



The Northland School Division (NSD)

Board Highlights Regular Board Meeting – April 17, 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).

Athabasca Delta Community School in Fort Chipewyan gets full funding for modernization or replacement

On April 9, 2020, the provincial government confirmed full funding to either modernize or replace the Athabasca Delta Community School (ADCS) in Fort Chipewyan as part of its Budget 2020 Capital Plan.

"Northland School Division is pleased with the announcement made in regards to Athabasca Delta Community School (ADCS) in Fort Chipewyan. When we submitted our 2020-2021 Capital Plan, replacing the current ADCS facility was a high priority. The division is looking forward to working with the staff, the community, and the province to create a modern facility that improves the learning experience for students and better reflects the community of Fort Chipewyan."

- Robin Guild, Board Chair, The Northland School Division

"The announcement is great news for the community of Fort Chipewyan. I am pleased that the community is being heard. Having something new to meet the needs of all students is a nice uplift for the community. An announcement like this goes a long way to our continued work together to improve community relations."

- Rubi Shirley, Ward 9 Trustee, Fort Chipewyan, The Northland School Division

Click on the website link to view the media release <https://www.nsd61.ca/about-us/division-news/post/athabasca-delta-community-school-in-fort-chipewyan-gets-full-funding-for-modernization-or-replacement>.

2020-2021 Capital Plan approved the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees approved the 2020-2021 Capital Plan. The attached plan lists the proposed projects for Northland School Division. The plan reflects a facilities report prepared by Edmonton Public Schools in the fall of 2018. Visit our website to view the Capital Plan <https://www.nsd61.ca/about-us/reports>.

Board approved motion to keep the instructional program open at Pelican Mountain School

The Board of Trustees approved a motion to continue the instructional program at Pelican Mountain School. School closure consideration was triggered under Policy 15 – School Closure due to low enrolment. A public meeting was originally scheduled March 25th to discuss the future of the school. But due to COVID-19, the meeting did not take place. If enrollment does not increase to match viability, a notice of motion will be made in January 2021.

Board approved a date change for the June Regular Board Meeting

The Board of Trustees approved that the June Regular Board Meeting date be moved to June 26, 2020. The original date was June 12, 2020. The date change allows for more time between the May and June meetings.

Board approved amendments to policies outlined by Policy Committee

- [Policy 8 – Board Committees](#)
- [Policy 4 – Trustee Code of Conduct](#)
- [Policy 7 – Appendix A Schedule of Rates](#)
- [Policy 21 – Appendix A School Council Conflict Resolution](#)
- [Policy 21 – Appendix B Elder Guidelines](#)

Trustees learning Zoom video-conferencing features

The Board of Trustees completed their second Regular Board Meeting using Zoom video conferencing. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Board Meetings were held in-person. On April 17th, Area 3 Associate Superintendent Tim Stensland hosted a “Tech Talk” session to help the trustees feel more confident using the video conferencing system. Stensland showed the trustees how to use gallery view, which allows participants to see everyone involved in the meeting; and demonstrated how a participant can screen share a document. Stensland also talked about the precautions NSD has taken to ensure Zoom is a safe environment for student learning, staff professional development and Board Meetings. He said hosts use password protection and turn on the waiting room feature to monitor user participation.

Board Chair Highlights - Long Service and Recognition Awards and Ward 1 Trustee

Board Chair Robin Guild updated trustees on items recently discussed by the Board Advocacy Committee. The first item discussed was the Long Service and Recognition Awards. In 2019, the Board approved for all recipients to receive their awards in school communities. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board Advocacy Committee recommended to postpone Long Service and Recognition Awards in school communities until the fall of 2020. More information will be communicated in the coming months.

Guild discussed a letter the Board sent in March about the vacant Ward 1 Trustee seat. In the letter, the Board asked that consideration be given, to appoint a trustee for the rest of the term based on recommendations from the communities within Ward 1. The Board is awaiting a response to their letter.

Superintendent Highlights - “Continuing Student Learning Plan” Update

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Nancy Spencer-Poitras updated the Board about NSD’s [“Continuing Student Learning Plan”](#). Prior to launching the division’s “Continuing Student Learning Plan”, staff have been focusing on how to effectively continue the student learning journey while the students are learning from home. This approach aligns well with NSD’s goal of enhancing and leveraging the use of technology. Students who don’t have access to technology will work from hard copy work packages and have regular communication with a teacher.

Spencer-Poitras said the feedback from families about NSD’s “Continuing Student Learning Plan has been very positive. Ward 8 Trustee Loretta Gladue told Nancy before the Regular Board Meeting that parents are ecstatic about the program delivery at Calling Lake School.

Dr. Spencer-Poitras updated the Board on efforts to improve housing for teachers. She said the division is looking at having custodians assist the Maintenance Department with housing upgrades while in-person classes are cancelled. Ward 5 Trustee Louis Cardinal asked a question about the mental health support for staff and families. Spencer-Poitras said NSD developed a [COVID-19 Mental Health Resources](#) webpage, which has been shared with families.

In addition, the division is working with the Children’s Autism Service (CASE) on a certification program for educational assistants. Having certified educational assistants on site will build capacity from within to better support students with specific needs. To support staff wellness, NSD’s Employment and Family Assistance Program provider Homewood Health, is hosting webinars for those interested.

Dr. Spencer-Poitras also provided an update on testing water in schools for lead content. In November, NSD received a letter from Alberta Health Services recommending the water in schools be tested for lead content. The Occupational Health and Safety Officer has been sampling water in schools since January. Any deviation from the Health Canada guidelines of 0.005 mg/l will be rectified.

Transportation Department Update

Transportation Manager Susanne Jones updated the Board on a number of transportation related items. The Transportation Department is currently working on making sure students are registered for riding the school bus next year and updating transportation related procedures and manuals. Jones explained improvements made to communicate school bus delays or cancellations. She said the drivers communicate a delay or cancellation to the department, then information is shared with local media and posted on NSD websites, school websites, Facebook pages and School Messenger.

Jones discussed challenges in transportation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 28th, NSD received [information from Alberta Education](#) which resulted in a 51% funding reduction for transportation. The reduction resulted in temporary lay-offs for bus drivers.

In regards to school bus driver recruitment, road tests have been halted due to COVID-19, which could impact recruitment of drivers for next year. For anyone interested in becoming a bus driver, they must take the School Bus Driver Improvement Program to get the S endorsement on their driver’s license before July.

Area Associate Superintendents provide updates to the Board

The Area Associate Superintendents provided some insight about the “Continuing Student Learning Plan” execution. In a very short amount of time, school staff have had to adjust from face to face to a virtual/distance learning delivery model. The associates shared how impressed they have been with staff embracing the use of educational technology tools. Dermod Madden, Area 1 Associate Superintendent, told the trustees that staff see this as an opportunity. He said conversations with staff have been about taking blended learning (in the classroom, outside the classroom and online) to the next level.

Teachers in Area 2 have continued work with SMARTLearning. While working with SMARTLearning, they are learning a teaching strategy to help students improve current skills and comprehend information easier. Pearce said the teachers are responding well to the training and are implementing the skills they have learned. He also said the First Nations, Metis Inuit Learner Success team is helping schools deliver Indigenous language (Cree/Dene) and culture content through a virtual/distance model. In addition, the team is hosting virtual sessions for staff interested in learning the Cree language.

Area 3 Associate Superintendent Tim Stensland shared another positive for NSD during this challenging time. During a regular school year, principals get together in-person 3-4 times a year for professional development. With access to virtual technology, principals connect 2-3 times a week. Stensland said principals feel more connected with each other.

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

Next Corporate Board Meeting is Friday, May 22, 2020

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.