

December News 2023

Our focus this year is on promoting positive perceptions of education and on student success. In order to support these two goals we will be concentrating on the factors of student success and how best to support students and families. Positive and productive communication is key to ensuring that all stakeholders are on the same page about educational importance and elements that are supporting or impeding a student's achievement.

The pillars of success are

- Attendance
- Be On Time and Be Prepared
- Work Hard

How can I support my students' attendance???

- Prioritize school!
- Communicate the importance of regular school attendance.
- Have regular evening and homework routines.
- Schedule family events with our school calendar in mind.
- Try to make appointments during non-school hours when possible.
- Reach out to your child's teacher with any questions or concerns about attendance.

We understand your child will be away at times because of illness and other reasons. Our priority is to eliminate unnecessary absences so that your child can learn, connect and succeed in school!

Stay Focused - Stay Healthy

We are on the home stretch to the Christmas break. There are only 15 days until the break, 18 days until the first diploma exam, 29 days until Exam Week. It is important to promote healthy learning habits for your students and assist them in remaining focused for the coming weeks.

Here are some tips:

-Keep a consistent sleep schedule. Sleep is critical in helping students maximize their potential academically, physically and socially. Students should be getting at least 8 hours of sleep a night.

-Each night, talk about things that students did in class, help them review, check Google Classroom for new and old assignments that need to be completed.

-High school students should spend an hour per course doing homework and/or studying material covered.

-Limit online time/TV time: play a board game or teach them a new card game. Yahtzee is great for practicing numeracy skills!

-Keep students home when they are sick. Sleep and fluids will help them heal quicker and keep from spreading to students and staff.

January Exam Week - 29 school days and counting

As we move towards the end of the semester for high school students and the midpoint of the year for junior high students, we have put together both a schedule for exams and some key pieces of information for parents.

We will be conducting an exam week for students in grades 9-12. Courses ending will have a final exam, and courses that are year long will have a midterm exam. During this week, there will not be any regular classes for grades 9-12. Grades 7 & 8 students will have midterms scheduled in the morning, and regular classes in the afternoon. These exams are important to student assessment and to students development as a learner. Exposure to larger assessments under exam conditions early in their jr/sr high academic career helps to prepare students for standardized assessment conditions. Familiarity with these settings can assist students in learning how to manage stress around assessments and studying. We will be working with students on study skills and test taking strategies over the coming months.

All exams start at 9 am. Students will be writing exams in the gym and will have between 1.5-3 hours depending on the exam. Grade 9 - 12 students are only required to attend for their scheduled exams. Bus students are required to remain at school unless being picked up by a parent and signed out of the school.

Grade 7 & 8 students are required to write exams and will be provided with supervised space to study after their exam. This time and space is the opportunity to catch up on work, study for exams and enhance learning. Students will be expected to behave appropriately and use the time effectively. The grade 7 & 8 regular classes will be held in the afternoon - students are expected to attend their afternoon classes.

Grade 10 students will be scheduled in two groups for their final exams. On opposite days they will be taking First Aid certifications. This course will earn them the Standard First Aid certifications for 3 years and one credit.

Exams are to be written on the scheduled date and time. **Please do not schedule appointments and other commitments during this week.** If there are any questions please contact me to discuss individual concerns as soon as they arise.

Winter Weather

The regular winter season has not yet arrived to the same degree but we should be prepared. While we do not expect disruptions to the same degree as last year, the safety of students is our primary concern and sometimes this results in cancellation of bus service. During bus cancellations, the school does remain open. Teachers conduct classes (combined if numbers are small), but new material will not be covered. The course outlines for each course describe the expectations for students and availability of teachers on these days. If your student has assignments not completed, whether they are at home or school, these days are a great opportunity to catch up on them (check PowerSchool and GoogleClassroom). Students can also practice literacy skills by reading, and numeracy skills by playing board and card games.

Junior high students will not be attending online classes on these days and there will not be any mandatory work but there may be some review activities, practice or previous work that can be

completed. Senior high classes generally have a drop in google meet to clarify concepts or ask questions. Please check the course outlines for more information.

Appropriate Weather Attire

Although we know that it is not “cool” to wear a jacket, when it gets cold it is a must. Please speak to your students about the importance of wearing weather appropriate attire, especially on the bus. There can be times where a bus dislikes the weather more than we do resulting in a breakdown. If students are not dressed appropriately, with a jacket, toque and mitts, they put themselves at serious health risk in frigid temperatures.

Christmas Activities

Our annual Christmas campaign is underway. This week we started with our food bank donations. Over the next three weeks, block 1 classes compete in daily challenges to gain points towards their class totals. The calendar of events is attached.

Dinner Theatre

Dinner Theatre auditions will begin in less than two weeks! Auditions will be on December 11, 12, and 14 after school from 3:30-5. Mrs. Lewis will be holding a meeting at lunch next week to answer any questions students have about the program! This year the dinner theatre team will be performing "Camelot and Camelittle" We will see the adventures of Ruth, a young girl who dreams of being a knight. When the knights of the round table laugh at her, she goes on a quest filled with magical creatures in order to start her own queendom. Rehearsals for dinner theatre will be once a week in January in order for students to prepare for exams. Starting in February rehearsals will be every Monday and Thursday. In order to participate in dinner theatre, students need to be available every day after school during the week of April 22-26 for tech rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and performances.

Sports

Volleyball, Golf and Cross Country seasons have officially come to an end. Congratulations to the MHS athletes and thank you to all the coaches, parents, teachers and volunteers that made it happen for our students.

Basketball tryouts are underway and will begin practices and games in the coming weeks.

School Council - Parent Advisory Group

We will continue to meet as a parent advisory group for this year. The next meeting will be held Tuesday February 27, 2024 at 7 pm.

PowerSchool Parent Portal

The parent portal access is the perfect way to keep up-to-date with student assessment and attendance. If you do not have access to the portal for your students please contact the office. The portal will be closed during the January exam week, to update marks and comments.

Breakfast Club

Each morning students have access to complimentary breakfast items. The menu varies daily and is always nutritious, delicious and served with a smile. We serve about 60 students daily. Thank you to Breakfast Club of Canada, Pembina Pipelines and Pembina West Co-op for their donations to our program. If you would like to help support the program, juice boxes and cereal are always appreciated.

Grad Photos

Smart Photography will be providing grad photos on December 19, 2023. The sittings and fees are both booked online.

Citadel Trip

The junior and senior high students will have an opportunity to go on a field trip this December 13, 2023 to the Citadel Theatre in Edmonton to see the classic "A Christmas Carol". There are over 70 students attending the live theatre event.

Always Looking For...

The sewing class is in need of old jeans for a project.

The foods lab is always in search of plastic containers and metal cutlery.

The IA shop is always in search of old horseshoes for welding projects.

Northern Gateway Public Schools

Trustee Report

Date of Report: November 30, 2023

Submitted by: Trustee Deb Koloski (deb.koloski@ngps.ca)

Trustee Diane Hagman (diane.hagman@ngps.ca.)

Highlights from Board Meeting - November 28 2023

NGPS Vision, Mission and Values - The Board began the meeting by recollecting our NGPS Values: *Joy in learning. Humility In achievement. Satisfaction In giving. Gratitude in receiving. Dedication to personal responsibility.*

Draft Annual Education Results Report 2022-23: NGPS Director of Learning, Tammy Davis, and Director of Learning Supports, Bev Cotton, presented the Division's DRAFT Annual Education Results Report (AERR) to the Board. Each year, the NGPS Board is required to provide Alberta Education with an AERR that details how the Division is meeting the goals set for it by Alberta Education, how division students are doing in a number of areas, and how the Division is addressing areas they have identified as priority. The Report provides an in-depth, data-based look at Division demographics, student growth and achievement, and the strategies NGPS leaders, educators and support staff will be using to support student growth and achievement. Highlights from the report were as follows:

- Division student population is up slightly.
- Grade 9 Provincial Achievement Test Scores (PATS) were on par with the province. First Nations Métis Inuit (FNMI) Grade 9 PATS were considerably higher than the provincial FNMI Grade 9 PATS.
- Grade 6 PATS in English and Math were not written last year as the Division had implemented the new K-6 curriculum in these subjects.
- High School Completion Rates have improved.
- High School Completion Rates for FNMI students is on par or above the provincial average.

The full Report will be available on ngps.ca and social media on November 30, 2023.

Audited Financial Statements: The Board was presented with the Audited Financial Statements and accepted the statements for the period ending August 31, 2023. No concerns were cited.

Valleyview New School Update: Superintendent Bird shared information with us that the meeting on November 16th was a success. This was an opportunity for students, staff, parents and community members to bring forward their visions for the new school. The wealth of ideas took into consideration preserving legacy, outdoor space, community use and project connections.

Mental Health First-Aid Training: Superintendent Bird shared with us that training is being offered in communities across the division this fall. The training teaches participants how they can support staff, parents and families with local, accessible tools and supports, as well as how to build a collective awareness and understanding of mental health and wellness.

School Results Review/Action Plans: On November 29th and 30th, the principals from each of our schools presented to the Board their Fall 2023 results reviews and action plans for this school year.

Next meeting of the Board: is scheduled for **December 19 2023**, at the Division Office in Whitecourt commencing at 10:00 a.m. Members of the public are invited to attend or watch the meeting live on our YouTube channel, NGTV.