

MINUTES

Northern Gateway Public Schools Board of Trustees

Regular Board Meeting

Division Office Board Room – Whitecourt, Alberta

February 18, 2025 – 10:00 a.m.

OPENING

Call to Order and Roll Call

A. OPENING

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

The February 18, 2025, Regular Board Meeting was called to order by Board Chair Gerry Steinke at 10:02 a.m.

Present at this time: Board Chair Gerry Steinke, Vice-Chair Diane Hagman, Trustees Jim Hailes, Judy Muir, Barb Maddigan, Deb Koloski, Les Urness and Christine Peck; and Administrators Kevin Bird, Superintendent; Tamara Spong, Secretary-Treasurer; and Nancy Whittaker, Recording Secretary. Trustee Linda Wigton was absent from the meeting. Deputy Superintendent Leslee Jodry joined the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

Communications Officer Lisa Bakos was present and there was one guest in the gallery. Pam Mehl was present virtually via Zoom.

O Canada

2. O Canada

A recording of O Canada by Whitecourt Central School students was presented.

Truth and Reconciliation Statement

3. Truth and Reconciliation Statement

Vice-Chair Diane Hagman read the Truth and Reconciliation Statement.

Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

4. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda

Two labour items were added to Closed Session by Chair Steinke.

Acceptance of the Agenda

5. Acceptance of the Agenda

The Agenda for the February 18, 2025, Regular Public Board Meeting was accepted as amended.

Acceptance of the Minutes

6. Acceptance of the January 21, 2025, Regular Public Board Meeting Minutes

The Minutes of the January 21, 2025 Regular Public Board Meeting were accepted as presented.

DELEGATIONS

B. DELEGATIONS

Nil

STAFF/ADMINISTRATION REPORTS/PRESENTATIONS

C. STAFF/ADMINISTRATION REPORTS and PRESENTATIONS

International Field Trip

1. Hilltop High School Lead Teacher Pam Mehl gave details about the proposed 2026 international field trip to Germany and the Alps.

5090-25

Moved that the Board approve, in principle, the Hilltop High School 2026 International Field Trip to Germany and the Alps.

Motion Carried

Pam Mehl left the meeting at 10:13 a.m.

Health Care Responsibilities

2. Bev Cotton, Director of Learning Supports, joined the meeting at 10:15 a.m. and gave a PowerPoint presentation on NGPS health care responsibilities as requested by the Board. Director Cotton answered questions from Trustees regarding potential areas of improvement to services, training for teachers and EAs, and changes in funding. The Board will continue to advocate for increased funding and support.

Bev Cotton left the meeting at 11:06 a.m.

2024 – 25 IMR

3. Randy Lovich, Director of Facility Services, presented the 2024 – 25 IMR to the Trustees and answered questions regarding projects in Fox Creek and Sangudo. It was noted that since upgrading the exterior, Rich Valley School has saved over 50% in energy costs.

5091 – 25

Moved that the Board approve the 2024 – 25 Infrastructure Maintenance Renewal Work Plan, as presented.

Motion Carried

Randy Lovich left the meeting at 11:22 a.m.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy Committee

5092-25

Moved that the Board reaffirm Policy 2 Role of the Board, and Appendix A, Annual and Term Work Plans, as amended.

Motion Carried

5093-25

Moved that the Board reaffirm Policy 3 Role of the Trustee, as amended.

Motion Carried

5094-25

Moved that the Board reaffirm Policy 7 Board Operations, as amended.

Motion Carried

5095-25

Moved that the Board reaffirm Policy 8 Committees of the Board, as amended.

Motion Carried

Committee Chair Peck introduced two 'new business' items recommended by the Policy Committee for direction from the Board: a) giving Trustees the choice of a Health Spending Account or a Lifestyle (Wellness) Spending Account; and b) possibly tying the mileage rate for Trustees and staff to a percentage of the national CRA rate. The Trustees had roundtable discussion.

5096-25

Moved that the Board direct the Policy Committee to look at the possibility of including a wellness component with the health spending account for Trustees.

Motion Carried

5097-25

Moved that the Board direct the Policy Committee to examine the concept of tying mileage rates to allowable CRA rates for Trustees and staff.

Motion Carried

ACTION ITEMS

2025 – 26 School Calendar

5098-25

Board Self-Evaluation

INFORMATION/REPORTS

ASBA and Zone 2/3

PSBAA/PSBC

E. ACTION ITEMS

1. 2025 – 26 School Calendar

Superintendent Bird presented the 2025 – 26 School Calendar to the Trustees for approval and answered questions as appropriate.

Moved that the Board approve the 2025 – 26 School Calendar, as presented.

Motion Carried

2. Board Self-Evaluation

Chair Steinke requested feedback from Trustees to determine if there was a need or desire to conduct a Board self-evaluation (per the Board Work Plan). Due to the upcoming election, the Trustees decided not to proceed with a review at this time.

F. INFORMATION AND REPORTS

1. Alberta School Boards Association and Zone 2/3

The Trustees discussed possible nominations for the Friends of Education Award.

2. Public School Boards' Association of Alberta

Trustee Peck gave a written and verbal report of the recent PSBC meeting she attended with Trustee Muir.

Superintendent's Report

3. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Bird presented his report to the Trustees for information. Trustees had roundtable discussion regarding changes to the parent assurance survey and the importance of completing it.

NGPS Community of Action

4. NGPS – A Community of Action EA/TA

Deputy Superintendent Jodry gave a written and verbal report on the recent professional development day for education and teacher assistants. Trustees had questions about survey responses, the possibility of holding these sessions every year (virtually every other year), and the idea of adding a session on emotional trauma de-escalation.

Financial/Enrolment Reports

5. Financial and Enrolment Reports

The financial and enrolment reports for January were presented by Secretary-Treasurer Tamara Spong.

Supplementary Course Fees

6. Supplementary Course Fees

Secretary-Treasurer Tamara Spong gave a written and verbal report on supplementary course fees, as requested by Board Motion 5083-24. Trustees had questions regarding the apparent lack of consistency in what schools charge, and how the Division deals with the surplus in school generated funds.

Board Work Plans

7. Board Annual and Term Work Plans

The Work Plans are up to date.

Motion Review Cycle

8. Motion Review Cycle

The Motion Review Cycle is up to date.

Trustee Reports

9. Trustee Reports

Trustee Muir

Attended Rich Valley School Council, PSBC, CUPE prep, and Oneway High School Council meetings.

Trustee Koloski

Attended Elmer Elson, Sangudo and Darwell School Councils and finance meeting.

Trustee Peck	Attended PSBC, Rural Caucus meetings, Onoway Children’s Health Fair meeting (funding has come through for grants), and finance meeting.
Trustee Hailes	Attended Northern Lakes College Community Education Council and the subject of dual credit programs was raised. <i>Superintendent Bird answered questions by the Board regarding the former program and the expense involved.</i>
Trustee Urness	Attended finance meeting and CUPE prep.
Trustee Maddigan	Attended the Rotary Dance Festival in Whitecourt Central School, will be attending Pat Hardy School Council and Friends of Hilltop meetings this week.
Vice-Chair Hagman	Attended Board Committee meetings, no school council meetings to report. Travelled to Slave Lake to watch the Mayerthorpe High School girls and boys curling teams – congratulations to the boys who won a gold medal! Gratitude extended to staff in the Division for providing these opportunities for students.
Chair Steinke	Attended OAP Council meeting with Director Randy Lovich in attendance, who gave a thorough report on air quality monitoring in the schools.

Upcoming Events

10. Upcoming Events

- February 19 and 20 – Growing the North Conference
- March 2 to 4 – Rural Education Symposium
- March 18 – Regular Board Meeting
- April 15 – Regular Board Meeting
- April 14, 24, 25 – School Visits
- May 1 – GSD Meeting following School Visits
- May 2 – School Visits

TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSIONS

G. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSIONS

Nil

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

H. REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION FROM ADMINISTRATION (BY BOARD MOTION)

Nil

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

CLOSED SESSION

5099-25

5100-25

5101-25

ADJOURNMENT

I. MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- Hilltop High School 2026 International Field Trip
- Health Care Responsibilities Presentation
- Approval of the 2024 – 25 IMR
- Approval of the 2025 – 26 School Calendar
- Update on the Valleyview School Project
- COMPASS Leadership Groups Update
- Out-of-School Care Survey for Grasmere and Darwell
- Parent Assurance Survey Changes
- NGPS Community of Action EA/TA Professional Development

J. CLOSED SESSION

Moved that the Board move to Closed Session at 2:06 p.m.

Motion Carried

Superintendent Kevin Bird, Deputy Superintendent Leslee Jodry and Secretary-Treasurer Tamara Spong were invited to stay.

Electronic recording stopped at 2:06 p.m.

Administration excused themselves from the meeting at 3:20 p.m.

Moved that the Board move out of Closed Session at 3:40 p.m.

Motion Carried

Moved that the Board proceed, according to Board Policy, with a superintendent evaluation, and that the evaluation be conducted by a third-party contractor.

Motion Carried

K. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 3:41 p.m.

Board Chair

Secretary-Treasurer