

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Regular Meeting

December 19, 2023

For Immediate Release

NGPS Motto

Learning for life. Together.

Presentation: Hillside Jr/Sr High School Travel Group, Teacher Meghan Caron and Principal Mandy Patenaude

Hillside staff and students are planning an educational adventure in England next March, including stops in London, Windsor, Stonehenge, Stratford-upon-Avon, and Manchester.

Ms. Caron spoke to trustees about the tremendous educational value students will acquire in traveling overseas: "These opportunities promote global citizenship, different perspectives, and ideas on future careers. Students will discover a different part of the world, and learn about classic literature, history, music, drama, and the famous figures of modern and historical England." In terms of curricular outcomes, Caron shared that traveling abroad helps students develop curricular outcomes such as critical thinking and communication skills, and a sense of citizenship.

Motion to approve Hillside's trip to England in March 2025. Motion carried.

Board Advocacy Goals

Advocacy is an important part of the work of the Board. Trustees, and the Board as a whole, advocate locally, provincially and federally for NGPS students in a number of ways, from awareness to resources, like funding, specialized supports and equitable access. The Board Advocacy Committee presented the Board's advocacy priorities:

- 1. Equitable funding for rural education**

The current funding model disadvantages NGPS in the areas of Maintenance and Utilities, Education programming, especially for students with special needs, and school models that exist outside of regular grade configurations.

- 2. Supplemental transportation funding for driver wages**

Current funding does not accommodate driver wage increases or address driver shortages.

3. Capital funding model based on sustainable, regular funding of school divisions

The current funding model limits decision making and planning. The Board advocates for capital funding to be based primarily on full time enrollment numbers (FTE) while also considering growth and age of current schools. Such an approach would allow divisions to use the funding to not only build new schools over time, but also to repair and maintain current buildings, especially in rural locations where a replacement school is unlikely because of viability issues.

4. Specialized positions serving children and youth are regularly vacant.

Approximatley 30% of non-education, government positions, like Occupational Therapists, Speech Pathologists and Psychologists, meant to support children and youth, are vacant. This represents a considerable reduction of intended and necessary service levels. The Board advocates for a blue circle program so that when these positions are not filled in a timely fashion, the school division receives the unspent funding.

Administrative Announcements

The Division was pleased to announce three new administrative appointments in December:

- [Darwell School welcomed new Principal, Mr. Kelly Muir](#)
- [Trish Muir was named Principal of Grasmere School following an Acting Term](#)
- [Rod Peterson was named the new Acting Principal of Rich Valley School](#)

Valleyview New School Meeting

Valleyview trustees and NGPS administration met with members of the Valleyview community in November to discuss the new school build. NGPS Superintendent, Kevin Bird, shared that the meeting was beneficial in "hearing the thoughts and feedback from staff, students and the community. Our students, and our community, really know what they need and what they'd like."

Project connections and shared space between the school and the community recreation facility appeared to be top priorities. A report is being generated from the information and ideas shared. The ideas gathered will help to inform the design team.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for [January 16, 2024](#), 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](#).