

2022-2023

Annual Education Results Report



Introduction/Executive Summary

The 2022-2023 school year was a year of recovery and growth for Northern Lights Public Schools. An increase in students moved the division closer to achieving pre-pandemic enrolments. Thanks to an increase in funding through Jordan's Principle, staffing also grew, with the number of support staff surpassing the number of certificated staff for the first time.

Curricular and extracurricular programming continued to recover from the effects of the pandemic. There was an increase in field trips, athletic tournaments, and school events. Work experience resumed for our high school students, and Summer School experienced a resurgence with changes made to its delivery model.

The division continued to engage stakeholders throughout the year both on broad education issues and specific topics impacting families at the local level. The Board re-engaged students by establishing a Student Advisory Council to the Board consisting of over 50 students from schools across the division. School council members were invited to participate in regional school council meetings with the Board. The division also conducted online engagements focused on a configuration change at Art Smith Aviation Academy and potential changes to student transportation boundaries in Cold Lake.

One major challenge for the division in 2022-2023, which is expected to continue, was staffing for both certificated and non-certificated positions. Additional strategies were implemented to recruit new teachers to fill vacant positions. As the demand for additional support staff increased throughout the year, efforts were also made to develop unique approaches to recruiting and retaining individuals in those positions. A shortage of substitute teachers and casual support staff has also created challenges for schools as staff absences continue to be higher than pre-pandemic levels.

Fortunately, our stakeholders continue to show a high degree of support for our staff and schools and flexibility which allows us to adjust to changing circumstances. Our students, staff, and families continue to exhibit empathy, perseverance, and a strong dedication to ensuring our students continue to have high-quality learning experiences and opportunities.

Table of Contents

Division Priority 1 - Mental Health and Wellness	3
Division Priority 2 - Numeracy	6
Student Growth & Achievement	9
Provincial Achievement Test and Diploma Exam Acceptable/Excellence	10
High School Completion	11
Citizenship	11
Student Learning Engagement	11
Teaching & Leading	12
Education Quality	12
Learning Supports	13
Welcoming, Caring, Respectful, and Safe Learning Environment	13
Access to Supports and Services	13
Improving FNMI Student Success	15
Governance	16
Parental Involvement	16
Budget Actual Comparison	16
Summary of Financial Results	16
Audited Financial Statements	17
Stakeholder Engagement	17
Accountability/Assurance System	18
Local & Societal Context	20
Accountability Statement	21
Whistleblower Protection	22

Division Priority 1 - Mental Health and Wellness

Our Priority

Northern Lights Public Schools is committed to creating an environment of knowledgeable and supported staff members as they strive to improve the mental health and wellness of all students. This priority was established by the Board after extensive consultations with students, parents, and staff.

Our Definition

Mental Health is a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can learn/work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her school/community. ~ Based on the definition from **The World Health Organization** ~

Our Evidence of Improvement

Beginning in March 2022, Northern Lights students completed a survey that has been administered annually moving forward. Given that spring 2023 was our second year of administration, we are continuing to analyze the data with each school and from an organizational perspective. We look forward to having trend data as we continue to administer the assessment over the next several years. The survey was categorized into four areas including student potential, normal stress of everyday life, contribution, and the ability to learn/work. This survey has helped identify where students need support, what factors are impacting their mental health, and what aspects of mental health should be focused on.

Our Results

NLPS Student Mental Health & Wellness Survey Kindergarten to Grade 2	
Survey Categories	2023 March Results
Student Potential: students feel encouraged to do their best	97.3% of students agreed
Normal Stress of Everyday Life: students feel safe at school	91.7% of students agreed
Ability to Contribute to Daily Activities: students feel safe talking to a grownup	90.6% of students agreed
Ability to Learn/Work: students feel loved and enjoy their school community	89% of students agreed

NLPS Student Mental Health & Wellness Survey Grade 3 to 12	
Survey Categories	2023 March Results
Student Potential: students have the ability to understand and manage their feelings and are hopeful about the future	77.7% agreed or strongly agreed
Normal Stress of Everyday Life: students need assistance to cope with and manage their fears and anxieties	48.7% rarely required assistance
Ability to Contribute to Daily Activities: students can connect with a peer or adult to assist with managing problems	68.2% agreed or strongly agreed
Ability to Learn/Work: students feel they belong, are engaged, and can work to the best of their ability	77.6% agreed or strongly agreed

Safe & Caring Schools Assurance Measures – Student Responses				
Grade Groups	May 2020 Results	May 2021 Results	May 2022 Results	May 2023 Results
Students Grade 4 to 12	80.2%	78.6%	74.8%	73.0

Highlights

Mental Health and Wellness

Northern Lights Public Schools is fortunate to continue to receive a grant through the Alberta Health Services Mental Health Capacity Building project. Our project is called [Successful Families, Successful Kids](#), and through the grant, we are able to hire a project coordinator and wellness coaches who work in each region of the division.

Our Wellness Coaches have developed a series of presentations for staff, students, and parents through a [menu of supports](#). They can facilitate these classroom sessions and have also worked with teachers to incorporate the information into lessons that align with the curriculum or other classroom activities. A variety of session types are offered to parents and caregivers. Online sessions continue to be available, while in-person sessions are being offered jointly with school teams. Parent sessions cover topics such as vaping, digital addiction, anxiety versus stress, and hope.

Our Wellness Coaches also work with other community groups to offer sessions to the whole community. For example, they work with Lac La Biche County FCSS to organize an It Starts with Hope parent group that offers monthly sessions for parents on many topics related to mental health, parent-child relationships, and child development.

Student mental health is prioritized as a Board and division goal. It was determined that one strategy to provide universal support to students would be the implementation or improvement of positive behaviour support plans for each of the division's schools. During the 2022-2023 School Year, NLPS embarked on a division-wide journey to revisit **Positive Behaviour Intervention Supports** (PBIS) and dedicated intentional time for all schools to focus on this universal strategy. Some schools had an existing framework, while others required time to learn more and create an approach that would work for their school. NLPS made a commitment to work with Tom Hierck for the next three years to dedicate time to reflect on where we are as a division, what is working, and where we are going.

Student Advocacy Counsellors

NLPS works to support counselors as they work with all students. Northern Lights commits a significant portion of the funding it receives for student support services towards ensuring that a Student Advocacy Counsellor (SAC) is assigned to each school and students have access to the supports those counselors provide.

Over the last three years, NLPS has focused on building capacity with our Student Advocacy Counsellors and ensuring similar services are being offered at each school. This has included professional development for our counselors, selecting a virtual platform for counselors to connect with students when in-person visits are not possible, introducing software that allows us to better track referrals, and increasing opportunities for division supports to be provided to students who need it.

We have also formed a partnership with the organization CASA: Child, Adolescent, and Family Mental Health to provide support to our counselors with specific, unique cases. This has allowed us to access expertise that we do not have in our division to help our students.

Agency Collaboration

NLPS has been connecting with our community partners, including other local school divisions, so everyone is aware of what services and resources are available locally. This has led to the creation of partnerships to deliver programming and discussions on how to streamline the provision of services for our students and their families.

We have also been working with Alberta Health Services (AHS) to identify student needs that are beyond the scope of our Student Advocacy Counsellors and how to connect those students to supports available through AHS Mental Health and Addictions. As part of this work, NLPS continues to refine the parent information sheet that our counselors can fill out to support parents as they take a referral to Alberta Mental Health or other partner agencies (Psychologist, Therapist, etc.).

Community Helpers Program

Community Helpers is a peer helping program designed for youth and young adults between the ages of 12 to 30. The program provides training to youth who are identified as natural helpers so that they can help their peers and connect them to supports in their school and community that can assist them further.

Thanks to a continued grant from Alberta Health Services, NLPS was able to hire a part-time coordinator to offer this program to all of our high schools and junior high schools. Sixteen schools took part in the training in 2022-2023.

e-Mental Health Project

NLPS had the opportunity to access an innovative tool called Innowell (sometimes referred to as e-Mental Health). Innowell is available through a partnership with Alberta Health Services and the University of Calgary called the e-Mental Health for Youth & Young Adults research project. The e-Mental Health for Youth and Young Adults project is a virtual platform that SACs can offer students aged 15+. The program improves mental health care for young people across the province. The virtual platform offers assessments to help identify mental health issues and build a treatment plan, as well as apps and e-tools for clients to use. Learn more about the project by visiting www.ahs.ca/emhyouth.

Division Priority 2 - Numeracy

Our Priority

Northern Lights Public Schools is committed to building a culture of numeracy, empowering learners, teachers, and leaders to collectively shift their practice, giving meaning to mathematics as they improve numeracy skills and understanding of all students. This priority was established by the Board after extensive consultations with students, parents, and staff.

Our Definition

Alberta Education defines numeracy as the ability, confidence, and willingness to engage with quantitative and spatial information to make informed decisions in all aspects of daily living.

Our Evidence of Improvement

Northern Lights students completed annual numeracy benchmark assessments in addition to the regular classroom assessments that occur. Results have been reviewed by schools each year. Additionally, Early Years Literacy and Numeracy Assessments, Provincial Achievement Tests, and Provincial Diploma Exams were used to monitor student progress. Norm-referenced CAT 4 testing was conducted over three years to determine trend data through the pandemic and beyond. Division-created Common Assessments were utilized at the junior high level.

Our Results

Early Years Numeracy Assessments					
Numeracy Data	Name of screening assessment	Total number of students identified as at-risk on initial assessment	Total number of students identified as at-risk on final assessment	Average months behind grade level at-risk students were at time of initial assessment for at-risk students	Average number of months gained at grade level after the administration of the final assessments for at-risk students
Grade 1	Provincial Numeracy Screening	133	132	8	5
Grade 2	CAT4	264	162	13	10
Grade 3	CAT4	154	142	15	10
Grade 4	CAT4	159	45	19	13

MATH Provincial Achievement Tests - Acceptable and Excellence Rates (Total Enrolled)				
Grade / Standard	2018-2019 Results	2019-2021 Results	2021-2022 Results	2022-2023 Results
Grade 6 Acceptable	66.4%	n/a	46.8%	54.6%
Grade 6 Excellence	9.0%	n/a	4.5%	7.9%
Grade 9 Acceptable	49.3%	n/a	37.1%	45.2%
Grade 9 Excellence	12.2%	n/a	8.0%	7.7%

MATH Provincial Diploma Exams - Acceptable and Excellence Rates				
Grade / Standard	2018-2019 Results	2019-2021 Results	2021-2022 Results	2022-2023 Results
30-1 Acceptable	65.3%	n/a	46.9%	58.7%
30-1 Excellence	20.0%	n/a	6.3%	11.5%
30-2 Acceptable	76.5%	n/a	56.1%	78.4%
30-2 Excellence	14.1%	n/a	12.0%	10.2%

MATH Common Assessments - Overall Average Scores			
Grade Group	May 2022 Results	May 2023 Targets	May 2023 Results
Grade 7 Math Common Assessment*	61.1%	67%	61.0%
Grade 8 Math Common Assessment*	64.2%	69%	61.1%
Grade 9 Math Common Assessment*	43.5%	60%	52.0%

*Common Assessments are calculated using the average of all student results from multiple assessments over the course of the year. This percentage is not the percentage of students who passed but represents the average score of all students who wrote the tests. Participation rates of Common Assessments within each grade were not consistent and results were not reported during disruptions to learning due to the pandemic.

Highlights

Professional Development

Four professional development days were identified in the 2022-2023 school calendar for staff to focus on division priorities. All schools used some or most of the days to build on their numeracy plans.

A partnership with Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia was utilized to support teachers and administrators in enhancing their numeracy proficiency, which impacts daily learning in the classroom. Sessions were offered regarding new curriculum implementation, numeracy strategies, and assessment practices.

Results

The Division results continue to provide a consistent message that the pandemic and post-pandemic influence on learning has negatively impacted our data and provincial data. Numeracy assessment results indicate an improvement from the previous year. All the PAT and PDE math results increased in the acceptable category. When examining the numeracy screening data the “average months behind” gap was reduced for students in grades 1 to 4. Strategies such as Building Thinking Classrooms, providing opportunities for families to engage in

mathematics together, and supporting teachers with timely and appropriate interventions for students needing additional support, as well as other strategies, impacted these positive results.

Students in the early years received additional support through the provincial learning disruption initiative which made a positive difference in their academic performance. Students in grades 1-4 progressed towards their grade level by three to seven months in mathematics. Numeracy learning loss instructional strategies included an explicit focus on number sense. Students were given small group hands-on instruction with lessons that progressed according to student skills focused on numeracy vocabulary.

Assessments

Various assessment strategies were utilized to more accurately determine a baseline for numeracy as a division. In addition to provincially mandated assessments, NLPS required the use of CAT-4 assessments for grades 1-4 and Commons Assessments for grades 7-9. These were utilized to provide data to inform practice in the classroom in order to address the learning gaps in numeracy.

Student Growth & Achievement

Literacy Data

Grade Level	List of Alberta Education approved screening assessments used at each grade level	Total number of students assessed at the beginning of the school year at each grade level	Total number of students identified as being at risk at the end of the school year at each grade level	Average number of months behind grade level after the administration of the initial assessments for at risk students	Average number of months gained at grade level after the administration of the final assessments for at risk students
Grade 1	LeNS, CC3	133	107	5	8
Grade 2	CC3	138	134	9	8
Grade 3	CC3	142	100	14	9
Grade 4	CC3	131	117	15	7

Numeracy Data

Grade Level	List of Alberta Education approved screening assessments used at each grade level	Total number of students assessed at the beginning of the school year at each grade level	Total number of students identified as being at risk at the end of the school year at each grade level	Average number of months behind grade level after the administration of the initial assessments for at risk students	Average number of months gained at grade level after the administration of the final assessments for at risk students
Grade 1	Provincial Numeracy	133	132	8	5
Grade 2	CAT4	264	162	13	10
Grade 3	CAT4	154	142	15	10
Grade 4	CAT4	159	45	19	13

Northern Lights Public Schools is pleased with the efforts made by administration and staff to address disruption to instruction due to COVID-19 related attendance issues as well as transportation challenges. Literacy intervention was focused on leveled literacy scripted programs for targeted students in small groups.

The annual Assurance Measures provide updated data in all eight measures included in Student Growth and Achievement. Of those measures, three did not see an improvement and the 5-year High School Completion measure improved significantly. Four of these measures do not have three-year averages to provide adequate trend data due to PATs and PDEs being either optional or not written during the pandemic years. Caution should be used when interpreting these results.

During the 2022-2023 school year, the division was able to reimplement some key system strategies. These strategies focused on literacy, numeracy, technology, classroom management, and the early learning coaching series delivered by Learning Consultants. The Central Office Leadership Team (COLT) and school administrators used the Collaborative Response Model and the Generative Dialogue process to facilitate structured improvement-related conversations. Commonly developed curricular assessments in core courses with students in grades 7-9 were used to facilitate opportunities for a more standardized approach to division-wide assessment.

Northern Lights First Nations, Metis, and Inuit (FNMI) students continue to outperform the provincial average regarding our 5-year High School Completion rates. While our 3-year High School Completion rate stands at a 4.1 percent deficit from the Provincial average, the 5-year High School Completion rate is 11.4 percent above the Provincial average. The trend is consistent for all students across Northern Lights Public Schools, with many opting for a fourth year to address the learning disruption caused by the pandemic. The 5-year Completion rate increased by 10.9 percent from the previous year.

NLPS continued to value feedback from all stakeholders and was pleased with the increase in the Assurance Measures survey response rates for the 2022-2023 school year. The Division saw an additional 244 student responses, 43 parent responses, and one teacher response. The provincial assurance model requires school divisions to report the following data sets. The results from 2022-2023 were significantly impacted by COVID-19 and decisions made at the provincial and division level. Some of the validity of data sets will increase as Northern Lights transitions back to normal operations. Please click on the following links to access specific results.

Provincial Achievement Test and Diploma Exam Acceptable/Excellence

- [October 2023 Overall PAT and PDE Results](#)
- [October 2023 Specific PAT Results](#)
- [October 2023 Specific PDE Results](#)
- [October 2023 Overall FNMI PAT and PDE Results](#)
- [October 2023 Specific FNMI PAT Results](#)
- [October 2023 Specific FNMI PDE Results](#)
- [October 2023 Overall EAL PAT/PDE Results](#)
- [October 2023 Specific EAL PAT Results](#)
- [October 2023 Specific EAL PDE Results](#)

High School Completion

- [Overall High School Completion Rates 2022](#)
- [FNMI High School Completion Rates 2022](#)
- [EAL High School Completion Rates 2022](#)

Citizenship

- [Citizenship 2023](#)

Student Learning Engagement

- [Student Learning Engagement 2023](#)

Teaching & Leading

Education Quality

- [Education Quality 2023](#)

Northern Lights Public Schools encourages growth in all staff through a variety of opportunities. Funds are budgeted for professional development at the administrative level, teacher level, and support staff level on an ongoing basis. This allows all staff to participate in professional development for growth specific to their role, in consultation with their supervisor. With COVID restrictions being relaxed, a number of teachers accessed funds provided by the Division to the ATA local for Professional Development that supported their Professional Growth Plans.

The Division offered a number of opportunities to enhance the quality of education provided to students through the training of the staff. Opportunities included the Positive Behaviour Intervention Supports (PBIS) series with Tom Hierck, support for new curriculum implementation, and a learning cohort for New Administrators. Division Learning Consultants continued elbow-to-elbow work with both certificated and support staff in classrooms. Learning Consultants focused on strategies to enhance literacy and numeracy, addressing new curriculum, and learning loss. They also provided ongoing support for new teachers including an orientation session and multiple call-back days. In addition, staff also had access to other training including First Aid and Non-Violent Crisis Intervention.

Additionally, Ignite 2022 was the first in-person opportunity offered since the pandemic for all staff to participate in a variety of professional development sessions. The division also scheduled four professional development days, two of which covered topics determined by school principals with input from their staff, and two that focused on division priorities (mental health and numeracy), as well as supporting the implementation of the new provincial curriculum.

Northern Lights Public Schools designs all Professional Growth Plans (PGP) around the Teaching Quality Standard and the Leadership Quality Standard developed by Alberta Education. Teachers developed their PGPs with their administrators at the beginning of the year and met periodically to discuss and track their progress. The Central Office Leadership Team (COLT) meets with school administrators on a monthly basis to develop and monitor their PGPs and facilitate the Generative Dialogue process to discuss teaching, learning, and the supervision and evaluation of teachers.

Learning Supports

Welcoming, Caring, Respectful, and Safe Learning Environment

- [Welcoming, Caring, Respectful, and Safe Learning Environment 2023](#)

Access to Supports and Services

- [Access to Supports and Services 2023](#)

Northern Lights Public Schools makes an effort to ensure all students are successful. Actions taken by Northern Lights to ensure student success include:

- Support of High Quality Teaching
 - Implementing differentiation in order to meet a variety of student needs in the classroom, with elbow-to-elbow consultant services, common assessment data review, IPP reviews and meetings, shared program development and collaborative response meetings
- Support of High Quality Early Learning
 - An investment in full-day programming for Kindergarten students at all schools across the jurisdiction utilizing the Flight Curriculum, Alberta's Early Learning and Care Framework, for the additional half-time
 - Creation of NLPS Health Pathways team including Speech Language Pathologists (SLP), Occupational Therapists (OT), and SLP and OT assistants to deliver appropriate programming in schools for students with Speech or Occupational Therapy needs
 - Program Unit Funding staff and SST coordinators work onsite with Little Lights programs to assist preschool-aged children
 - Engagement with Jordan's Principle to assist all students in accessing needed supports
- Support of Leadership in Schools includes our Central Office Leadership Team's school visits keeping the Teaching Quality Standard, FNMI focus, and student success at the forefront.
- Support of Regular Monitoring
 - Utilization of the Collaborative Response process where school teams meet to discuss individual student progress, barriers to success, and development of continuous improvement plans to support students based on their personal needs
 - Dossier software: actively working with our high schools, to demonstrate how to utilize attendance tracking tools to track attendance by variables including date, grade, gender and culture in order to determine timely and appropriate intervention plans
 - Ensuring that each high school has academic counseling time to support students as they transition to and progress through high school

- Support of Provision of Tailored Supports
 - Successful Families, Successful Kids: non-educational staff working directly with the school community and the greater community to wrap around supports for students and families beyond the classroom
 - Student Support Team (SST) leads at each school, assisting in developing Universal, Targeted, and Individualized measures to support students.
 - Continuation of the Learning Together Anywhere School, allowing families to choose alternatives to in-person classes.
 - High levels of support from the school-linked team should additional services be required to support school teams (ie. SLP, OT, PT, Behaviour Intervention Supports, Psychologists, Low Incidence Team Supports, etc.)
- Support of Enlisting the Active Involvement of Families
 - Working with our high school administrator group to develop frameworks for supporting at-risk students, building relationships, and monitoring both attendance and achievement for these students.

Each year Northern Lights Public Schools works with partners that include the Mental Health Capacity Building Project (Successful Families, Successful Kids (SFSK), Community Helpers (CH)), and Community Agencies and Partners to ensure appropriate supports are in place. Individual Program Plans, Behaviour Support Plans, Medical Support Plans, safety plans, and Success in School Plans are created to support the individual learning needs of students and are signed by the parents/guardians of the students.

In order to meet student needs in the 2022-2023 school year, over 1,803 Individual Programs or Support Plans were created to identify specific student needs ranging from severe needs to addressing gifted and talented needs. NLPS utilizes Program Unit Funding (PUF) to serve more than 76 preschool-aged students across a vast geographic area. 313 students were supported through Jordan's Principle funding that focused on addressing speech, language, occupational, and physical therapy needs. Additionally, supports included educational assistants, counseling, assessments, programming fees, and access to transportation and technology.

Northern Lights Public Schools has maintained a team focus on serving speech, physical, and occupational therapy needs in order to address the impact of these needs on student learning and educational development. In addition to the time spent working with students and staff on addressing universal needs, these staff met with students in groups or one-on-one to address complex student needs.

Northern Lights partnered with a number of school jurisdictions in the former Eastern Edge Regional Collaborative Service Delivery (RCSD) area to support a Low Incidence Team, ensuring we have access to professionals to support students with specific needs such as hearing and visual challenges. This partnership allows us to secure access to individuals who work with staff and families to meet the needs of low-incidence students. Effective May 2022, the division took on the ownership of operating the Low Incident Team and providing services to 13 other school divisions. We continue to facilitate this collaboration through memorandums of understanding with each of the partner school districts.

Improving FNMI Student Success

As of September 2022, Northern Lights Public School had a total enrollment of about 5,825 students. Among this student body, more than 1,980 students identified as FNMI (First Nations, Metis, and Inuit), constituting roughly 34% of our student population. Northern Lights is dedicated to enhancing student engagement and achievement, particularly among FNMI students. While our diploma-acceptable standards surpass the Provincial average, there is still room for improvement in our Provincial Achievement results.

The collaborative work with the Nations and Settlements we serve reinforces a desire to support students pursuing their full high school diploma. In the 2022-2023 school year, our data indicates a 5.4% increase in high school diploma attainment with a slight decrease in certificate of achievement completion, indicating more students are obtaining a diploma. In order to support this we have increased access to academic counselling and are working to track leading indicators of student success. Fortunately, we experienced a decrease in the number of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit students leaving Northern Lights Public Schools before obtaining either a high school diploma or a certificate of achievement. Dedicated academic counseling time paired with collaboration time for high school administrators and counseling teams to share protocols and practice has provided additional support for FNMI students. Inreach and outreach programming have introduced flexible opportunities for students to complete their high school education. The collaborative partnerships between our schools and parents remain a vital strategy in supporting the social and academic success of our students.

Governance

Parental Involvement

- [Parental Involvement 2023](#)

Budget Actual Comparison

The following chart depicts the financial performance of Northern Lights Public Schools for the year ending August 31, 2023.

Variance Analysis of Spring Budget to Actual Expenditures 2022-23				
	2023 Actual	2023 Budgeted	Variance Amount	Variance Percentage
Total Revenues	93,043,530	83,807,488	8,881,270	10.60%
Expenses By Program				
Instruction ECS	3,790,583	3,443,193	2,597,771	75.45%
Instruction Grades 1-12	64,627,329	60,394,770	2,010,736	3.33%
Operations & Maintenance	12,969,284	10,709,386	2,190,526	20.45%
Transportation	5,978,823	5,966,547	12,276	0.21%
System Administration	2,880,053	2,931,933	-52,174	-1.78%
External Services	818,737	512,850	294,072	57.34%
Total Expenses	91,064,809	83,958,680	7,053,207	8.40%

Summary of Financial Results

The 2022-2023 school year posed a number of challenges. The Division experienced additional revenues from targeted grants not included in the funding profile. Each of these grants required individualized applications and reporting. Additional revenue and expenditures were recognized due to the provincial settlement of the teacher's collective agreement. The Division also experienced significant increases in federal revenue and expenditures related to Jordan's Principle. Schools returned to pre-pandemic normalities where sales, gifts, donations, and fundraising increased.

NLPS experienced difficulties in attracting educational assistants and specialized staff positions due to the increase in staffing. A number of the increases were focused on specifically

addressing Jordan's Principle students. This resulted in not fully expending budgeted staffing amounts. These surplus funds are difficult to reallocate during the year, given that the NLPS budget is largely staffing costs.

Unspent funds account for a large component of the Division's deviation from projected spending. This impacted the Division's ability to manage the reserve limits. Processes affecting reserves changed and as a result, capital expenditures needed to be identified at the time of budget submission. This caused further challenges in the Division's ability to achieve financial targets.

The Minister approved the use of funds from reserves to be spent on capital projects such as sensory rooms, safe entrances, and the purchase of yellow and white buses. The Division maintenance team was tasked with additional work in order to begin the completion of the safe entrances. CMR/IMR projects included work done at Glendon School, Cold Lake Junior High, H.E. Bourgoin, and Ardmore School. The Maintenance department continued to experience a deficit in comparison to the funding provided. The division transportation department posted a small surplus specifically due to collapsing routes and routes that had temporary driver vacancies.

The Division sold an excess building to the City of Cold Lake in exchange for a long-term agreement to access community facilities. This sale resulted in the Division posting an unexpected surplus. As no funds actually changed hands, this impacted the financial reports due to a large recognized revenue and a long-term recognition of expenses. Once the financial picture is adjusted for that entry, overall, the Division posted a small planned deficit from operations.

Audited Financial Statements

- Audited Financial Statements
- [Provincial Roll Up of Audited Financial Statements Information](#)

Information in greater detail can be found at <https://www.nlpsab.ca/accountability>. For further information, please contact Paula Elock, Secretary-Treasurer at Division Office (780.826.3145).

Stakeholder Engagement

The 2022-2023 school year featured numerous engagement opportunities for NLPS stakeholders with both in-person and online strategies used to gather input on a variety of topics.

The Board re-engaged students by creating a Student Advisory Council to the Board. The council consists of approximately 60 students in grades 5-12 from schools throughout the division. The Board held two meetings (one in December and one in May) in two central locations during 2022-2023. The students were asked for input on improving school culture and climate, what could be done to improve opportunities for students to be successful, student leadership, and increasing opportunities for student input at the school level.

After reviewing the student feedback, the Board developed a series of actions designed to make improvements in those areas. This includes the revitalization of Positive Behaviour and Intervention Supports programs in the division's schools, a focus on improving cleanliness at schools, increased academic/career counseling, the establishment of academic counselor protocols with a focus on transitions between schools, enhanced student leadership programs, establishing a high school redesign model in high schools, and revitalization of the Board Initiatives policy to support projects within schools.

The Board also resumed in-person regional school council meetings in 2022-2023, hosting a series of three meetings in January and February. Participants were asked the same questions that were posed to students at the Student Advisory Council meetings and feedback indicated that parents appreciated the change in format from previous regional meetings.

The division's online engagement platform [Engage NLPS](#) was used to elicit feedback from stakeholders on a number of topics throughout the 2022-2023 school year. This included the proposed 2023-2024 school calendar, proposed changes to Board Policies 7, 13, and 16, and proposed changes to eight division administrative procedures. In addition, the platform was used to gather feedback from parents at Art Smith Aviation Academy on adding Grade 9 to programming at the school. This was supplemented by a phone survey done with parents and guardians of Grade 8 students. NLPS also collected feedback from families living in the Tri-City area of Cold Lake about potential changes to student transportation boundaries.

All of these stakeholder engagement opportunities provided valuable insight to the Board and in many cases resulted in significant change at both the division and school levels. The Board remains committed to engaging stakeholders in discussions about issues impacting education, and to finding new ways to provide opportunities for students, staff, parents/guardians, and local communities to provide input.

Accountability/Assurance System

School councils are a vital component of the success of students in Northern Lights. They represent the voice of stakeholders in each individual school. Schools work with stakeholders, including school councils, to create a three-year plan that must include the division and any locally determined priorities. Individual school priorities are determined by school principals reviewing relevant data sets with the school council, staff, and students depending on age. This document is reviewed frequently throughout the year at school council meetings by principals and must be signed off by the school council chair to ensure their knowledge and endorsement of the schools' priorities and strategies. School principals also provide regular updates to Division executive members through the COLT process to ensure progress and explore supports available from the division in implementing strategies identified at the school level. By November of the following school year, the principal completes the results portion of the three-year plan and reports directly to the school council.

In an effort to provide stakeholders the assurance that the division is meeting its responsibilities, Northern Lights Public Schools makes the [Annual Education Results Report](#) available in its entirety online and regularly shares information about the division's goals and priorities in the form of a

quarterly report shared in public board meetings. Northern Lights Public Schools also operates a Facebook page, and Instagram and Twitter accounts. Social media platforms are regularly monitored by division staff to address questions posed by stakeholders in as close to real-time as possible. The division also uses School Messenger, which allows the division, schools, and individual teachers with opportunities to connect directly with students and parents.

The Annual Education Results Report was presented to the Board of Trustees at a public meeting on November 29, 2023. The approved report was posted to our website at nlpsab.ca and electronic copies were provided to school administrators and school council chairs. Print copies are available to the public upon request, at no charge, by contacting our Division Office at 780-826-3145. Electronic copies can be found at <https://www.nlpsab.ca/accountability>. Northern Lights Public Schools also develops and provides, in conjunction with school councils, Three-Year Education Plans. Copies of these school plans are provided to School Council members and are available on school websites.

Local & Societal Context

Formed on January 1, 1995 through the merging of Lac La Biche School Division and Lakeland Public School Division, Northern Lights Public Schools has a history of excellence in scholastics, citizenship, and innovation.

The division operates 26 schools which are located in the City of Cold Lake, the major towns of Bonnyville and Lac La Biche; the villages of Glendon and Plamondon; the hamlet of Caslan; and the rural areas of Ardmore, Iron River, and Wandering River. There is a school on the Kikino Metis Settlement. Northern Lights Public Schools operates five outreach programs, including one program in Lac La Biche, one in Bonnyville, one in Cold Lake, one on the Kikino Metis Settlement, and one on the Buffalo Lake Metis Settlement. Northern Lights School Division also operates the Pine Meadow Hutterite School. The division also initiated an online school called Learning Together Anywhere which services students across the region and is open to students throughout the province.



Northern Lights Public Schools is bordered on the East by the Saskatchewan border and on the West by Highway 63, which runs through Wandering River. The Southern border extends approximately 25 km south of Highway 28. The Northern area of the jurisdiction is mostly sparsely populated, forested areas and includes the Cold Lake Air Weapons Range (CLAWR), which is military property. The Division spans over 200 km from Wandering River to Cold Lake and covers a geographic area of 14,800 square kilometres. Northern Lights School Division is located in the Lakeland Tourist Zone which is noted for its natural beauty including numerous recreational lakes and abundant wildlife.

In 2022-2023 Northern Lights Public Schools had over 750 staff and 5,825 students, 34% of those being First Nations, Metis, Inuit (FNMI) students. The division offers a wide range of programs to accommodate the learning needs of our diverse population. In addition to conventional programming, the Division operates the Learning Together Anywhere School (online education), Home Education, Out of School Care and Preschool, enhanced programming for Kindergarten students, and enrichment programming such as the Mobile Trades Lab.

Accountability Statement

The Accountability Statement, signed by the Board Chair and Superintendent, is the organization's commitment to implement the plan and achieve the outcomes and targets, stated as follows:

The Annual Education Results Report for the 2022-2023 school year for Northern Lights Public Schools was prepared under the direction of the Board in accordance with its responsibilities under the *Education Act* and the *Fiscal Planning and Transparency Act*. This document was developed in the context of the provincial government's business and fiscal plans. The Board has used the results reported in the document, to the best of its abilities, to develop the Education Plan and is committed to implementing the strategies contained within the Education Plan to improve student learning and results.

The Board approved this Annual Education Results Report for the 2022-2023 school year on Wednesday, November 29, 2023.

The Northern Lights Public Schools Board has the authority and is charged with the responsibility delegated by the province to:

- Ensure schools provide an education program for each student consistent with the *Education Act* and the *Alberta Program of Studies*;
- Ensure that a school/community-based management system is in place;
- Implement systems of evaluation for students, staff, schools, programs, and board operations consistent with provincial policy;
- Establish clear measures of performance linked to provincial standards to assess student achievement;
- Report to parents and taxpayers on the achievement of students and the performance of the Northern Lights Public Schools system;
- Establish annual business plans and budgets that provide efficient student services, transportation services, and operations and maintenance of facilities; and
- Establish links to other community agencies.



Karen Packard, *Board Chair*



Rick Cusson, Superintendent

Whistleblower Protection

Northern Lights Public Schools employees should feel comfortable in all aspects of their job including when it comes to filing a complaint. The Division encourages employees to comply with their respective code of ethics in making good faith reports of any unlawful or improper conduct without the fear of retaliation. To support this perspective, Northern Lights Public Schools has created an [Administrative Procedure \(605\)](#) that guides individuals who wish to file a complaint. No complaints were filed in the 2022-2023 school year.