



# Board Meeting Highlights

## April 26, 2025

### 2024-2025 What We Heard Report presented to the Board



Superintendent of Schools/CEO Cal Johnson presented the 2025 What We Heard Report. Between January and March 2025, Northland School Division hosted 15 in-person engagement sessions and one virtual session with Northland Online School. Sessions were held in every school community except Father R. Perin School.

Northland attempted to host the community engagement at Father R. Perin School on January 15th and March 10th, but both sessions were postponed following recent losses in the community. NSD is working with the community to find a more appropriate time to host the engagement.

Feedback from the sessions was summarized into key themes to support Northland School Division’s Three-Year Education Plan and guide future planning.

To read the full report, click on the website link: <https://www.nsd61.ca/download/509412>. The What We Heard Report will be shared with all Northland school communities.

### Board approves grade additions at Elizabeth, Grouard Northland and Gift Lake Schools



The Board of Trustees approved grade additions at the following schools, in coordination with Northland Online School:

- Elizabeth School – Grade 9
- Gift Lake School – Grade 10
- Grouard Northland School – Grade 11

The decision reflects feedback gathered during recent community engagements, where families shared a strong desire to have their children educated within their home communities for as long as possible.

Families shared that having local schooling helps students succeed, stay connected to their culture, and feel strong in their communities.

Northland School Division will continue working with families to explore future grade additions based on community needs, student enrollment, and available resources.

### Board approves Long Service Awards date



The Board approved hosting the Long Service Awards on Friday, May 23, 2025, at the DoubleTree West Edmonton.

The event celebrates staff who have achieved 20, 25, 30, 35, and 40 years of service, and retirees. Northland School Division also recognizes its Edwin Parr Teacher Award nominee during the event.

### Board approves telephone replacement project



The Board approved a proposal from Netagen to replace Northland School Division’s phone system. The total one-time cost is \$193,946.50 plus GST, with funds coming from capital reserves.

NSD’s current system is outdated, expensive to maintain, and no longer supported. The new cloud-based solution will be rolled out to all 18 schools and central office buildings. It includes on-site gateways to keep phone service running even during network outages.



The new system offers improved safety features, like GenAlert 911 for emergency location notifications, and integrates with Google collaboration tools. It also includes local and long-distance calling, training, and remote support.

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Netagen is an approved vendor under Alberta ShareIT facilitating procurement.

## Board approves Budget 2025–2026 Principles and Assumptions



The Board approved the principles and assumptions that will guide the development of Northland School Division’s 2025–2026 budget. The draft budget is a key milestone in the division’s annual financial management cycle and will be presented at the May Board Meeting for approval.

Secretary Treasurer Douglas Aird presented the information. Each year, the Division begins its planning by approving key principles and assumptions. These include:

- Making sure each school receives fair, equitable and transparent funding.
- Collaboration to focus budgets on what each school and student needs.
- Continuing to fully fund School Food Services and enhanced student transportation.
- Planning based on enrollment projections and expected grant funding with an adjustment in the fall when enrollments and staff deployment are finalized.
- Managing costs related to salaries, benefits, utilities, insurance, and inflation to maximize funds in each classroom.
- Using capital funds to help enhance the learning experience for Northland students and reduce long-term costs.

The budget is an important part of making sure the priorities in Northland School Division’s Education Plan are successful and links directly to each of our four priorities.

## Awards and Celebrations: Northland recognized at provincial leadership conference



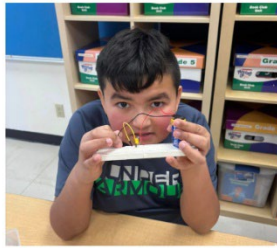
Our Awards and Celebration for the month of April is related to a presentation delivered in March. Superintendent of Schools/CEO Cal Johnson shared a follow-up on Northland School Division’s presentation at the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) Annual Learning Conference, held March 19–21, 2025.

Johnson said it was a proud moment for Northland to be invited by CASS to present alongside two other school divisions on “Effective change leadership using system data.”

The presentation highlighted the strong alignment between the Board and Executive Team and the collaborative work behind Northland School Division’s new Education Plan.

NSD received positive feedback from Alberta Education and superintendents across the province. Many praised NSD’s focus on listening to students, families, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and communities, and for using data to drive meaningful change.

### **Student growth, principal collaboration, and technology upgrades featured in Superintendent’s Highlights**



Superintendent of Schools/CEO Cal Johnson and members of the Executive Team provided updates aligned with Northland School Division’s Education Plan.

**Under Priority 2 – Holistic Learning**, Deputy Superintendent Scott Meunier shared results from the Early Years Evaluation (EYE) and Our School Survey. The data shows general improvement in areas like literacy, numeracy, and overall well-being.

**Under Priority 3 – Excellent People Supporting Students**, Associate Superintendent Mark Owens spoke about the April Principal Meeting, where school leaders used the Collaborative Response

Model (CRM) to connect and problem-solve. The Collaborative Response Model from Jigsaw Learning has been implemented across Northland to enhance student success. It involves regular team meetings with teachers, support staff, and administrators, focusing on data-informed decision-making and targeted interventions. Owens said principals were highly engaged and that CRM helps school leaders feel supported and not alone in their roles. Leaders also completed the final session of Fierce Conversations, a course on giving feedback and handling tough discussions.

**Under Priority 4 – Responsible Resourcing**, Mr. Meunier updated the Board on the Division-wide network refresh. Switches have been replaced at all schools except Mistassiniy, which already has updated infrastructure as part of the new school build. Work at central office buildings is scheduled for July.

## Board receives update on transportation across Northland School Division

2025

### Transportation Department Monitoring Report



Secretary Treasurer Douglas Aird presented the 2024–2025 Transportation Report to the Board of Trustees. The report highlighted how Northland continues to provide school bus service to all students at no cost to families, regardless of how far they live from school.

Northland currently operates or contracts 43 routes across 17 schools and two outside school locations in Cold Lake and High Prairie. The Division maintains a fleet of 56 school buses and 42 light vehicles, supported by six local garages and a dedicated team of drivers and contractors. As of February 2025, there were 31 bus drivers and 11 contract operators.

From September to February, buses were available 98.5% of the time. Most of the missed days were due

to inclement weather, with other factors including driver illness, mechanical issues, and approved personal or compassionate leave.

The report also noted ongoing efforts to recruit drivers in areas facing shortages and shared that four new buses have been ordered for the 2025–2026 school year. The department continues to explore new tools to improve safety, training, communication, and fleet management.

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.