

Supporting Student Success



EDUCATION PLAN

2024-2027 Year 2

Accountability Statement

The Education Plan for Northern Lights Public Schools commencing in September 2024 was prepared under the direction of the Board of Trustees in accordance with the responsibilities under the *Education Act* and the *Sustainable Fiscal Planning and Reporting Act*. This plan was developed in the context of the provincial government's business and fiscal plans.

The Board has used its performance results to develop the plan and is committed to implementing the strategies contained within the plan to improve student learning and results. The Board reviewed and approved the 2024-2027 Education Plan, Year 2, on May 28, 2025.

The Education Plan is informed by the results from the NLPS 2023-2024 AERR, the 2023-2024 Division Mental Health Survey, the Alberta Education Assurance Survey, and the 2025-2028 Alberta Education Business Plan in preparation for year two and served to reaffirm the direction set in year one of the 2024-2027 Education Plan. Overall, NLPS has opportunities for celebration and areas for continuous improvement.



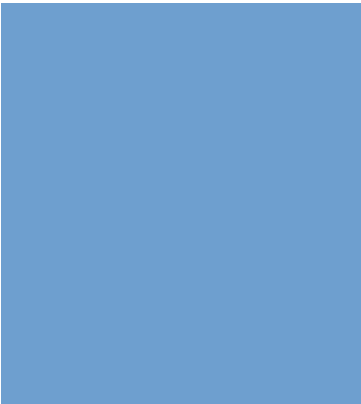
Karen Packard

Chair, Northern Lights Public Schools



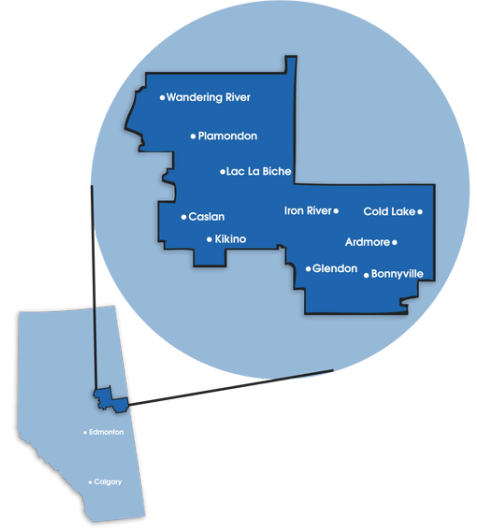
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Local Context

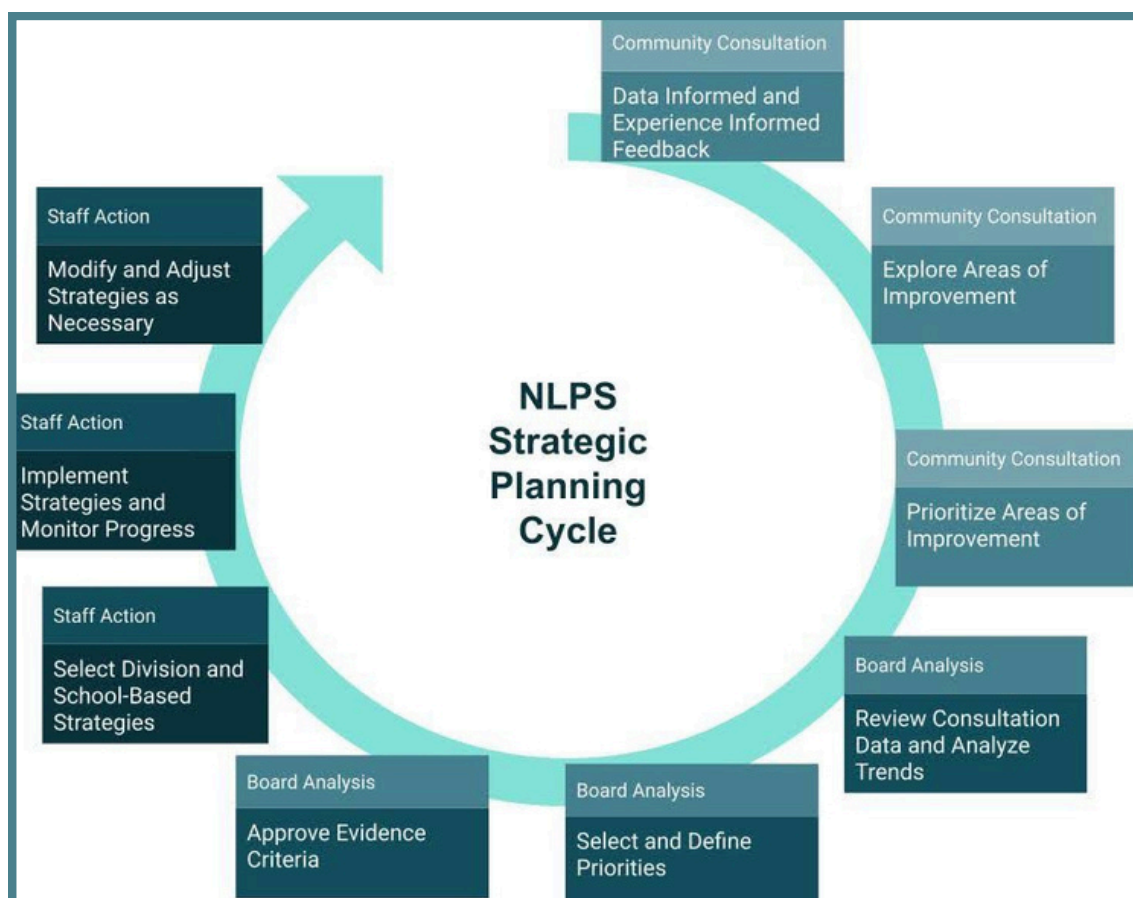
Northern Lights Public Schools proudly serves over 5,800 students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 across 28 schools. Approximately 38% of students self-identify as First Nations, Métis or Inuit, reflecting the rich cultural diversity that enhances the student learning environment.



Geographically, Northern Lights is one of the largest school divisions in Alberta, covering 14,800 square kilometres and spanning 200 kilometres from Wandering River in the north to Cold Lake in the east. The division's schools are located in the urban centres of Bonnyville, Cold Lake and Lac La Biche, as well as the rural communities of Ardmare, Caslan, Glendon, Iron River, Plamondon, and Wandering River. NLPS also operates schools on the Pine Meadow Hutterite Colony, Kikino Métis Settlement and Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement. Additionally NLPS provides educational services to the Provincial Campus Based Care Centre in Lac La Biche.

As one of the largest employers in the Lakeland region, NLPS plays a significant role in the local economy. Beyond direct employment, the division also supports its communities by contracting services for student transportation, custodial, and other services.

To meet the diverse needs of its student population, NLPS offers a broad range of programming, including: online learning and home education through the Learning Together Anywhere School, outreach programs in five communities, preschool and out-of-school care, full-day programming for Kindergarten students, as well as dual credit, apprenticeship, and work experience opportunities for high school students.



Stakeholder Engagement

The foundation of the Northern Lights Public Schools' Education Plan is an extensive stakeholder engagement process initiated in December of 2023. Students, parents, community members, and staff were invited to participate in engagement sessions, which examined areas of success, reflected on student data, and explored areas for improvement. The Board then participated in a facilitated session where trustees analyzed all of the collected input.

From this comprehensive analysis, the Board identified two primary areas for improvement: to increase student achievement, and to continue to support the mental wellbeing of students. To address student achievement, the division's focus is two-fold: improving foundational skills in numeracy and literacy for Kindergarten to Grade 6 students, and enhancing learning pathways for Grades 7 to 12 students. The strategies outlined in the Education Plan, as well as those detailed in individual school improvement plans, are designed to help NLPS realize these priorities.

To ensure ongoing alignment with its Education Plan, NLPS continues to provide diverse opportunities for stakeholders to share feedback on existing priorities. Engagement initiatives include regular updates through communication channels, discussions with school councils, meetings with the Student Advisory Council to the Board, and soliciting feedback on specific initiatives such as Board policies, school calendars, and topics affecting individual schools and communities.

Each spring, Northern Lights Public Schools conducts its annual Student Mental Health Survey across Kindergarten to Grade 12. Insights from this survey have been instrumental in shaping strategies to support student mental health, forming an important part of the division's ongoing commitment to wellbeing.

Face-to-face engagement also played a significant role in the 2024-2025 school year. Trustees held meetings with Student Advisory Council representatives from grades 5 to 12 across the division, gathering invaluable student feedback on division priorities. The Board also hosted a meeting with school councils to gain parent and community perspectives, ensuring alignment with student input to inform the division's Education Plan priorities and strategies.

Parental engagement is further supported through School Councils, which, per *School Council Regulation (94/2019)*, are established at each NLPS school. Composed of parents, school administration, teachers, and occasionally students or community members, these councils advise school principals and the Board on matters such as school plans, budgets, policies, and student programming. NLPS trustees attend school council meetings throughout the year, and the Board supports school council members' participation in the Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) annual conference.

This multi-faceted approach demonstrates NLPS's commitment to engaging stakeholders actively and consistently, fostering an inclusive environment where student, parent, and community voices guide the division's journey toward educational excellence.

Priority 1:

Student Achievement

Northern Lights Public Schools is committed to enhancing and supporting instructional practices to improve the numeracy and literacy skills of all ECS to Grade 6 students, and is committed to providing all Grade 7 to 12 students with enhanced instruction and programming to ensure a learning pathway that leads to success.

Outcome 1

Kindergarten to Grade 6 Students: In alignment with Outcome One of the Alberta Education business plan, *Alberta's students are successful*, Northern Lights students will achieve the acceptable standard in literacy and numeracy foundational skills with enhanced and supporting instructional practices.

Performance Measures

Student achievement entails students meeting or exceeding established learning outcomes, and obtaining the knowledge and skills, as well as receiving diverse programming opportunities, to successfully complete high school and transition to post-secondary training or employment. Acceptable standard is defined as:

- for Kindergarten children the percentage of children meeting Early Years Evaluation - Teacher Assessment (EYE-TA) developmental milestones-pre-test and post-test measures
- for grades 1-3 students not requiring additional support as per the provincial early years assessments
- for grades 4-5 those students who are at grade level using the CAT4 assessment
- for grade 6 those students who meet the acceptable standard on Provincial Achievement Tests

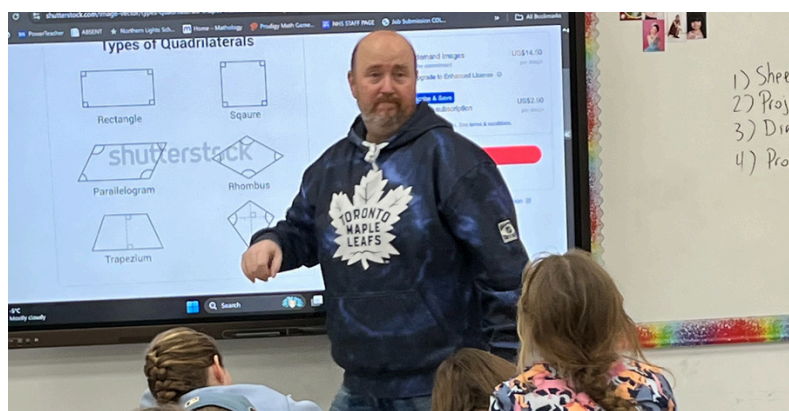
Plan for Implementation - Strategies

Northern Lights is committed to the successful implementation of the new curriculum through a multifaceted approach. Directors of Learning will work with administrators to hone skills in being instructional leaders. Focus will be on design and structure of numeracy and literacy blocks to build teacher capacity. Teachers are also empowered with the autonomy to select resources that best fit their instructional strategies.

Upcoming professional learning days will be dedicated to deepening collaborative practices within both grade-level and subject-specific teams. The core objective is to empower educators to work together more effectively to enhance instructional strategies, analyze student data, develop common assessments, and vertically align curriculum. Dedicated time will be provided for these teams to collaboratively plan units, share best practices, discuss content-specific pedagogical approaches, and share resources, thereby fostering a cohesive and articulated learning experience for all students.

Northern Lights is strengthening its instructional leadership by focusing on the use of generative dialogue. By fostering and enhancing skills in generative dialogue, the initiative aims to improve classroom instruction. This approach ensures that instructional leadership remains a central priority for administrators, thereby directly influencing and enhancing teaching practices. Through this emphasis, Northern Lights is committed to creating a collaborative environment that empowers both leaders and teachers to continually refine and elevate educational practices for the benefit of students.

Each school within Northern Lights is developing and implementing school-specific strategies as part of their individual school plans. These strategies are tailored to meet the unique needs and demographics of each school, ensuring consistency with the overall goals and initiatives of the division.



Outcome 2

Grades 7 to Grade 12 Students: In alignment with Outcome Three of the Alberta Education business plan, *Alberta's students have access to a variety of learning opportunities to enhance competitiveness in the modern economy*, Northern Lights students will express high levels of satisfaction in supports provided by Learning Pathway Advisors and the programming offered.

Performance Measures

For this priority, the performance measures will include:

- Grade 7 and 8 Common Assessments
- Grade 9 Provincial Achievement Test
- Grade 12 Provincial Diploma Exam
- Percentage of students who complete high school in 3, 4, or 5 years.
- Number of students enrolled in Dual Credit Programs (using the number of participants in 2023-24 as base data)
- Alberta Education Assurance Survey measures:
 - Percentage of teachers, parents, and students who are satisfied with the overall quality of education at school.
 - Percentage of teachers, parents, and students who are satisfied with access to support and services at school.
 - Percentage of teachers, and parents who are satisfied with work preparation for students.
 - Percentage of students and parents who agree that students are engaged in their learning at school.

Plan for Implementation - Strategies

Northern Lights Public Schools is committed to ensuring that students in grades 7 to 12 receive high-quality instruction and programming opportunities aligned with their learning pathways. To support this, the division is enhancing the role of Learning Pathways Advisors to better assist students and their parents/guardians in selecting appropriate programs as they transition from high school to post-secondary education or employment. Feedback from the division's Student Advisory Council to the Board indicates that having designated Learning Pathway advisors has helped to bring awareness to career pathways through career fairs, and enriched programming in areas such as Dual Credit courses, the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP), Work Experience, Land-Based Learning, the use of the Mobile Trades Lab, and the Canadian Rockies Outdoor Learning Centre.

Northern Lights strategically utilizes professional staff to champion its educational initiatives and foster student success. A dedicated team, including the Director of Learning - Grades 7 to 12 Instructional Support, Learning Pathways Advisors, administrators, and teaching staff, provides vital human capital. Furthermore, robust collaborations with esteemed post-secondary institutions such as Portage College, Olds College, Lakeland College, and Athabasca University, alongside valuable partnerships with organizations like Careers The Next Generation and various community stakeholders, significantly enrich and expand the educational offerings available to students.

Northern Lights Public Schools' application for a collegiate school has been approved, with specialized pathways for students in Health, Education, and Trades. This initiative builds upon the division's commitment to providing diverse and relevant learning opportunities. To support students' hands-on learning experiences, the division also provides programs and opportunities that include Skills Alberta, Hunters Education, the Registered Apprenticeship Program and paid internships, which provide practical training opportunities. Dual Credit programming in the areas of Trades, Computer Science, Cree, and University Transfer courses are available to all Northern Lights high school students. Through this array of resources, Northern Lights is well-equipped to deliver a high-quality educational experience.

Northern Lights is strengthening its instructional leadership by focusing on the use of generative dialogue. By fostering and enhancing skills in generative dialogue, the initiative aims to improve classroom instruction. This approach ensures that instructional leadership remains a central priority for administrators, thereby directly influencing and enhancing teaching practices. Through this emphasis, Northern Lights is committed to creating a collaborative environment that empowers both leaders and teachers to continually refine and elevate educational practices for the benefit of students.

Each school within Northern Lights is developing and implementing school-specific strategies as part of their improvement plans. These strategies are aligned with division actions and tailored to meet the unique needs and demographics of each school, ensuring consistency with the overall goals and initiatives of the division.



Priority 2:

Student Mental Wellbeing

Northern Lights Public Schools is committed to promoting and providing healthy, safe environments for all students. Students learn best when they feel safe, are respected, and have their mental wellbeing supported. The World Health Organization defines mental health as *‘a state of wellbeing in which every individual realizes their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can learn/work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their school/community.’*

Outcome

Student mental health and wellbeing is intentionally reinforced through access to a variety of resources and supports. Students will feel safe, respected and will demonstrate greater capacity in the areas of mental health and wellbeing described above.

Performance Measures

For this priority, performance measures will include the NLPS Student Mental Health Survey. The survey is administered in the spring of each year. Some schools opt to provide supplementary surveys aimed at assessing the mental wellbeing and overall wellness of their students in addition to these measures. Mental Health Survey results are reviewed by school administration and further analyzed as teams at an administrative council meeting in the spring each year. Other measures include the number of referrals for support through Student Advocacy Counsellors, and progress in Positive Behaviour and Intervention Supports (PBIS).

Specific measures include:

- NLPS Mental Health Survey Results (spring)
- Alberta Education Assurance Survey measures:
 - Percentage of teachers, parents and students who are satisfied that students are safe at school, are learning the importance of caring for others, are learning respect for others, and are treated fairly at school.
 - Percentage of teachers, parents and students who are satisfied that learning environments are welcoming, caring, respectful and safe.

Plan for Implementation - Strategies

Strategies to provide supports for students in the area of mental health and wellbeing have been designated into three tiers of supports: Universal supports that benefit all students, targeted supports for students who need additional programming, and individualized supports for students who require specialized strategies and/or wrap-around supports to address their mental health needs.

Northern Lights Public Schools (NLPS) is committed to supporting student success through a comprehensive array of human resources. The division employs Student Advocacy Counsellors, Student Support Team Coordinators, the Director of Learning - Student Services, the Director of Learning - Inclusive Education, administration and teaching staff, and CASA Classroom staff. Additional support facilitated by NLPS and funded by external sources includes the Successful Families Successful Kids/Mental Health Capacity Building Team and the Community Helpers Program Coordinator. Training opportunities will be provided for division staff in the area of mental health first aid. These resources help to build staff capacity and collective efficacy to ensure ongoing improvement.

Northern Lights Public Schools continues to be committed to advancing Positive Behaviour and Intervention Supports (PBIS) in schools. The division is continuing work with Tom Hierck to concentrate on universal initiatives across all school teams. Enhanced services and training on PBIS strategies will be provided to specific schools along with ongoing support from Student Services to ensure successful implementation.

Northern Lights Public Schools will continue to work toward community partnerships such as with Bonnyville Primary Care Network (PCN) to ensure children have access to quality mental health supports. These partnerships will aim to build resources for staff and students and remove barriers wherever possible. Partnerships in other local communities will be explored and developed.

Northern Lights Public Schools has partnered with CASA (Child Adolescent Services for All) Mental Health in the implementation of a CASA classroom. This program will be in its second year in 2025-2026 with service up to 12 students per semester in grades 4-9.

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Students are Successful

In alignment with Outcome Two of the Alberta Education business plan, *First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Students in Alberta are Successful*, Northern Lights Public Schools remains committed to advancing the success of Indigenous students through multiple partnerships, comprehensive support systems and resources, and building capacity in staff and students. Fostering understanding within students, staff and the broader community is paramount to empower students and set them up for success.

The proportion of students self-identifying as First Nations, Métis, and Inuit within Northern Lights Public Schools has increased to over 38% of the division's student population. In the past, accessing funds through the federally funded Jordan's Principle program has created further opportunities to work with families to identify and support students with specific needs, with well over 200 students benefiting from this initiative. Changes to the program in early 2025 has caused an uncertainty to what opportunities may still be available to students who had qualified for additional supports in previous years.

Northern Lights Public Schools will continue its commitment to reconciliation and the success of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students through targeted actions across the division.

NLPS will prioritize the cultivation of key community partnerships with local First Nations and Métis Settlements as an ongoing act of reconciliation and commitment to healing relationships. A major focus will be ensuring all First Nations, Métis and Inuit students have equitable access to necessary services within the inclusive education model. Recognizing the significant uncertainty surrounding Jordan's Principle funding, NLPS will proactively plan for potential shortfalls and explore alternative ways to provide essential support, ensuring efforts continue towards closing identified gaps and fostering inclusivity.

The division plans to further enhance the availability of culturally relevant resources in all schools to increase the visibility of First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures. Collaboration with the Learning Bird will continue to develop and implement co-created tool-kits designed to deepen staff's foundational knowledge of the specific Indigenous communities NLPS serves.

Concurrently, NLPS will support administrators and teachers in enhancing their understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures, ensuring alignment with Teaching and Leadership Quality Standards.

Additionally, NLPS will continue collaborating with Liaison Workers to support the academic success of First Nations, Metis and Inuit students. During the 2024-2025 school year, grants like the Community Reconciliation Grant have introduced numerous cultural initiatives at Cold Lake schools, including land-based camps, drumming, art, and class presentations with Elders and Knowledge Keepers. NLPS will continue pursuing grant opportunities, possibly through partnerships with local First Nations, Metis, and Inuit communities.



Budget Summary & Capital Planning

Northern Lights Public Schools' Capital Plan and budget information can be found in the [Accountability](#) section of the NLPS website or by clicking the links below:

[NLPS Budget](#)

[NLPS CMR](#)

[NLPS Capital Plan](#)

[NLPS IMR](#)