

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

April 12, 2022

For Immediate Release

Locally Developed Courses

The Board approved the use of the following locally developed courses for the 2022-23 school year:

- Math 15 from Red Deer School Division for 5 credits
- Learning Strategies 15, 25 and 35 from Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School Division for 5 credits
- Abnormal Psychology 35 from Pembina Hills School Division for 3 credits

Official 2022-23 School Year Calendar

The [2022-23 school year calendar](#) was presented to the Board for approval and is now official. The calendar has been circulated amongst parents and staff through social media, school councils, ngpsTALK and school information over the past several weeks. Feedback received from schools, school communities and ngpsTALK was used to inform calendar planning.

Points to note:

- One of the requests gathered from public feedback was to begin the school year after Labour Day. NGPS Superintendent Bird checked into this possibility; however, dates and instructional hour requirements make this not possible at this time.
- National Truth and Reconciliation Day, on September 30, will be recognized as a statutory holiday beginning in the 2022-23 school year.

Motion to accept as presented. Motion Carried.

Onoway Schools Ukrainian Pysanka Egg Exhibit of Hope

Onoway Jr/Sr High School Art teacher, Mrs. McNeice, organized a beautiful collaborative art project with Onoway students from elementary school through Grade 12, to bring hope and support to the people of Ukraine. The Pysanka, elaborately decorated eggs commonly associated with the Easter holiday, are a symbol of rebirth and the welcoming of Spring.



Beliefs and symbolism associated with the Pysanka have changed over time, but it was believed the eggs could help ward off evil spirits. Mrs. McNeice worked with students in all grades, using a variety of mediums including ceramics, eggs and paper mache. The project was showcased at the Division Office in Whitcourt the week leading up to Easter.

COVID Update

NGPS continues to see cases throughout the Division, often concentrated in a particular community for a period of a couple of weeks. April plans include reducing monitoring to clusters, rapid rise in cases or staffing challenges.

We continue to ask staff, students and families to use the daily checklist and to stay home if they are ill.

Diploma Exams

COVID-19 has significantly impacted students in Alberta and around the world, creating unique challenges for the entire education community. Over the course of the pandemic, Alberta Education has collaborated with education system partners to adjust the administration of diploma exams based on changing circumstances and in response to feedback from students, parents and education partners about stress and anxiety regarding academic achievement.

- Diploma exams are expected to be administered for the rest of this school year (April, June and August 2022).
- Due to learning disruptions caused by the pandemic, the weighting of diploma exams will be temporarily reduced to 10% for the 2021-22 school year only.
- To help students feel more prepared for writing diploma exams, Alberta Education has made a number of [resources available online](#), including practice questions.
- To further support Grade 12 students whose learning has been impacted, the Ministers of Education and of Advanced Education have sent a letter to the presidents of all Alberta post-secondary institutions, asking them to consider this unprecedented experience when admitting students.

More information can be found on the [Alberta Education website](#).

Onoway Mental Health Capacity Building (MHCB) project has been renewed

NGPS is pleased to share that funding for our Onoway MHCB project, the CREW, has been renewed for the 2022-23 school year.

The MHCB project works to promote positive mental health in children, youth and families in the communities where they live. Based on research and best practice that demonstrates that mental and emotional wellbeing can be developed, nurtured and

supported through promotion and prevention efforts, the initiative, and the three MHCB projects we have in our Division, have been invaluable in supporting NGPS students.

Valleyview New School Project Update:

Valleyview trustees, Gerry Steinke and Sally Petryshen, met with councilors from the Town of Valleyview and the MD of Greenland to update them on the Valleyview school project and to discuss the potential for working together to make the new school the absolute best facility it can be, including the potential to include amenities/services that would serve both students and possibly the community.

Trustee Steinke emphasized the magnitude of the future project and the desire to work with the community to determine any potential contributions to the project. Thank you to the Town of Valleyview and the MD of Greenview for allowing us to share our excitement and vision.

Congratulations to Hillside Jr/Sr High Student on Winning U of A's President's Entrance Citation Award!

With great pleasure, the Board congratulates Ty, Grade 12 student from Hillside Jr/Sr High School in Valleyview, on winning the University of Alberta President's Entrance Citation Award. Ty intends to study at the University of Alberta's Augustana campus next year in Law, Crime and Justice Interdisciplinary Studies. The \$30K scholarship is based on Ty's Grade 11 and 12 marks, as well as his application, and will be spread over his four years of undergraduate study.

Board Asks Minister to Delay Curriculum Implementation

Northern Gateway Public Schools respects the Government's wish to move forward with the Draft Curriculum and has been working with our education partners to provide feedback, and with our teachers, to begin the transition. That being said, the Board has sent a letter to the Minister of Education outlining a number of concerns with the roll-out of the new curriculum:

- Normally, curriculum change is accompanied by a variety of instructional materials that will support implementation.
- Generally, staff attend in-services and work collaboratively to share and develop resources.
- These two very important processes have not happened to date.
- After 2+ years of the pandemic and learning gaps, many students are presenting a learning loss, and may continue to do so over the next few years.
- As well, many students are having difficulty managing emotions, navigating a full school day, working and playing cooperatively with others, and being kind to fellow classmates.



- Of course, all of these concerns are largely the result of two years of isolation and disrupted learning. Our staff must be focused on their students' individual needs and fundamental classroom expectations in order for students to learn successfully.

In the letter, the Board asked the Minister to consider delaying implementation of the new curriculum in order to allow for staff to focus on the social/emotional needs of students, which will include literacy, numeracy and well being outcomes, but within a program of studies they are already familiar with. This delay would also allow time for Alberta Education to provide quality learning materials to support successful implementation.

Rural Caucus

Trustee Hagman attended the Spring virtual meeting of the Rural Caucus of Alberta School Boards. The Caucus is a forum and a voice for rural school boards who meet to discuss and work collaboratively on issues facing rural school boards, bring awareness and advocate for change. This month's discussion centered around ongoing transportation challenges, learning loss, curriculum implementation, private charter school funding, and wellness.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for, [May 10, 2022](#), commencing at [10:00 a.m.](#) in the Boardroom at the Division Office in Whitecourt. Members of the public are invited to attend or to watch the Meeting live on our YouTube channel, [NGTV](#).

