

Board Meeting Highlights

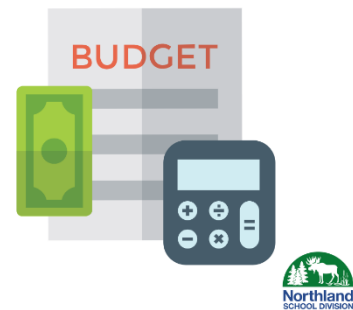
May 24, 2025

Board Approves 2025-2026 Spring Final Budget



The Board of Trustees approved the 2025–2026 Budget following a presentation from Secretary Treasurer Douglas Aird. He highlighted continued investments that reflect what makes Northland unique, referring to this as the Northland advantage.

The budget supports all four priorities in the Education Plan. It keeps key services in place, including full-day kindergarten, transportation for all students, and the hot lunch program. It also continues to invest in student learning, cultural programming, and housing.



Highlights include:

- 91 percent of staff work directly in schools
- A 32 percent increase in Indigenous Language Instructors, support for additional grades being offered, and continued investment in cultural, engagement and student success teams
- Continued investment in housing
- A planned shortfall of \$255,353 to be covered by reserves

A fall update will reflect final enrollment and staffing numbers. Click on the website link to view the budget <https://www.nsd61.ca/download/512924>.

Board approves the presented Northland School Division 2025-2028 Education Plan



The Board of Trustees approved the presented 2025 to 2028 Education Plan. This is year two of the three-year plan.

The priorities and outcomes remain the same. Updates reflect feedback from recent community engagement sessions. One key change is the revised name of Priority 1, now called **Connections Supporting Truth and Reconciliation**.

New or refined strategies include a 32 percent increase in Indigenous Language Instructors, a partnership with the University of Alberta to support language revitalization, and the development of a Land Based Learning Framework. The plan also

adds more extracurricular and hands-on learning activities, such as arts, trades, and cultural experiences. Capital planning work will be guided by feedback from students and staff to support improvements to learning spaces. The updates build on the current plan while helping Northland students thrive. You can view the full plan at nsd61.ca/download/512929.

Cree language pilot coming to Wabasca-Desmarais



Deputy Superintendent Scott Meunier told the Board that Northland is starting a Cree language pilot in Wabasca-Desmarais. The one-year pilot, developed in partnership with the University of Alberta, will focus on the Woodland Cree dialect. Meunier noted that a pipe ceremony will be held in early June to officially begin the program. The goal is to create classroom-ready Cree language resources that are easier for teachers to use.

If the pilot is successful, a similar project may be considered for Janvier, a community where Dene is the traditional language spoken.

Northland School Division receives funding to offer collegiate programming



NORTHLAND COLLEGIATE PROGRAMMING



Educational Assistant
Division-wide

Partners
Northern Lakes College



Carpentry
Wabasca-Desmarais
Paddle Prairie

Partners
Northern Lakes College
Paddle Prairie Métis Settlement
Rick Sim Trucking



Welding
Wabasca-Desmarais

Partners
Northern Lakes College



Healthcare and Cosmetology
Wabasca-Desmarais

Partners
Northern Lakes College
Atoske Action Group
Alberta Health Services
Bigstone Health



Multi-Trade
Fort McMurray Site

Partners
Keyano College
Suncor

The Board was informed that Northland School Division’s proposal to offer collegiate programming has been approved by Alberta Education, along with funding to support program delivery. Starting in the 2025 to 2026 school year, students will have more access to hands-on learning that connects directly to careers in skilled trades, healthcare, and education. More details are available in the full media release: <https://www.nsd61.ca/about-us/division-news/post/northland-school-division-receives-funding-to-offer-collegiate-programming>.

Board hears community feedback about staff supports



Ward 8 Trustee Wally Rude shared community feedback with the Board. The feedback highlighted interest in additional support for emotional regulation, particularly when working with students who have complex needs. It also noted that current professional learning sessions could be more engaging and useful for staff.

In response, Associate Superintendent Krista Veitch provided an update. New professional learning focused on working together as a team is planned for the 2025 to 2026 school year. Educational Assistants have already participated in training this year, and new service providers will offer more team-based sessions moving forward.

Principals have also started training in the Collaborative Response Model. This approach includes structured debriefing and encourages teamwork and shared problem-solving among school staff.

Superintendent's Highlights: How Northland is achieving Education Plan priorities



Superintendent of Schools/CEO Cal Johnson shared that Northland presented at the 2025 CASS First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education Gathering. The presentation focused on Priority 1 and highlighted how community voices are shaping Northland's Education Plan. He also spoke about how the Superintendent's Youth and Elder/Knowledge Keeper Councils are helping to change the narrative about Northland by building stronger connections.

The councils met in May and reflected on teachings shared by Elder John Bigstone of Wabasca-Desmarais. Topics included wahkotowin (the interconnectedness of all living things), public service and leadership, and the importance of giving back to the community. Ideas from these conversations are helping shape next year's plan.



Associate Superintendent Krista Veitch provided an update on Priority 3, including professional learning for Educational Assistants and staff retention efforts.

Deputy Superintendent Scott Meunier spoke about the Education Plan sub-committee, which includes Trustees. The group reviewed system data and helped draft updates for the 2025 to 2026 Education Plan. Their work supports thoughtful decisions about how resources are used to help students thrive.

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.