



**Northern Lights**

**PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

*Working Together to Help Every Student Learn and Excel*

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December 6, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

The Northern Lights Public Schools Board of Trustees fully supports the Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement Council's advocacy for a new school within their community. We recognize the profound benefits this initiative would bring to the children of Buffalo Lake and commend the Council for its proactive efforts, including completing an engineered feasibility study and pursuing federal grant opportunities. Their unwavering commitment to providing locally accessible, culturally relevant education is inspiring and deserves acknowledgment.

Buffalo Lake is the sole Métis Settlement in the province of Alberta without its own school. As a result, Buffalo Lake children face daily bus rides of up to 2.5 hours to attend Caslan School. These long commutes limit opportunities for families and Elders to engage with the school, share their language and traditions, and actively participate in the educational process. Establishing a school within Buffalo Lake would directly address these challenges, fostering a supportive learning environment that reflects the community's culture and strengthens its social fabric.

While the NLPS Board is managing various competing capital priorities, we are committed to working with the Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement to explore viable paths for moving this initiative forward. We understand the unique importance of this project and agree that a school located within the Settlement is the best long-term solution to meet the needs of students, families, and the broader community. The existing Caslan School facility, with its aging infrastructure and significant maintenance needs, underscores the urgency for change. While the Board remains committed to addressing these challenges, we believe that building a new school in Buffalo Lake represents a more sustainable, culturally responsive solution for the future.

We believe that every child deserves access to quality education in a supportive environment, and we are prepared to advocate for solutions that benefit the students of Buffalo Lake.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen R.', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Karen Packard  
Board Chair

cc: Chairman Stan Delorme, Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement Council  
Gerry Peardon, Administrator, Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement