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# REPORT

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***Safe Welcome Program***



## MEMORANDUM

Date: September 24, 2013  
File Code: E05

**To:** Trustees

**From:** Travis Enge  
Manager of Plant Operations & Maintenance

**Subject:** Safe Welcome Program

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### History

On December 20, 2012, the government announced funding to re-open and expand the Safe Welcome program for all elementary schools across the province to access funds to lock their front doors (and perimeter doors where appropriate) and put necessary security access devices in place. The program was first initiated in 2005-06. Since then the Ministry has provided funding to elementary schools to put in place access device systems such as new locking outside doors, security cameras and buzzers. Schools eligible to receive this funding were those where the front door could not be seen from the office of the school and those schools were required to have locked doors as a condition of the funding. The Rainy River District School Board received approval and a set of specifications was tendered in the spring of 2013.

During the summer of 2013, equipment has been installed at all schools with the exception of Crossroads as the school's exterior doors did not allow for the installation of an automatic latch like the other schools. The contractor has since overcome that obstacle and the equipment installation will be completed well before implementation.

The schools that have the equipment have been testing it out. At last week's principal session, a discussion was held with the principals and suggestions came forward for improvements. The principals have now brought information back to the schools to ensure everyone understands how the system works, the expectations of the program and to ensure that everyone is trained on its use.

### Operational Details

The system will operate much like a system at most large apartment buildings as follows:

- As a parent or visitor approaches the main entrance of the school, they will notice a sign that states, "WELCOME. Please Press for Assistance. Thank You for your patience." An arrow on the sign will point to the device.
- The visitor will then press the button located at the bottom of the device.
- An attendant in the school will hear a chime, and see a video feed of the visitor outside the door.

- The attendant can then speak to the visitor, verify their identity and ask whom they are there to visit through an intercom system.
- Once satisfied, the attendant will then push a button and "buzz" in the visitor.

### **Communication and Next Steps**

The go live date for the program is the 7th of October 2013. We are moving forward with a communication plan both in the community and at the schools. This plan consists of:

- Staff communication
- Parent letters
- School Newsletters
- Letter to community partners, agencies and community members
- Radio (CFOB)
- Newspaper advertising (FF Times, RR Record, Atikokan Progress, Westend Weekly)
- Inclusion with school days announcements on CFOB
- Board and School Websites
- RRDSB Facebook Page
- Press Release

The main message we want to convey for this program is that the program supports a welcoming learning environment by ensuring that parents and other authorized visitors can access elementary schools while keeping students and staff safe. The Plant Operations and Maintenance Department will continue to support all schools in the implementation of this program.