



P.O. Bag 1400 9809 77th Avenue, Peace River, AB T8S-1V2
Phone: 1-800-362-1360 | 780-624-2060 | Fax: 780-624-5914
www.nsd61.ca | [Facebook.com/TheNorthlandSchoolDivision/](https://www.facebook.com/TheNorthlandSchoolDivision/) | [@Northland61](https://twitter.com/Northland61)

ASBA Zone 1 Meeting – Reflection Question

Online Learning: What's the future for your division? What are you doing for your remote learning and how is it working?

How NSD is utilizing technology to support student learning



If there is ever a school jurisdiction that should be masterful at leveraging the benefits of technology, it is Northland School Division (NSD). In a school division that spans 288,347 square kilometres, the cost to organize in-person professional learning is high.

When in-person classes were cancelled in March due to COVID-19, we were concerned about additional learning loss for students. However, when Alberta

Education announced that learning will continue in an alternative way, we immediately pushed our technology plan several years ahead. This was the opportunity we needed to move NSD forward in the use of technology to enhance and improve the teaching and learning.

To help move the technology plan forward, NSD hosted almost 900 virtual professional learning opportunities for staff last year (2019-2020). Additional focus was dedicated to targeted professional learning for staff to learn about the virtual learning tools and strategies to enhance learning continuity for students.

A survey completed by staff in June demonstrated substantial growth in staff development, in particular, the knowledge and skill with using technology tools such as Google Classroom. The work on professional learning in the spring of 2020, survey results demonstrated:

- The comfort of teachers using technology has grown immensely.
- 94% indicate a very high comfort.
- 92% of teachers indicate a comfort with online learning. Previously this was measured at 47%.

- 79% of teachers from March 15 to June last year indicated they supported students through online learning.

In addition, NSD purchased more Chromebooks to ensure all students have access to technology for in-school or at-home learning. One of the challenges we have faced with delivering at-home learning, is internet connectivity challenges in the communities we serve. To overcome the challenges, teachers save lessons on memory sticks so at-home learning students can access lessons on their Chromebook. At some NSD schools, teachers create paper packages for at-home learning students.

Over the past year, the Board of Trustees have been meeting with education partners via Zoom or teleconference (First Nations, Metis Settlements, Metis locals, municipalities, community organizations). One of the topics they have discussed is how to address the internet connectivity challenges. The Board, with support from community leaders will be advocating to government on how to improve internet access and connectivity in remote/isolated communities.

2020-2021 Technology Utilization Focus to support student learning



The new Vision for Technology Teaching, Learning, and Leading (draft) has been developed for NSD. This plan acknowledges that understanding and using technology will be an integral part of virtually every aspect of daily life. NSD has a responsibility to prepare students for this future.

The classroom is the primary place where this preparation will occur; therefore, every classroom must be equipped with diverse

technologies to support teaching and learning. Every teacher must be knowledgeable and skilled in the use of these technologies in daily instruction.



The focus for the current year (2020-2021 school year) has been to raise 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. Positive steps are being made to assist teachers and students to

participate in technology-rich, learner-centered classrooms where students are engaged in a challenging curriculum. The professional learning for staff is housed in the NSD Professional

Learning Portal. The opportunities within the portal are customized according to our current needs. For example, we are working with EdTechTeam Canada to provide engaging learning ideas for in-school learning and at-home learning.

Also, we have been developing a new and meaningful relationship 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. Being able to learn from Telus World of Science staff is not only a benefit to our teachers, it helps our students understand and enjoy science.

We have found investing in technology and utilizing virtual and remote means allows Northland to overcome travel distances between schools and access to educational resources. Time that was previously spent driving for many hours has been severely reduced and, in some cases, eliminated. This shift also increases the time the staff is available as well as the increasing response time for questions.

Continuing Student Learning Newsletters



Continuing Student Learning Plan Newsletter - Volume #2

The Northland School Division

Tansi, Edlânat'e, Hello everyone! This is the second edition of the Northland School Division (NSD) "Continuing Student Learning Newsletter". When the province cancelled in-person classes on March 15th due to COVID-19, school divisions were tasked with developing a plan so students can still continue to learn from home. On March 27th, released information about it's "Continuing Student Learning Plan". The plan aligns with Alberta Education's guide for continuing student learning. The "Continuing Student Learning Newsletter" highlights how NSD schools are implementing the plan and student success stories while learning from home!

f t @

When the province cancelled in-person classes, school divisions were tasked with developing a plan so students can still continue to learn from home. The "Continuing Student Learning Newsletters" highlighted how NSD schools implemented the plan and student success stories while learning from home! Continuing Student Learning Newsletters:

- [Volume #1](#)
- [Volume #2](#)

Good News Stories

- **CBC article:** The article speaks to what Northland is doing with respect to technology and at-home learning. You will notice that we received positive comments from parents which helps change the narrative of Northland
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/fort-mckay-fort-chipewyan-conklin-learning-school-covid-1.5818595>.
- **Peace River Broadcasting:** The article highlighted NSD's Three Year Plan/Annual Education Results Report. As you will see in the article and audio recording (located at the bottom of the article), Dr. Nancy Spencer-Poitras, Superintendent of Schools, describes what NSD has achieved in the use of technology
<https://www.rivercountry.fm/technology-a-strong-focus-of-northland-school-division-in-3-year-plan/>.