



Northland School Division No.61 Board Highlights Corporate Board Meeting – February 23, 2017

Building capacity and strengthening language and culture headlines the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Land-Based Learning Report

Building capacity and strengthening language and culture are the core objectives highlighted in the *First Nations, Métis and Inuit Land-based Learning Report*. The report, presented by Director of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Lorraine Cardinal-Roy, provides insight into Northland School Division No.61's (NSD61) commitment to eliminating the achievement gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. With support from the *Building Collaboration and Capacity in Education Grant Program* from Alberta Education, Northland is able to better coordinate strategies such as: professional development for Indigenous Language Instructors, land-based learning opportunities and extra-curricular activities in partnership with Kee Tas Kee Now Tribal Council (KTC). For example, KTC-NSD61 Indigenous Language Instructors have participated in workshops primarily focused on understanding the Program of Studies and strengthening teaching strategies. An upcoming workshop (February 27 – March 3) will be conducted completely in the Cree language with the intention for participants “to hear, listen, to sign and to speak in Cree only.”

The *Building Collaboration and Capacity in Education Grant Program* also supports relationships NSD61 has with Bigstone Cree Nation (BCN) and Athabasca Tribal Council (ATC). NSD61 and BCN have hired a grad coach to increase the number of students who successfully graduate from high school and NSD61 and ATC are working towards a formal partnership focused on improving the learning for students.

In October 2016, NSD61 administrators' participated in the NSD61 version of the Kairos Blanket Exercise designed to educate people about the impact of colonization, treaty making and modern legislation for Indigenous peoples. The NSD61 First Nations Métis and Inuit department created this adapted version to include the history of First Nations, Métis communities in NSD61. The report also highlights a protocol guide designed to help NSD61 staff when they are working with Indigenous peoples and organizations. See Board Agenda Package to view the *First Nations, Métis and Inuit Land-based Learning Report* <http://nsd61.ca/download/96172> (pages 15-26).

Proposed project aims to connect Indigenous knowledge to provincial Math outcomes

Associate Superintendent Don Tessier presented the *Proposed Elements of the Indigenous Math Project*. The purpose of the project for Northland is to develop and test Math curriculum content that builds on and connects Indigenous community knowledge, culture and ways of learning to provincial Math outcomes. This project is going to involve the expertise of Dr. Lisa Lunney Borden, an Associate Professor from St. Francis Xavier University. Dr. Borden has been involved in similar work with the Mi'kmaw community in Nova Scotia, where the graduation rate of Indigenous students is higher than that of the general population (**click website link to learn more about her work** <https://goo.gl/OSZp8B>). The proposal says the focus will begin with kindergarten to grade 6 students at St. Theresa School and preliminary work will begin in late spring or fall 2017. This work entails bringing Dr. Borden to Wabasca-Desmarais to share her experience and successes, revisit promising practices such as NSD61's Kikway Project and begin the process of working with St. Theresa School staff to develop Math units with local cultural content and ways of knowing. See Board Agenda to view the *Proposed Elements of the Indigenous Math Project* <http://nsd61.ca/download/96172> (pages 27-28).

Official Trustee approved Northland School Division 2017-2018 School Year Calendar

The Official Trustee approved the *Northland School Division 2017-2018 School Year Calendar*. In 2017-2018, the school year begins September 5th, Christmas Break is December 20th – January 2nd, Easter Break is April 2nd – 6th and the last day for students is June 28th. In addition to schools hosting organizational days from August 28th – September 1st, they will organize a *Regional Northland Day*. On August 30th, all NSD61 schools will host a *Regional Northland Day* for students, parents, elders and community members. The purpose for the event is to create closer relationships between the school and the community. The 2017-2018 calendar includes new regional meeting dates for school administrators. These meetings will occur seven times a year (September, November, December, January, March, April and June) with area superintendents. For new educators, New Principal Orientation is August 21st and New Teacher Orientation is August 22-24th. See Board Agenda Package to view the approved *Northland School Division 2017-2018 School Year Calendar* <http://nsd61.ca/download/96172> (pages 30-32).

KTC Education Authority status and new portables for NSD61 schools discussed in Superintendent's Report

Superintendent of Schools Gord Atkinson provided an update regarding recent developments between Kee Tas Kee Now Tribal Council (KTC), the Government of Alberta (the province) and NSD61 in the *Superintendent's Report*. On February 18, 2016, KTC and the province signed a framework agreement for the establishment of a First Nations education authority; the first of its kind in Alberta. With this announcement, Atkinson says Lubicon Lake Band (Little Buffalo School) and Peerless Trout First Nation (Peerless Lake School and Kateri School) will eventually become part of the KTC Education Authority. Prior to Atkinson's update, Peerless Trout First Nation Chief James Alook addressed questions being raised by NSD61 staff and communities impacted by this agreement. Chief Alook says it's going to take time and many discussions before Little Buffalo School, Peerless Lake School and Kateri School transition from NSD61 to KTC Education Authority. Atkinson says "NSD61 congratulates KTC and we look forward to continuing our partnership that enhances professional development for staff and the quality of education for students."

In addition to the KTC Education Authority update, the report highlighted a letter from the Deputy Minister of Education approving modular classrooms for Conklin Community School and Father R. Perin School and a Wabasca Fever article featuring a special presentation. On February 12th, NSD61 presented a certificate of appreciation to Molloy's Welding for donating \$5,000 towards a WE Day trip for Mistassiniy School students.

See Board Agenda Package to view the *Superintendent's Report* <http://nsd61.ca/download/96172> (pages 127-130).

Future governance structure for NSD61 featured in the Official Trustee's Report

Official Trustee Lois Byers provided an update regarding the future governance of Northland School Division in the Official Trustee's Report. For the past few months, Alberta Education visited parents, community members and community leaders to discuss what the future governance for NSD61 should look like. In February, they hosted four more sessions in Peace River, Edmonton, Janvier and Wabasca-Desmarais to validate the information they received from school communities. Byers says recommendations will go to a government standing policy committee, then to cabinet and then to the Legislative Assembly where any proposed changes will go through three readings. Byers ended the update saying "I personally thank everyone for again sharing your thoughts, not only through the formal community engagement process but through the many meetings and phone discussions I have had."

Superintendent of Schools presents Education Quarterly Report

Updating progress on division priorities is part of what Superintendent of Schools presented in the *Education Quarterly Report*. One ongoing priority is the reorganization of central office. Part of this process includes the hiring of Associate Superintendents to oversee three NSD61 regions. Once they've been hired, the division will coordinate second layer services such as student services, literacy, numeracy, technology to support each NSD61 region. The report also includes student attendance by division in percentage, staff attendance and success stories such as the Flexible Learning Pilot Program, Local School Board Committee Chair/Principal workshop, Family Literacy Day activities at schools and an unforgettable welcome for a Peerless Lake School Teacher. See Board Agenda Package to view the entire *Education Quarterly Report* <http://nsd61.ca/download/96172> (pages 35-57).

Secretary Treasurer presents First Quarter Finance Report

Secretary Treasurer Trudy Rasmuson presented the *First Quarter Finance Report* to the Official Trustee as information. See Board Package to view the entire *First Quarter Finance Report* <http://nsd61.ca/download/96172> (pages 58-68).

Superintendent of Schools proposes a Family Wellness Workers Program

Superintendent of Schools Gord Atkinson presented information to the Official Trustee about the benefits of having Family Wellness Workers for schools. Atkinson says some school divisions have transitioned from a traditional counselor/community liaison worker to a family wellness worker service for student and families. Family Wellness Workers are certified social workers who work for the school division but follow the occupational guidelines for social workers. Currently, some NSD61 schools have school community liaison workers (SCLW). The vision of the program would be to provide confidential intervention services to students and families in order to support emotional, behavioural and social wellbeing. Atkinson believes this will translate to better attendance, academic success and improve overall mental health and wellness for students. A formal proposal for Family Wellness Workers at NSD61 will be presented at a future Board Meeting.

Wabasca Modernization Update presented as information

Secretary Treasurer Trudy Rasmuson presented an updated report regarding the *Wabasca Modernization Update*. The report from Capital Planning North of Alberta Education includes details about the value scoping session held at Mistassiniy School June 15-16, 2016. The value scoping involved 25 participants from NSD61 including the Official Trustee, Superintendent, principals and teachers of Mistassiniy School, staff from other Wabasca-Desmarais schools, students, parents and community members. During the sessions, participants toured the school, brainstormed and prioritized the needs for the modernization of Mistassiniy School and worked with architects, cost consultants and government staff to develop four modernization concepts for Mistassiniy. The report says the majority of participants preferred Option 2 which would include a new gymnasium, a cultural space, a learning commons area and project based learning space for a cost of \$24.23 million. The update also includes follow up meeting details from October 20, 2016, modernization drawings and costing information. See Board Package to view the entire *Wabasca Modernization Update* <http://nsd61.ca/download/96172> (pages 137-231).

Alternate Attendance Placements procedure

Associate Superintendent Don Tessier presented the division's new administrative procedure for alternate attendance placements. Procedure 306 – Alternate Attendance Placements which will replace Procedure 320 – Financial Support for Education Placement Outside the Division includes strict deadlines, adjustments to the decision making process and a change in the maintenance/boarding allowance. Before the administrative procedure is fully implemented, the Official Trustee requested administration to provide legal opinions received at the next Board Meeting so school communities understand what's driving the changes. See Board Agenda Package to view Procedure 306 – Alternate Attendance Placements <http://nsd61.ca/download/96172> (pages 97-100).

Summary of approved Board Motions

The Official Trustee approved:

- Ashley Ethier, a teacher at Bill Woodward School and student at St. Francis Xavier University, to conduct research in Northland School Division.
- Professional Improvement Leave to Wendy Calahasen, Grouard Northland School Teacher and Helen Akranis, Gift Lake School Teacher for the 2017-2018 school year.
- A local committee be struck for teacher bargaining.
- Second Reading for Policy 14 – Hearings on Teacher Matters.
- Second Reading for Policy 15 – School Closure.
- Second Reading for Policy 18 – Alternative Programs.
- First Reading of Policy 8 – Committees and directed administration to send out the information to Local School Board Committee Chairs and principals for feedback with the inclusion why this was changed. Official Trustee Lois Byers says the reason for the changes is because boards now meet as board of the whole or strike an adhoc committee instead.
- First reading for Policy 9 – Board Representatives and directed administration to send out the information to Local School Board Committee Chairs and principals for feedback.
- First reading for Policy 10 – Policy Making and directed administration to send out the information to Local School Board Committee Chairs and principals for feedback.

View Board Schedule, Agendas, Minutes, Highlights and Attachments on our website at:

<http://nsd61.ca/governance/board-meeting-agenda-minutes>

Next Corporate Board Meeting will be held at Elizabeth School on April 20, 2017.

Note: These writings do not constitute the official record of the Northland School Division No.61. 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.