

The Honourable Demetrios Nicolaides
Minister of Education
228 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB
T5K 2B6

The Honourable Matt Jones
Minister of Jobs, Economy, and Trade
425 Legislature Building
10800 - 97 Avenue
Edmonton, AB
T5K 2B6

March 21, 2024

Dear Ministers Nicolaides and Jones:

Re: Northern Student-Teacher Bursary Expansion

On behalf of the Board of Trustees for Grande Yellowhead Public School Division (GYPSD), please accept this letter in support of, and advocacy for, the expansion of the Northern Student-Teacher Bursary.

As you are aware, the challenges facing small, rural school boards in Alberta are complex and diverse. Attracting student-teachers and recruiting newly graduated educators into small and/or remote communities is challenging. Unless the student-teacher is from that small/remote community or has connections to accessible housing, it is difficult and costly for university students to temporarily move away from a metro/urban centre for their practicum experience. Practicums in rural and/or remote locations are critical for introducing future educators to the benefits of rural life. Establishing relationships, making connections, and experiencing teaching within a small community is critical to attracting new graduates.

The NSTB is important in attracting teachers in two ways: first, for the student, the funds address the costs for temporary housing if a rural practicum is of interest; second, the funds entice students enrolled in Education Degree programs to serve in qualifying school boards after they have graduated.

Unfortunately, the qualifying locations are restricted to the north – as determined by the [Northern Alberta Development Council Area](#). Apart from Grande Cache, GYPSD does not qualify for student-teachers to explore the possibility of a career in our fantastic jurisdiction – despite the remote location of Fulham School and the very small hamlet communities along the West Yellowhead, as examples. Thriving schools entice new families to the area, contributing to the local economy, and securing the viability of those communities.

Just recently, Dr Lewis and I met with Chief of Staff James Johnson to discuss the exceptional literacy instruction occurring in GYPSD schools, illustration of our Board's Priority of Student Learning. We want as many student-teachers as possible to experience the great teaching and learning taking place in our classrooms. An expansion of the NSTB would help school divisions such as ours introduce pre-service teachers and new graduates to the joys of rural living while strengthening local economies.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Dale Karpluk

Dale Karpluk (Apr 1, 2024 11:31 MDT)

Dale Karpluk, Board Chair (Jasper)

Cc: Board of Trustees
Mr. Martin Long, MLA for West Yellowhead
Mr. Shane Getson, MLA for Lac Ste. Anne-Parkland
Dr. Carolyn Lewis, Superintendent of Schools

