

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

January 11, 2022

Return to in-person learning

Alberta students returned to in-person learning on January 10, 2022. Diligent safety precautions continue including the use of masks, additional cleaning and sanitization, and cohorting.

NGPS Superintendent Kevin Bird spoke to the province's climbing case numbers and the Division's own increase in staff illness:

"We are happy to be back in school and committed to keeping students in the classroom; however, we do want to caution parents to prepare for potential shifts to at-home learning, should student or staff illness require it."

Rapid tests for home use and masks

To lower the risk of in school transmission and provide an additional layer of protection, the Government of Alberta will be supplying rapid tests for home use and masks to schools for students. These supplies will be distributed to students when received. The province has suggested that students might rapid test twice a week. Use of these government-provided supplies is completely voluntary.

A [how-to video](#) for parents and a [rapid test program fact sheet](#) offers tips on how to use the rapid test kits.

Complete information, including updates to the NGPS 2021-22 Back to School Plan can be found at ngps.ca.

ngpsTALK

Deputy Superintendent Leslee Jodry introduced trustees to the Division's new engagement platform, ngpsTALK, an online forum where parents, students, staff and community members can discuss educational priorities, provide feedback and help inform Division planning in an easy to use and access format.

ngpsTALK will debut on January 20, 2022 with the Division's first engagement: *What makes your school community shine?* Stories gathered from this first engagement will be used to highlight NGPS schools. Information on how to sign up and share your voice on this first of many engagements will be shared via Division media.

Provincial Mental Health Funding

The Government of Alberta has delineated 40 million dollars to Alberta school divisions to address increased need for mental health supports. NGPS received approximately \$248,000 of the provincial funding.

In consultation with NGPS school principals, the funding was used to increase psychologist time in schools. Each school received an increase of one day of psychologist support in their school.

Trustees discussed the serious need for more provincial mental health support and advocacy.

Motion 4544-22: That the Board have a report presented at a future meeting of the mental health supports that are being offered at each of the schools.

Alberta Rural Education Symposium

The Alberta Rural Education Symposium is held annually in March to bring together organizations with an invested interest in rural education. NGPS trustees and administrators will attend the Symposium in Edmonton, on March 6-8, 2022, and local municipal officials will receive invitations to attend. The theme this year is: *Flourishing Rural School Communities: Learning and leading through appreciative inquiry.*

March Board Meeting Reschedule

The March 8, 2022 NGPS Board Meeting has been rescheduled for March 1, 2022.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board will take place on **February 8, 2022** commencing at **10:00 a.m** at the Division Office in Whitecourt. Members of the public are welcome to attend, or to watch the Meeting live on our YouTube channel, [NGTV](#).