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Gord Atkinson appointed as Superintendent of Schools and Chief Executive Officer for Northland School Division No.61

For immediate release – August 10, 2016



Northland School Division No.61 (NSD) is pleased to announce the appointment of Gord Atkinson as Superintendent of Schools and Chief Executive Officer effective September 1, 2016.

Lois Byers, Official Trustee, says, “Mr. Atkinson was selected from a group of outstanding candidates following a Canada-wide search that resulted in many excellent applications from five provinces and one territory. Gord is an experienced educational leader who has a strong and demonstrated belief in the ability of every child to succeed. His understanding in the importance of Indigenous education, including languages and engaging Indigenous peoples in the education of their children; his belief in relationships and community engagement; his focus on student needs; his attention to staff development and wellness and his strong policy and planning orientation will propel NSD forward. I am confident in Gord’s ability

to overcome challenges and bring exciting new directions for student success, while moving forward with existing priorities that are already making a difference -- to lead Northland School Division to great heights.”

Mr. Atkinson began his education career in northern Alberta in 1990 as a teacher with East Smoky School Division. He successively held positions of Technology Coordinator, Director of Technology, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Director of Instructional Services, Assistant Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent with Northern Gateway Regional Division. Recently, Gord served as Associate Superintendent – Learning Services with Wild Rose School Division. His education career has been spent primarily working in small rural communities which included collaborative work with First Nation and Métis students, parents, and community members. Gord has also spent six years in the private sector as a National Manager of Safety Training.

Mr. Atkinson has a strong practical background in educational leadership. He has a Bachelor of General Studies degree, a Bachelor of Education degree from Brandon University and a Master of Business Administration (Executive Management - Education Administration) degree from Royal Roads University. Gord is committed to a collaborative and transparent approach to decision making and is “student centered” in his approach to education. He says, “I have a deep, genuine interest and commitment to



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increasing student success and to strengthen involvement and partnerships with local communities. I am extremely honoured and I welcome the opportunity to work with and serve the students, staff and communities of NSD. I believe we can achieve many things together – why not Number 1!”

Gord and his wife Tracy have 2 daughters. He believes in and understands the importance of family.

Background information

Gord Atkinson, whose father served in the Canadian Armed Forces and whose mother was a teacher, was born in Comox, British Columbia and grew up in Gimli, Manitoba, Toronto, Ontario, Lahr West Germany and Pine River, Manitoba. He began his education career in northern Alberta in 1990 as a teacher with East Smoky School Division (**East Smoky School Division area was divided between Peace Wapiti School Division and Northern Gateway Regional Division in the mid 1990's**). Gord held positions of Teacher, Technology Coordinator, Director of Technology, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Director of Instructional Services, Assistant Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent with Northern Gateway Regional Division. Recently, Atkinson served as Associate Superintendent – Learning Services with Wild Rose School Division (WRSD).

Mr. Atkinson has a strong practical background in educational leadership. He has a Bachelor of General Studies degree, a Bachelor of Education degree from Brandon University and a Master of Business Administration (Executive Management - Education Administration) degree from Royal Roads University.

Mr. Atkinson's 26-year career includes the following accomplishments:

Experience working with First Nation, Métis students

Mr. Atkinson's education career has been spent primarily working in small rural communities, which included collaborative work with First Nation and Métis students, parents, and community members.

Moving Forward with High School Redesign

Gord worked with the Learning Services Team in WRSD, school principals, school staff, students, parents and community members to improve the high school experience for students. This work involved principals organizing community engagement sessions to gather feedback from stakeholders, resulting in improved learning opportunities, and options for high school students to complete assignments. Atkinson says students started to take more ownership in their learning and were pleased with the changes.

Mr. Atkinson's team and principals, developed partnerships with Lakeland College and Bow Valley College to offer dual credit courses such as Introduction to Heavy Oil and Gas, Introduction to Soil Science, Esthetics, early learning and child care program, environmental sustainability and health care.



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Student Wellness

Gord has experience promoting student wellness including work with Alberta's mental health capacity building project. Mr. Atkinson assisted schools to improve nutrition and develop strategies such as peer mentoring to deal with social and emotional situations and create positive environments for students and staff.

Strategic Planning

Mr. Atkinson believes in collaboration when developing a vision for a school jurisdiction. During his time at Wildrose School Division, they gathered feedback from students, parents, staff and community members to set direction for the division. Gord also worked with schools to create one page school education plans. The purpose of the one page plan is to make it easier for schools to showcase the education plan. For example, on a school bulletin board.

Accountability

Mr. Atkinson promotes accountability by ensuring job descriptions are current and performance appraisal systems in place. Atkinson says this work includes making sure policies and procedures are relevant and current.

Staff Development

While working at Northern Gateway Regional Division, Gord was involved in developing staff development programs with Royal Roads University. He is looking forward to doing similar work at NSD.

For further information please contact:

Lois Byers, Official Trustee
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