

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Regular Meeting

November 5, 2024

For Immediate Release

Stories of Scotland: Hillside Jr/Sr High School International Field Trip

Hillside Jr/Sr High School (HSH) teacher Meghan Caron is planning an international learning experience abroad following approval from the Board. Dubbing the trip, 'Stories of Scotland', Caron presented the trip itinerary which will immerse students in the rich literary and world history of Scotland through experiences and tours in Glasgow, the West Highlands, Inverness, and Edinburgh.

Caron spoke to the educational value students gain from traveling overseas, both from an academic perspective in terms of history, culture, literature and the arts, to the holistic learning and growth that takes place as students connect with others, face challenges, develop awareness and discover more about themselves.

Motion to approve Hillside Jr/Sr High School's international field trip to Scotland in 2026. Motion carried.

Percy Baxter Cultural Exchange

Percy Baxter Principal Vince Dikaitis spoke to the Board about an exciting new cultural exchange program involving Percy Baxter Grade 8 students and students from Owen Sound, Ontario. The exchange, organized through the Canadian Sports and Friendship Exchange Program, offers a unique opportunity for Percy Baxter students to excel academically and grow personally as they develop leadership skills, build friendships and experience cultural and geographic diversity.

The exchange will involve four groups of 30 Grade 8 students from Percy Baxter and four schools in Owen Sound. Percy students will "earn" their spot in the program through the school's new AAA Program, which focuses on Academics, Attitude, and Attendance. Students will model positive behaviours and serve as mentors to Grade 6 and 7 students, reinforcing their roles as leaders within the school community.

Planned for May and June of this school year, the program aims to broaden students' perspectives by exposing them to different cultures, economies, educational systems, and geographic regions. It will also give Percy students the chance to showcase the community of Whitcourt and the beauty of Alberta.

Motion to approve Percy Baxter Middle School's field trip to Ontario in 2025. Motion carried.

Election Bylaws

The Board appointed Secretary-Treasurer, Tamara Spong, as Returning Officer for the October 20, 2025 School Board Election, and approved First Readings of the:

- Receipt of Nomination Papers for the Office of School Trustee at Locations Other than the Jurisdiction Office; and,
- Deposit for Nominations for Elected Office.

Motion to prepare a bylaw requiring a Criminal Record Check for Nominations for Elected Office. Motion carried.

Transportation Update

NGPS Transportation Director Rhett Czaban reported on bus cancellations and delays that have occurred since September. In NGPS, students are transported to school each day via 89 different bus routes. Of the 89 routes (both ways) running daily in the division - 7,298 runs (one way) - there have been 20 canceled runs, 15 of which are due to driver absence.

Czaban shared steps the Division is taking to support bus contractors in addressing driver shortages/challenges, including driver training, recruitment strategies and sharing drivers between routes for absence coverage.

School Bus Ridership Program

Elementary students throughout the Division have been participating in interactive bus safety presentations with presenters from Safety on Board. Students learned essential tips to stay safe on the bus, from how to board and exit safely to understanding the importance of listening to their bus drivers.



COMPASS Teacher Leadership Group

COMPASS is a Division professional development program that supports the development of future formal and informal leaders. The Assistant Principal group had their first day of learning in October which focused on instructional leadership with lesson planning, effective content delivery methods, organic Indigenous inclusion, and socio-emotional effective practices.

Annual Operational Viability Report

Superintendent Bird reported that all NGPS schools meet Safety viability requirements. In terms of utilization rates, Bird noted that while there are a few decreases; generally, there has been a steady increase in utilization rates across the Division, including an increase in Sangudo Community School's utilization rate from 68% in 2023 to 73% this school year.

All schools meet the criteria for continuing operation.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for [November 26, 2024](#), at the [Division Office in Whitecourt](#), commencing at [10:00 a.m.](#) Members of the public are invited to attend.

