

## BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Regular Meeting

November 7, 2023

For Immediate Release

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### ***NGPS Vision***

Northern Gateway Public Schools strives to be the place where students realize their value, discover their talents, and imagine a future where their contribution matters.

### ***Board Welcomes New Trustee Les Urness***

The Board and Administration welcomed new Trustee, Mr. Les Urness, who was elected to the position in the Valleyview Rural By-Election held on October 23, 2023. Mr. Urness brings a wealth of governance experience to the position having served as a Valleyview Town Councillor. Mr. Urness represents Ward 3, Subdivision 2, which encompasses rural areas around Valleyview reaching into Little Smokey and Sunset House.

Trustee Urness shared that he is "honoured to have been elected and to join the Board in supporting education and opportunity for our local kids."

### ***School Bus Transportation Update***

NGPS Transportation Director, Rhett Czaban provided an update to trustees on transportation activities since the start of the school year.

- **Whitecourt urban bus routes** have been re-worked to accommodate the grade reconfiguration at Whitecourt Central and Pat Hardy Elementary schools, and an increase in students riding in-town due to the new provincial walk distance eligibility criteria. Additional routes were also added and/or re-worked in the Sangudo and Rich Valley areas. Buses have been upsized, or added where needed, to accommodate 300 additional riders across the Division this school year.
- **Attraction and retention of regular and spare bus drivers** continues to be a challenge. Transportation Director Czaban advocated for additional supports and a higher minimum hourly wage for drivers as possible solutions at a recent Transportation Roundtable with Alberta Education Minister, Demetrios Nicolaides.

- Students across the Division have been learning about **school bus safety and evacuation** with the NGPS Transportation department and special guests from Safely on Board. The engaging presentations will continue in NGPS, Living Waters and Holy Family schools in Valleyview over the month of November.

### ***Board Policy 18 Student Transportation Services***

Board Policy 18 has been updated to reflect the new eligibility distance requirements for student transportation that the province announced this past Spring. NGPS has implemented the new criteria this school year, reducing the eligibility requirement to 1 kilometre for Grade 1-6 students and 2 kilometres for Grade 7-12 students.

### ***New School in Valleyview – Community Roundtable***

Excitement for the new school build in Valleyview continues to grow as we enter the next phase of planning. A Community Roundtable meeting will be held at Oscar Adolphson Primary School on Thursday, November 16, at 6:30 p.m. Families and community members are invited to join NGPS to discuss ideas around the new school.

### ***School Operational Viability Report***

NGPS Superintendent, Kevin Bird presented the November 2023 School Operational Viability Report. The Report noted Utilization Rate concerns at Grasmere School in Alberta Beach, and at Oscar Adolphson Primary, Harry Gray Elementary and Hillside Jr/Sr High schools in Valleyview. The Report also noted Building/Capital Costs as a concern for Sangudo Community School.

### ***Next Meeting***

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for **November 28, 2023, at the Division Office in Whitcourt**, commencing at **10:00 a.m.** Members of the public are invited to attend or watch the Meeting live on our YouTube channel, [NGTV](#).