage Improvements	Parking lot and sidewalk replacement or repair with appropriate drainage and cover material.	Elizabeth, Pelican Mountain and Mistassiniy are completed. Grouard won't be complete until early November.
Electrical Upgrades	Continue with energy efficient lighting.	Susa Creek, Hillview, Father R. Perin, Elizabeth and Gift Lake are completed.
Mechanical & Controls Upgrade	Replace pneumatic heating controls.	Some are completed but several will not be complete until mid-November. ADCS will not be complete until 2021.
Mechanical Heating Equipment Replacement	Boiler replacements and air conditioning unit installations.	Design reports are underway for Grouard and Paddle Prairie. Some work at J.F. Dion completed.
Safety & Security	Blind installation, door lock replacement, fire panel upgrade & site security with camera installations	All scheduled blinds are completed. Installation is still ongoing at Career Pathways.
Playground Repairs	Site work, media replacement, border construction and equipment repairs of playgrounds.	

## Fall Budget & Audited Financial Statements

Secretary Treasurer Douglas Aird provided a Budget 2020-2021 update. The budget will continue to 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 continuing to engage students in meaningful learning experiences.

The updated budget also reflects changes in student enrolment, school division staff, federal tuition rates and COVID-19 related expenses. Click on the website link to view the entire report <https://www.nsd61.ca/download/314625> (starting on page 108).

In addition to the Fall Budget, the Audited Financial Statements for 2019 - 2020 were presented by Jeff Alliston of Metrix Group LLP, Chartered Professional Accountants. The Division completed this challenging year with a surplus of \$227,865. Click on the website link for more information <https://www.nsd61.ca/download/315379> (starting on page 71).

### **Board approved changes presented by the Policy Committee**

The Board of Trustees approved housekeeping changes to the following policies:

- Policy 2 Appendix C Board - Performance Assessment Guide
- Policy 15 - School Closure. The policy has been updated to say that public meetings may be in-person or by electronic means, or a combination.

### **NSD to share virtual learning story with ASBA & Ward 3 Trustee selected for Edwin Parr Teacher Award Committee**



At a recent Zone 1 Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) Zone 1 meeting, Michelle Boisvert of Grande Prairie Catholic presented the Zone 1 professional development (PD) planned for January 2021. For the round-table PD, they are asking school divisions to share how they're supporting mental wellness for staff and students or what they're doing for remote learning.

The Board decided NSD will share what they have done to support remote learning. Ward 3 Trustee Randy Anderson, who regularly attends the ASBA Zone 1 meetings, informed the trustees that he was selected to sit on the Edwin Parr Teacher Award Committee. The Edwin Parr Teacher Award recognizes first-year teachers that demonstrate exemplary dedication and commitment in the field of education.

### **Superintendent to conduct school viability studies**

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Nancy Spencer-Poitras provided notice to the Board that she will be conducting viability studies on the following schools:

- Hillview School
- Pelican Mountain School
- Susa Creek School.

As per Policy 15 - School Closure, the Superintendent is required to inform the Board prior to December 1 of each year of any school viability studies to be undertaken.

## Transfer of land, buildings and school furniture in Little Buffalo

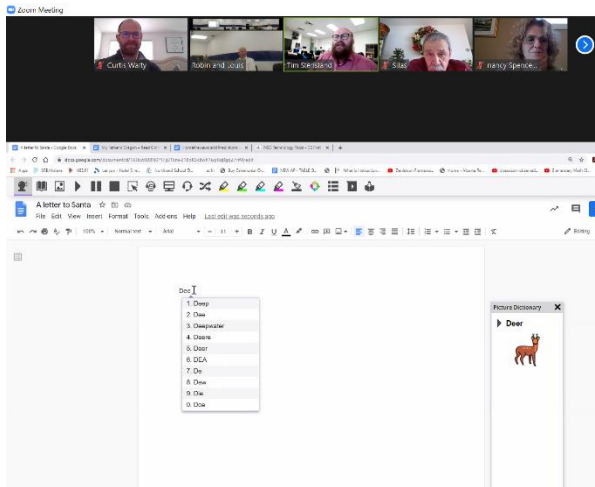
The Board of Trustees approved the request to transfer land, schools and the school furniture but excluding mobile homes used as teacher housing to the Lubicon Lake Band subject to Ministerial Approval. The Board also directed that negotiations ensue to sell the teachers housing. These three schools have been operated by KTC since September 2018.

## Negotiations approved to include a dedicated kitchen space in the Mistassiniy Replacement School

The Board of Trustees approved to start negotiations with the Alberta government to include a dedicated School Food Services kitchen space in the new Mistassiniy School by authorizing Administration to execute the Statement of Commitment. The statement is not binding but indicates a good faith effort to design, agree and pay for the dedicated kitchen space.

As part of the Mistassiniy Replacement School project, cost dedicated to a commercial kitchen is not part of the cost from the government. Based on square footage of the kitchen.

## Tech Talk with Associate Superintendent Tim Stensland



Associate Superintendent Tim Stensland showed trustees how Google Read and Write works. The technology tool is designed to assist students with improving their reading and writing skills. For example, the technology allows a user to highlight text and have it read out loud. Click on the website link to learn more about Read and Write <https://tinyurl.com/y7pfhdf5>.

## Board Chair Highlights - Meetings with education partners and NSD staff



The latest report highlights how the Board is focused on improving staff morale and relationships with education partners. Board Chair Robin Guild has been in regular meetings with the First Nations and the Métis local to discuss the reciprocal tuition agreements in Fort Chipewyan. He also provided an update to the Municipal District of Opportunity about the Mistassiniy Replacement School project.

To help improve staff morale, Guild attended the Attraction and Retention and Teaching and Learning Committee meetings. These meetings have helped to formulate decisions on how NSD can better support staff.

## Superintendent Highlights - Mistassiniy Replacement School Update & Relationship Building



The latest edition of Superintendent Highlights provided trustees an update on the Mistassiniy Replacement project, relationships with Telus World of Science and MacEwan University and NSD's role during a recent University of Calgary (U of C) virtual education career event.

On November 24th and 25th, NSD hosted two virtual community engagement sessions. The sessions gave parents and guardians an opportunity to share feedback on educational programming, cultural components and other features that should be considered for the new school. Parents and guardians who couldn't attend were able to provide input by filling out a survey.

Superintendent of School Dr. Nancy Spencer-Poitras announced that NSD is working on finalizing a memorandum of understanding with the Telus World of Science. With support from the Science in Motion team, our teachers have been learning innovative ways to deliver science-related topics into the classroom environment. On October 30th, the Telus World of Science team created a special Halloween event just for Northland students and staff. The theme of the event was "The Addams Family Talent Show".

An agreement between NSD and MacEwan University is in the works. The agreement would give schools access to specific dual credit programs. Spencer-Poitras talked about the U of C's virtual careers in Indigenous event for all Werklund School of Education students. J.F. School Principal Angela Sanregret participated in the event as a panelist. Angela shared information to students about what it's like to work in an Indigenous community.

Dr. Spencer-Poitras concluded highlights by congratulating Ward 9 Trustee Ruby Shirley. Ruby, who has been working on completing a doctorate, will be defending her thesis in December.

### Teacher Housing Renovation planned presented to the Board

Secretary Treasurer Douglas Aird presented an updated Teacher Housing Renovation Plan. 11 of the 20 school communities require divisional housing, as the remoteness and small community size preclude a market for rentals. Housing is a key driver of teacher recruitment, satisfaction, and retention.

The plan has two phases aligned with the funding available:

- Phase I is \$2.0M based on the July 31, 2020 Alberta Government commitment letter.
- Phase II is \$1.9M based on internal funding prioritized by Northland.

Phase I and II are focused on renovating 37 of the 94 units.

Click on the website link to view the entire report <https://www.nsd61.ca/download/314625> (starting on page 159).

**View Board Schedule, Agendas, Minutes, Highlights and Attachments on our website at <https://www.nsd61.ca/governance/board-meeting-agenda-minutes>.**

**Next Regular Board Meeting is Saturday, January 23, 2021**

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.