



## Board Meeting Highlights February 14, 2025

### Four NSD students nominated for Honouring Spirit: Indigenous Student Award



**Top Row (Left to Right): Brooklyn Wiltzen, Avery Gladue-Auger**

**Bottom Row (Left to Right): Miles Desjarlais, Zoey Powderhorn-Desjarlais**

We are pleased to announce that four Northland students have been nominated for the Honouring Spirit: Indigenous Student Award. This year, the following students have been nominated:

- Brooklyn Wiltzen, Grade 5, Anzac Community School
- Avery Gladue-Auger, Grade 12, Mistassiniy School
- Miles Desjarlais, Grade 8, Northland Online School
- Zoey Powderhorn-Desjarlais, Grade 11, Northland Online School

The Honouring Spirit: Indigenous Student Award categories are divided into three regions: North, Central and South. In each region, awards are divided into the following grade categories:

- Kindergarten to Grade 3;
- Grades 4 to 6;
- Grades 7 to 9;
- And, Grades 10-12.

In total, 12 awards are distributed each year.

### The Board nominates Pearl Lorentzen for Friends of Education Award



Northland School Division is celebrating a local newspaper journalist! The Board is pleased to announce that they have nominated Pearl Lorentzen, Lakeside Leader Reporter, for the Alberta School Boards Association Friends of Education Award. The award recognizes individuals and organizations in the community who have made a special contribution to education in Alberta.

Pearl stumbled into journalism after studying creative writing. She has been a journalist at the Lakeside Leader since March 2019. This paper covers a region of Northern Alberta including Slave Lake, Wabasca, Red Earth Creek, Kinuso, Swan River First Nation, Loon River First Nation, Peerless Trout First Nation, Sawridge First Nation, the M.D. of Lesser Slave River, and M.D. of Opportunity. She enjoys the variety of stories that come out of working for a regional paper, where anything from Cree classes to local artists to municipal council meetings are fair game. Prior to starting her journalism career, Pearl worked as a linguistics research assistant, at a retreat centre, in office settings, kitchens, cleaning, and helping out in a mechanic and body shop.

Pearl will be recognized at the ASBA Zone One Fall Awards Ceremony in September.



### Trustees listen to podcast created with Google NotebookLM

During Awards and Celebrations, the Board listened to a podcast created using Google Notebook, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered note-taking tool. The podcast was based on What We Heard Reports from meetings with the Youth Council and the Elders and Knowledge Keepers Advisory Council. NotebookLM was used to organize the information from these reports and assist in creating the podcast. Click on the website link to listen to the podcast <http://bit.ly/41RP75>.

### NSD moving ahead with purchasing new school buses



Secretary-Treasurer Douglas Aird presented a plan to purchase four new school buses for the Transportation Department. Purchasing these buses is planned as a sustainable way to refresh the school bus fleet using existing capital reserves.

NSD will engage in a public tender process with school bus fleet companies. The public tender award recommendation will be brought to the Board of Trustees for approval.

### NSD working with Athabasca Tribal Council on traditional ceremonies course



Northland School Division is working with the Athabasca Tribal Council (ATC) to create a course about traditional ceremonies. A draft version of the course was shared with ATC, and a group meeting was held on February 12, 2025, to discuss the draft. The next step is to present the course to Elders from the Janvier and Fort McMurray #468 communities in a meeting planned for February 27, 2025. The final version must be submitted to Alberta Education by March 1, 2025, for approval.

### Superintendent's Highlights - Updates on achieving Northland School Division's priorities



Superintendent of Schools/CEO Cal Johnson presented the latest updates on how Northland School Division (NSD) is working to support students, families, and communities. Every month, progress is made to achieve NSD's priorities:

1. Connections Supporting Reconciliation
2. Holistic Learning
3. Excellent People Supporting Students
4. Responsible Resourcing

Here are the latest developments in each priority area:

### **Priority 1 - Connections Supporting Reconciliation**

NSD continues to strengthen the connection between schools and Indigenous communities. Superintendent Johnson shared that teachers recently took part in two important professional learning sessions:

- On January 31, 2025, all teachers joined the “Wahkohtowin Every Day” session, which focused on weaving Métis knowledge and land-based learning into daily lessons.
- On February 10, 2025, teachers attended a session called “Kiyokewin: Visiting with Community.” This session, led by the Rupertsland Institute, introduced educators to the Métis tradition of “visiting” as a way to build strong relationships with the land, families, and students.

### **Holistic Learning**

Superintendent Johnson highlighted the ongoing work to support students’ learning and growth.

- Schools continue to use the Collaborative Response (CR) approach, which brings teachers together to discuss student needs and develop action plans. On January 31, 2025, Grade 9-12 teachers met to prepare for upcoming exams, support course completion, and discuss expanding Career and Dual Credit programs.
- The partnership with the University of Calgary (U of C) through Math Minds is also progressing. Teachers are learning to design math lessons that connect with the land and Indigenous perspectives. Plans are developing to form a math teacher group to strengthen support for Grades 9-12.

### **Excellent People Supporting Students**

Superintendent Johnson was pleased to announce that NSD’s work is being recognized across the province:

- On March 20, 2025, NSD will present at the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) Conference alongside other school divisions, sharing how data is being used to improve student learning.
- From April 30 to May 2, 2025, NSD will present at the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) Education Gathering in Edmonton, focusing on the division’s efforts to weave Indigenous knowledge in classrooms.

### **Responsible Resourcing**

Superintendent Johnson reported that:

- Principals are working closely with the division to review staffing with a focus on having the right people in place to support student needs
- NSD has secured its current Jordan’s Principle funding and will submit its 2025-2026 application early with the goal of maintaining continued support.

Visit <https://www.nsd61.ca/governance/board-meetings> to view upcoming Regular Board Meeting dates and Board-related documents.

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