



The Northland School Division (NSD)

Board Highlights Regular Board Meeting – March 25, 2022

Moment of Silence held at Regular Board Meeting

The Board of Trustees held a moment of silence for recent events that have impacted Northland School communities. On March 1, 2022, the Kapawe'no First Nation, with support from Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta and the team from the Institute of Prairie and Indigenous Archaeology at the University of Alberta, released a preliminary report that says 169 potential graves were identified by ground-penetrating radar at the St. Bernard Indian Residential School site. The Board and Administration extended their thoughts and prayers in a statement on March 1st <https://www.nsd61.ca/about-us/division-news/post/nsd-statement-regarding-st-bernard-indian-residential-school-in-grouard>.

The Board mourned the loss of a student and a Gift Lake educator. Cylas Cunningham, a student from Conklin Community School passed away in February. Sandra Anderson, who worked for 17 years at the Headstart program in Gift Lake, passed away at the age of 65 years in March.

Research study shines a bright light on Northland School Division

Northland School Division (NSD) is celebrating exciting news after reviewing results from a research study presented by Dr. Sharon Friesen, University of Calgary (U of C) Werklund School of Education Professor. The outstanding results were presented during NSD's Regular Board Meeting on March 25, 2022. The aim of the overall study is to gain insights into the implementation of Alberta's three professional practice standards: The *Teaching Quality Standard (TQS)*, the *Leadership Quality Standard (LQS)*, and the *Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard (SLQS)*. The researchers focused on three types of implementation drivers: competency drivers, organizational drivers and leadership drivers. 39 school divisions plus charter and private schools have been involved in the research study.

Northland School Division's research study is one of three reports being presented to the Government of Alberta. The report was chosen for its strong theories of action and strong overall improvement. NSD's research study is the only rural school division report being presented to the provincial government in its entirety. During the presentation, Dr. Friesen revealed positive steps Northland has taken in these areas of implementation.

"I commend the leaders, teachers, support staff, students, and parents of Northland School Division on creating a culture of learning that places students at the center of all its decisions," said Friesen. "The increased focus on building teachers and school leaders' competence through ongoing, continuous professional learning has created a coherent vision of learning and expectation across the division. I was impressed to see the ways in which First Nations, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Language and Culture and Land Based Learning was enacted in schools during the pandemic. It would have been easy for teachers and school and division leaders to save that initiative for some time in the future. However, they seized upon the opportunities that the pandemic created to initiate strong culturally and academically supportive educational programs for the children and teachers at Northland School Division."

Click on the website link to view the media release <https://www.nsd61.ca/about-us/division-news/post/research-study-shines-a-bright-light-on-northland-school-division>.

2022-2023 Northland School Division Calendar approved by the Board of Trustees

The 2022-2023 School Year Calendar (showing operational days and breaks) received approval from the Board of Trustees. The Board has the responsibility to set the school division calendar as set out in Section 60 of the Education Act. The calendar was circulated for feedback from school councils, members of the Northland Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) Local and principals. Click on the website link to view the approved calendar in detail <https://www.nsd61.ca/download/385621>.

2022-2023 Capital Plan approved by the Board of Trustees

The Board approved the 2022-2023 Capital Plan. The plan ranks the proposed school level projects for the division, based on provincial criteria. The criteria for the plan include enrollment, projections, utilization, building age and overall condition. This ranking will be used to seek capital funding from Alberta Education in a process that matches very limited capital funding with the highest-ranking projects provincially.

The capital plan includes requests for 12 of our schools. This includes Grouard, Paddle Prairie, Susa Creek and Anzac as the highest priorities. Visit our website to view the Capital Plan in detail <https://www.nsd61.ca/download/385562> (page 46).

Superintendent's Highlights - Northland celebrating success stories at CASS First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Gathering



In the latest Superintendent Highlights, Dr. Nancy Spencer-Poitras shared what Northland presented at the College of Alberta School of Superintendent's (CASS) First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Gathering and the presentation Northland organized for its communities featuring Monique Gray-Smith.

On March 16, 2022, Northland celebrated success stories during a presentation at the CASS First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Gathering with TELUS World of Science - Edmonton (TWOSE) staff members.

On June 21, 2021 (National Indigenous Peoples Day), [Northland and TWOSE signed a Memorandum of Understanding](#). Under this partnership, NSD teachers have been learning innovative ways to deliver science-related topics into the classroom environment. Being able to learn from TELUS World of Science - Edmonton staff is not only a benefit to our teachers, but it assists our students by enhancing the science experience.

With support from Northland, Knowledge Keepers and Elders, TWOSE staff have incorporated Indigenous traditional knowledge alongside western science concepts. These learning experiences generate a lot of excitement in the Northland school communities. Northland receives countless stories of students talking and sharing their learning experiences at home. The stories Northland and its schools publish online via websites and social media (Facebook) create positive conversations.

On March 17, 2022, Northland organized a presentation to share its story about relationships and how it supports Truth and Reconciliation, student learning and leadership. Northland has established a culture of collective efficacy, which refers to staff having a shared belief on having a positive impact on student learning. Creating a strong sense of collective efficacy is helping Northland achieve leadership excellence for:

- Achievement: Weaving Indigenous knowledge, language and culture across the curriculum.
- Teamwork: Support division-wide professional learning through a community of practice. Through a community of practice, educators work with each other on common themes such as incorporating Indigenous literacy into teaching and collecting local stories from Knowledge Keepers and Elders.
- Engagement: Create conversations with First Nations and Métis leaders, organizations and communities to optimize learning success.

During the presentation, Director of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Debbie Mineault shared a number of resources Northland is currently using to achieve excellence in learning and weaving Indigenous knowledge, language, culture and the history and legacy of Residential Schools. For example, Northland educators are using technology tools and decoding strategies to help students learn to speak, read and write in Cree or Dene.

On March 23, 2022, Northland hosted a special presentation with award-winning and best-selling author Monique Gray Smith. During this visit, Monique shared her personal journey of Truth and Reconciliation and how that journey has transformed her and her family. Throughout the evening, everyone in attendance learned ways to have conversations with children and young people about Canada's history, with a focus on Residential Schools. Click on the website link to view the Superintendent's Highlights in more detail <https://www.nsd61.ca/download/385562> (page 63).

Associate Superintendent's Report - Alberta Education Assurance Survey Update

Associate Superintendent Scott Meunier provided an update to the Board about the Alberta Education Assurance Surveys and the Communities of Practice professional learning. Every year, Alberta Education surveys parents, teachers and students from grades 4 to 12 about their satisfaction with their school environments. Meunier said Administration has worked with principals in every school to ensure that Northland collects as much of this information as possible. This work includes working with principals to develop engagement plans, principals reaching out to parents/guardians via phone, newsletters, websites/social media, School Council and Principal Advisory Committee meetings to engage as much as possible about the survey and School Success Reports (A newsletter schools develop to inform families about the strategies they have in place and how it connects with Alberta Education Assurance Survey measures). The results from the provincial Assurance Survey should be available to the division in early May 2022.

Meunier also talked about the professional learning series Northland started this year called "Communities of Practice". These monthly sessions are led by staff members for staff members as a way of sharing best practices for supporting student learning across Northland. In a short time, these communities have allowed principals, teachers and support staff members to meet around topics of common interest and have helped improve the sense of shared responsibility for student success in every school. Some of the "Communities of Practice" topics include land-based learning, incorporating

Indigenous literature into teaching and teaching multi-age/grade level classrooms. Click on the website link to view the report in more detail <https://www.nsd61.ca/download/385696> (page 69).

Next Regular Board Meeting is Friday, April 22, 2022

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.