



Rainy River District School Board

Parent Involvement Committee Newsletter

Fall 2017

10 Reasons To Get Involved at School

1. Volunteering makes a big difference. Research consistently shows that kids whose parents are involved in their schools do better.
2. Volunteering offers tangible ways to be part of things. Sometimes we might mean well, but our busy lives get in the way of committing. Joining a parent group will provide concrete ways to get involved, whether at events, in the classroom, or on a committee.
3. It feels great to participate! Your child spends a lot of time at school, and it's great to share some of her school-related experiences with her.
4. You'll get to know other parents. It's powerful to create a circle of adult friends around a school, and having a shared interest is a good place to start. What's more, it can help foster connections between families in your community.
5. Your help is always needed. Whether it's helping run the next big event or providing support in the classroom, there are always ways to pitch in.
6. It's a manageable commitment. Volunteering can seem daunting, but it doesn't have to be. Spend an hour at a bingo night or talent show, and your efforts will be appreciated. And remember, it's always OK to say no when you're busy.
7. It's fun! Even simple events like pizza nights and family reading nights can spice up your week.
8. You can tailor volunteering to play to your strengths. Within a parent group or school community there are many ways to contribute, some of which are sure to complement your strengths, interests, or professional skills.
9. Have a great idea? Volunteering gives you opportunities to get your ideas out there.
10. Volunteering provides another way to get to know school and support staff to better understand their needs and ideas.

www.ptotoday.com

Parents Reaching Out Grants (PRO) Awarded

The Rainy River District School Board was awarded \$20,000 for a 2017-2018 Regional/Provincial Parents Reaching Out (PRO) Grant to support the Connecting Communities through Creativity (Family Arts/Math Nights) project. The funds will be allocated to the schools across the Board to use towards Family Arts/Math Nights for parents of K-12 students.

The Family Math Nights will help parents become more knowledgeable about the math curriculum, instructional strategies used in the classroom, and interactive ways to extend the learning of math at home.

The Family Arts Nights will provide parents with information on arts education, arts programs offered in the school board, and the importance of the arts in fostering positive student self-esteem and well-being.

PRO Grants support parents in identifying barriers to parent engagement in their own community and to find local solutions to involve more parents in support of student achievement and well-being.

Watch for more information!



RRDSB Parent
Involvement Committee
Fall 2017

Upcoming School Council Meetings:

- [Crossroads](#)— November 30, 2017
- [Donald Young](#)— November 13, 2017
- [J.W. Walker](#)— November 7, 2017
- [McCrossoon-Tovell](#)— December 6, 2017
- [Mine Centre](#)— November 28, 2017
- [Nestor Falls](#)— November 9, 2017
- [North Star](#)— December 5, 2017
- [Riverview](#)— November 13, 2017
- [Robert Moore](#)— November 28, 2017
- [Sturgeon Creek](#)— November 21, 2017
- [Sturgeon Creek Alternative Program](#)— November 22, 2017
- [Atikokan High](#)— November 7, 2017
- [Fort Frances High](#)— November 7, 2017
- [Rainy River High](#)— November 20, 2017

Visit your school's website for additional school council meeting dates.

For links to school websites, parent resources, the latest news, upcoming school activities and more, visit the Board website at: www.rrdsb.com.



"Together, we empower all students to believe in themselves, to achieve, and to dream."

Start Your Day Off Right!

Start your day right with a healthy breakfast. Children who eat a healthy breakfast are more:

- Likely to be a healthy weight.
- Ready to learn.
- Calm and alert.

For some families, mornings may feel like too busy a time for a good breakfast. Being ready and preparing in advance can help:

- Plan ahead
- Get ready the night before
- Keep breakfast foods on hand
- Be a role model - eat breakfast!

Enjoy a balanced breakfast by choosing foods from at least 3 of the 4 food groups.

Try some of these ideas:

Vegetables and Fruit	Grain Products
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Apple, banana - 100% fruit juice - Frozen berries - Grapes - Canned peaches - Melon - Carrot sticks - Zucchini - Mushrooms - Peppers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cold or hot cereal - Bread - Bagel - Pita bread - English muffin - Tortilla - Muffin - Cereal bar
Milk & Alternatives	Meat & Alternatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - White or chocolate milk - Cheese - Yogurt - Cottage cheese - Fortified soy milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Beans (black, navy, baked or chick peas) - Eggs (scrambled, poached, fried) - Sliced lean ham, chicken or turkey - Nut butter (almond) - Nuts and seeds

Jumpstart Partnership

The Rainy River District School Board and Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities (Jumpstart) have developed a partnership, with RRDSB joining the Fort Frances Jumpstart Chapter as a Community Partner.

Jumpstart is a National Charity that helps kids from families in financial need participate in organized sport and physical activity by assisting with the cost of registration, equipment, and/ or transportation.

"Participation in physical activity is important for a student's overall success, helping to stimulate their minds and bodies, to build friendships, and to promote healthy living," said Heather Campbell, Director of Education for RRDSB.

RRDSB will help to identify children in financial need who want to participate in organized sport and recreational activities. Children ages four to 18 years are eligible to apply to receive funding of up to \$600 per year for multiple activities (up to \$300 per sport).

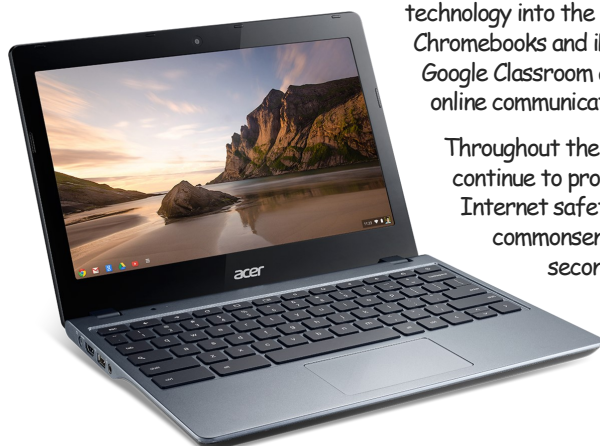
For more information or to apply, visit www.rrdsb.com/jumpstart-partnership

Technology Being Used as a Tool

Children and youth today are the first generation to never know a world without the Web. They are the biggest users of social media and are using it to help build a dynamic, positive global community. As an educational organization the Rainy River District School Board has a responsibility to provide our students, staff and families with access to the Internet and to support the development of 21st century learning competencies which include:

- Engaging students as partners in their own learning;
- Harnessing the capacity of technology to engage learners and to optimize and amplify student learning and achievement;
- Creating more teacher-student learning partnerships through real world, authentic learning tasks enabled by technology;
- Emphasizing and teaching important higher-order skills such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity and entrepreneurship;
- Supporting educators in preparing our students for a rapidly changing, technology-driven, globalized world.

Through co-teaching and co-planning, the STEM Coordinators support teachers in bringing technology into the classroom through the use of Chromebooks and iPads, Seesaw, Twitter, Padlet, blogs, Google Classroom accounts, Read & Write, and other online communication tools. Prior to any implementation



Throughout the school year, STEM Coordinators continue to promote the digital citizenship and Internet safety curriculum by co-teaching commonsense.org lessons with elementary and secondary teachers and students. STEM Coordinators support teachers and students with Ministry funded programming such as Homework Help and Career Cruising.

Chromebook benefits

1. **Security**—Chromebooks are cloud-based, constructed to run exclusively by browser, with no installations on the computer. Chromebooks do not require active firewalls, or anti-virus and anti-malware software.
2. **Easy to use**—Chromebooks are lightweight, portable, boot up in seconds, and batteries last about eight hours. They automatically update and are always current. Apps are selected, which can be pre-installed, accessible, or blocked. Schools also have the option of filtering and monitoring mail, and internet content.
3. **Collaboration**—Chromebooks enhance student communication and collaboration opportunities. They allow students to work together while completing group projects, reports, a power point, or videos. Access to work can be attained at school, in the library, or at home.
4. **Education apps**—Google Apps for Education (GAFE) services are free to public schools.
5. **Unlimited users**—Chromebooks can be used by different students. Every student has their own personalized profile and learning experience when they log in.

Keep Kids Safe From Cyberbullying

- Establish that all rules for interacting with people in real life also apply for interacting online or through cell phones. Convey that cyberbullying inflicts harm and causes pain in the real world as well as in cyberspace.
- Educate your children about appropriate Internet-based behaviors. Explain to them the problems that can be created when technology is misused (e.g., damaging their reputation, getting in trouble at school or with the police).
- Model appropriate technology usage. Don't harass or joke about others while online, especially around your children. Don't text while driving. Your kids are watching and learning.
- Monitor your child's activities while they are online. This can be done informally (through active participation in, and supervision of, your child's online experience) and formally (through software). Use discretion when covertly spying on your kids. This could cause more harm than good if your child feels their privacy has been violated. They may go completely underground with their online behaviors and deliberately work to hide their actions from you.
- Use filtering and blocking software as a part of a comprehensive approach to online safety, but understand software programs alone will not keep kids safe or prevent them from bullying others or accessing inappropriate content. Most tech-savvy youth can figure out ways around filters very quickly.
- Look for warning signs that something abnormal is going on with respect to their technology usage. If your child becomes withdrawn or their Internet use becomes obsessive, they could either be a victim or a perpetrator of cyberbullying.
- Utilize an "Internet Use Contract" and a "Cell Phone Use Contract" to foster a crystal-clear understanding about what is appropriate and what is not with respect to the use of communications technology. To remind the child of this pledged commitment, we recommend that these contracts be posted in a highly visible place (e.g., next to the computer).

Tips from: Hinduja, S. & Patchin, J. (2014). Preventing Cyberbullying: Top Ten Tips for Parents. Retrieved (insert date), from Cyberbullying Research Center. <http://cyberbullying.org/Top-Ten-Tips-Parents-Cyberbullying-Prevention.pdf>

Sample of a Teen Pledge for Being Smart and Safe Online

- I will be respectful to myself and others. I won't bully and won't tolerate bullying by others.
- I will be a good online friend and be supportive of my friends and others who might be in trouble or in need of help.
- I won't post or send pictures or other content that will embarrass me, get me into trouble or jeopardize my privacy or security.
- I will respect other people's privacy and be courteous when posting photos or other content about them.
- I'll be conscious of how much time I spend on the web, phone and other devices and won't let use interfere with sleep, school work and face-to-face relationships.
- If they need my help, I'll assist my parents, teachers others in their use of technology.
- I will respect other people's digital property and space. I won't steal, hack, break into anyone else's accounts or use other's content without permission.
- I will protect my passwords and practice good Net security.
- I will be thoughtful in my use of copy, paste and forwarding. If I use anyone else's content or images I will quote them, give them credit and link to them if appropriate.
- I will help create a culture of respect and tolerance at my school and among my peers.

www.safekids.com

New Ways For Teaching Phys Ed

The OPHEA (Ontario Physical Health and Education Association) coaching project launched in October 2016, with Kari-Lynn Beckett of the Rainy River District School Board travelling to the annual OPHEA conference in Niagara Falls to take part in a variety of exciting workshops. With the Health and Physical Education curriculum revised in 2015, OPHEA felt it was important to provide professional development to teachers.

Beckett returned to the Board and has trained other teachers with the knowledge and resources she acquired, utilizing CIRA/Playsport/Ophea Teaching Games For Understanding (TGFU) and Physical Literacy online resources to better engage students.

Example: Chain Tag

Choose one participant to be a tagger. Have the other participants spread out within the activity area.

When the tagger tags another participant, they join hands and become a chain. Participants forming a chain can also link arms or use an object (e.g., scarf) to hold on to.

The taggers continue to tag others using their free hands, and those tagged join the chain as well. When the chain has four players, it splits in half. The game continues until all participants are part of a chain.



Whose Homework Is It?

Parents often say: One of the hardest things I have found when helping my child is that I don't understand the homework myself."

Frequently, parents are under the impression that they should be able to do the homework. They believe that they should be reading the textbook and trying to teach their child how to solve a problem or complete the homework. Although understandable and well intentioned, using this approach can create confusion and frustration for both parents and children.

What many people do not know is that one of the key things parents can do to help their children succeed is to help them take responsibility for their own learning. All students, elementary and secondary, can benefit from learning how to become a self-directed learner.

How can parents help their child become a self-directed learner?

Parents can help their child become a self-directed learner by encouraging their child to use a problem solving approach to homework.

Here is an example that describes how a parent can use the problem solving approach.

Problem solving scenario:

Parent: *What are you supposed to do?*

Student: *I'm supposed to make a presentation about how a material I can find at home is manufactured.*

Parent: *OK. Let's both think of some... Which ones might you choose?*

Student: *Glass and brick...*

Parent: *And paint and dry wall, wire, pipe... Can you think of any more?*

Student: *metal*

Parent: *Great list we've got... now which one do you think you want to use?*

Student: *Brick!*

Parent: *Well, why don't you check out a few websites about how brick is made and see if you can make a good presentation about it?*

Student: *I can't find much out about brick. Do you think I should change?*

Parent: *Well, why don't you check out how another couple on the list we made and decide which one you'd like to present?*

More problem-solving type questions and statements that you can use:

- Let's talk about your schoolwork.
- What were you asked to do?
- Can you show me how you got your answer?
- Have you seen how someone else did it?
- Try looking at your problem again.
- If you can't find a solution, let's ask for help from your teacher. When will you be able to ask for more help?

From the Council of Ontario Directors of Education - Parent Tool Kit

Special Education—Meeting the Needs of All Students

The Rainy River District School Board Special Education Department serves roughly 650 students, or approximately 24% of the student population. Students accessing services have a variety of unique strengths and needs.

Many supports are available for students who have special needs. These supports have been categorized into four main areas: safety, educational programming, training, and coordination of services.

Special Education in the Board supports students in an individual manner to help them flourish and succeed.

An IEP is a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student. It identifies learning expectations that are modified from or alternative to the expectations given in the curriculum and/or any accommodations and special education services needed to assist the student in achieving his or her learning expectations.

Parents can help foster student confidence by expressing a positive attitude about learning, offering praise and acknowledging their child's accomplishments, and encouraging their child to do their best.

Parents can access Special Education by contacting their school's principal. The school principal will discuss the ways the school might meet your child's needs including steps involved in having your child receive a special education program.

RRDSB 2017-18 Exceptionalities

Exceptionality	# of Students
Behavioural	110
Speech Impairment	4
Multiple Exceptionalities	2
Physical Disability	12
Visually Impaired	2
Mild Intellectual Disability	20
Language Impairment	2
Learning Disability	139
Hard of Hearing, Deaf	5
Autism	38
No Exceptionality	339