

## BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Regular Meeting

April 15, 2025

For Immediate Release

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### ***Bill 51, Education Amendment Act 2025***

The Alberta Government introduced Bill 51 in the Legislature last week. The Bill contains several proposed changes, including:

- Removes the ability for school boards to disqualify or remove a trustee for breaching the Board's code of conduct
- Changes to JUPA (Joint Use and Planning Agreements) requirements where some municipalities are exempt, and gives government power to create specific requirements of JUPA agreements
- Changes to the teacher discipline process
- Additional amendments change new school ownership (including playgrounds) from School Divisions to Alberta Infrastructure

Learn more about [Bill 51](#).

### ***Bill 13: Real Property Governance Act***

Alberta's Bill 13 purports to reduce administrative burden and red tape, and ensure consistent handling of public property sales and transfers. Key changes include:

- the government managing a centralized inventory of public property
- granting the Ministry of Infrastructure the ability to purchase surplus school division property at book value, a concept echoed in Bill 51, which "enables" the Ministry of Infrastructure to own all new K-12 schools and their properties and lease these back to the school authorities who operate and maintain them.

The proposed legislation will have significant and far-reaching implications on school divisions in terms of finance, operations and maintenance, and planning within each school division's local context.

Learn more about [Bill 13](#).

### ***Budget 2025-26 Highlights***

- Introduction of a Supplemental Rural factor resulting in an increase to Operations and Maintenance funding.
- Increase to technology funding and the introduction of a Technology Grant to assist in funding the increased costs of information security and insurance.
- 20% increase to the Classroom Complexity Grant.
- A minor increase in School Nutrition funding.

### ***Reduction in Mental Health Support Grant***

Budget 2025-26 sees no changes in the Mental Health Capacity Building program contracts with Alberta Health Services which places a mental health worker in about half of NGPS schools.

However, the Mental Health Pilot program grant, which enabled NGPS to place a mental health worker in every school, has been ended for next year. The new funding formula will represent a significant decline in funding of over half of what NGPS had been receiving. The Division is looking at ways to continue with these important services in all schools.

### ***Exceptional Indigenous Students Honoured***

Twelve exceptional Indigenous Students from across Alberta were honoured by the Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA) on April 14 with an Honouring Spirit: Indigenous Student Award.

The Award recognizes First Nations, Métis and Inuit students from across Alberta who model strength and commitment in the pursuit of their personal education paths. The award celebrates the unique qualities of students who inspire their peers, teachers, education leaders and community members while celebrating the ways of their people.

We are proud to announce that NGPS has two recipients this year!  
**Congratulations Cougar Desjarlais and Riley Mitchell!**

### ***Emergency After Hours Number***

NGPS now has an after-hours "Emergency" line that can be used for urgent or emergency issues involving student, staff or building safety outside of regular business hours. After-hours: 780-706-8222. For emergencies during regular business hours please call the Division Office, 780-778-2800.

Box 840  
4816 – 49 Avenue  
Whitcourt AB T7S 1N8  
[www.ngps.ca](http://www.ngps.ca)  
[learn@ngps.ca](mailto:learn@ngps.ca)



***Motion – Transfer of Land***

Motion was made in principle to transfer land to Heart River Housing for a planned expansion of the Red Willow Lodge in Valleyview.

Motion carried.

***NGPS featured in PSBAA's The Advocate***

NGPS Board Chair Gerry Steinke examines the power of foundational statements and safe and dynamic learning environments in the latest issue of the Public School Board Association of Alberta's *The Advocate*.

***Next Meeting***

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for [May 27, 2025, at the Division Office in Whitecourt](#), commencing at [10:00 a.m.](#) Members of the public are invited to attend.



Northern Gateway  
Public Schools

## MAKING A MISSION STATEMENT REAL

GERRY STEINKE, BOARD CHAIR

Upper elementary students in NGPS can explore a wide range of trades and other interests as they visit high schools for authentic learning opportunities.

"Teacher, why do I have to learn this?" The everyday lament of the student is something that **Northern Gateway Public Schools** is answering both at the foundational level and at the practical level in the classroom.

The Board developed a revised Policy 1. Part of the motivation came from a PSBAA fall conference presentation several years ago. To help with the view that educators should be able to give students the reason to learn any curriculum concept, the NGPS mission statement makes a daily promise to parents:



A NGPS teacher uses a SNAP board to engage students in discovering real life math applications.

NGPS provides a safe and dynamic learning environment that promotes connection and the authentic application of learning. But the real work is to act on a mission statement for a student. Superintendent Kevin Bird gives three examples where authentic learning is now practiced in NGPS classrooms.

For instance, teachers use a structure called SNAP, promoting the connection of each math concept to real-life applications developed from the student's own experience and creativity. This approach cements a habit of mind, ensuring students see what they have learned in their own environment outside of school.

Another example of authentic application of learning is the Division Boot Camp program. It offers two weeks of summer programming on diverse hands-on topics such as forensic science, cultural experiences, and certifications for safety tickets. Many community partners donate for some of the costs because they like to see students engaged in experiences outside of the school. The success of the program is easily demonstrable as hundreds of teenagers voluntarily spend a good part of their summer vacation in school.

Mirroring the high school Boot Camp program, elementary students about to transition to high school are brought together in Careers and Technology Foundations to develop friendships while working together on projects that combine their interests, academics, talents and technological skills. These students begin to imagine what their future could look like.



NGPS Summer Boot Camp students engage in a variety of hands-on learning, including textiles, culinary arts, and trades.

NGPS is using its foundational statements to create meaningful learning experiences.