DIRECTOR’S ANNUAL REPORT
2018 / 2019
As Director of Education for the Rainy River District School Board, I am pleased to share our 2018-2019 Annual Report, which highlights some of the exciting accomplishments and events that have occurred within the Board over the past year. Our Strategic Plan sets the direction, focusing our efforts to reach every student and identifying the priorities to enhance and support student achievement and well-being.

During this year, we continued our focus on our Strategic Plan’s two pillars — A Culture of Lifelong Learning and A Culture of Caring. Together, we worked hard to maintain our focus on making a difference in the achievement and well-being of our students by ensuring our schools are highly effective centres of learning.

Thank you to the Board of Trustees for their commitment and dedication to student success. Thank you to our staff, parents, caregivers, community partners, and community members who all assist in creating a culture of collaboration and caring, putting the interest of students in the forefront of their thinking and actions.

The leadership of our students is also to be recognized and celebrated. Our students continue to share their vision for improved learning opportunities and environments, while building skills and abilities that provide a strengthened foundation for their achievement.

Together, we are truly empowering our students to believe in themselves, to achieve, and to dream.

Yours in education,
Heather Campbell, Director of Education
Strategic Plan

A CULTURE OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Our students pursue learning pathways that reflect their individual interests and needs, and build their skills for the future.

Our students are prepared for their futures through excellence in instruction and assessment.

Our staff is equipped with the skills and resources to support every student in achieving success.

A CULTURE OF CARING

Our students experience a sense of belonging in caring environments that address their well-being.

Our staff is supported in mutually respectful and productive working relationships to enhance the success of all our students.

Our students, staff, and communities are supported in safe, inclusive, and collaborative learning environments.
Pathways and Experiential Learning

Our students pursue learning pathways that reflect their individual interests and needs, and build their skills for the future.

Techways Program

Our goal in introducing this District-wide Program was to nurture our students’ technical skills and expand their awareness and understanding of various pathways. Over the 2018-2019 school year, we successfully provided hands-on learning to approximately 400 students through the following sessions:

Bicycle maintenance
Students learned servicing procedures using professional tools, such as:
• brake servicing which includes the removal and installation of rim brakes.
• gear setup which includes troubleshooting, servicing and setting up gears to get the most efficient shifting while riding.
• tire repair which involves troubleshooting and repairing flats.

Carpentry
Throughout the carpentry type project, students produced/created:
• pegboard games, small handheld games that incorporate the use of basic hand tools like a saw, hand drill and pencil.
• decorative paddles, which had students designing and building a decorative paddle using other types of woodworking tools, such as a hand plane and wood rasp.

Plastic Bottle Rockets
In this project, students designed and built their own rocket based on established criteria and using the understanding of the force (wind) that will be acting upon the structure.

Engaging students in these activities allows them the opportunity to explore curriculum expectations in a hands-on and more practical way. We have seen through student participation and student feedback that this Program is supporting their career exploration and choices.
Highlights

Our work on supporting students to explore pathways also included:

- Creating a Pathways website to support Grades 7-12 Pathway Planning Document and its ongoing revision. [Pathways.rrdsb.com](http://Pathways.rrdsb.com)

- Hosting the Regional Skills Ontario Young Women’s Career Exploration Event, La Place Rendezvous on November 15, 2018. Almost 100 female students from Northwestern Ontario attended and met with over a dozen local female mentors working in the skilled trades and technologies and STEM fields. The day included a luncheon, team-building activities, small group presentations, and Q&A sessions with mentors. The mentors included recent (<5 yrs) graduates of RRDSB who have taken technology programs and/or Manufacturing SHSM, have trained and are working in the field (e.g. truck and coach technician, heavy duty equipment technician), and were inspired by the same event when they were in high school.

- Competing in Skills Ontario Secondary Competitions. Atikokan High School students competed in qualifiers at Confederation College in Thunder Bay on April 6, 2019: 1 student in construction and 2 students in welding. Student, Kelyn Vos, in construction, qualified for provincial competition in Toronto May 2019 and placed 7th of 23 competitors. It was a good showing for our first provincial Skills Ontario competition. AHS students also participated in the secondary cardboard boat race challenge in Thunder Bay.

- Hosting the first Summer Job Hiring Fair at FFHS on April 10, 2019 in partnership with Northern Community Development Services (NCDS), Shooniyaa, and DSSAB. Nearly 30 employers provided a range of opportunities to over 500 students, providing information, as well as holding on the spot interviews and hiring for summer positions.

Specialist High Skills Majors

Specialist High Skills Majors (SHSM) continue to provide opportunities for RRDSB students to specialize and gain experience, training and certification in various sectors: Business (FFHS), Environment (AHS & RRHS), Health and Wellness (FFHS), Hospitality and Tourism (AHS), and Manufacturing (FFHS).

- 2018-2019 was the first year with the Environment SHSM program at RRHS, with all secondary schools now have at least one SHSM program.
- 122 Grades 11 and 12 students in three schools participated in our SHSM programs, with 42 RRDSB students graduating with a SHSM Red Seal Diploma in June 2019.
Indigenous Education

Our staff is equipped with the skills and resources to support every student in achieving success.

FNMI Learning in Schools

The Board continues to connect student learning to the local histories and cultures of the First Nation and Métis communities. Our most recent efforts include resource development for Grade 10 Civics and History courses, with an emphasis on local histories and perspectives. Schools continue to participate in Festival du Voyageur, Louis Riel Day, Gagwe-gikendamaawiziwin, Orange Shirt Day, Fall Harvest, and Treaties Recognition Week. Our schools begin each day with a Land Acknowledgment. Through our actions, we honour the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action 62.1 and 63.3, “as we build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect and provide curriculum on residential schools, treaties, and Indigenous people’s historical and contemporary contributions to Canada.”

The Rainy River District School Board is proud of their continued partnerships with First Nation and Métis communities across the District. Elders, Senators, and Knowledge Keepers continue to be key resources to schools and classrooms, bringing their expertise and experience to enrich student learning. These important relationships have supported the Board in its focus on positive outreach to parents as partners in their children’s education. As a result, funding is provided to all schools to enhance appreciation and awareness of First Nation and Métis history, culture, and perspectives through school events and field trips, and to support schools in bringing this expertise into the classroom.
The Anishinaabemoda Initiative, a partnership with the Rainy River District School Board, Seven Generations Education Institute and SayITFirst, is currently in its third year and continues to grow to support communities, educators, families, and children. Consultation with community partners continues to be at the forefront of the strategy to ensure communication and planning involves parents, Elders and language speakers. As of this fall, 180 preschoolers, toddlers, and teachers throughout the lower part of Treaty 3 are receiving weekly Anishinaabemowin instruction. Gigidiziiminaanig, the Elder Committee, representing the 10 First Nation communities in the District, continues to provide guidance and direction for the Initiative. Since the launch of the website last spring, Anishinaabemoda - Waking up Ojibwe has expanded to include resources, videos and language kits, which are intended for use by families and teachers. In addition, we completed the locally developed Grade 12 University Anishinaabemowin course for Fort Frances High School, which supports students to further their language skills at the post-secondary level.

"If we lose the language, there won't be [anymore] connection to being Anishinaabe." —Farrell White

Self Identification

In the Rainy River District School Board, parents, guardians (for students under the age of 18), students over the age of 18, and staff have the opportunity to identify as First Nation, Métis, or Inuit on school registration forms, self-identification forms, and course option sheets. Currently, the Rainy River District School Board’s voluntary student self-identification rate is 43.0%. This is an increase of 2.5 percentage points from last year. To provide context, the provincial voluntary self-identification rate is 2.0%. This data is used to help identify trends in achievement at the school and program level, and to provide further supports, where necessary.

In the fall of 2017, the Rainy River District School Board began implementation of the voluntary staff self-identification process. To date, 421 members have completed the staff self-identification form. Our voluntary staff self-identification data is at 25.7%.

www.wakingupojibwe.ca
Equity and Inclusion

Our students, staff, and communities are supported in safe, inclusive, and collaborative learning environments.

The Equity Steering Committee was formed in 2017 and has since worked to gather information on equity and inclusion supports within RRDSB schools. The Equity Steering Committee has worked to create a Board Equity Plan based on feedback from staff and parents. Principals have consulted their staff and School Councils using a Supporting Equity Survey. Our goal is to build a shared commitment to monitoring and improving equitable outcomes for all students. By the end of 2020, we want to provide more opportunities for students to celebrate and learn about people of various abilities, orientations, races, cultures, ethnicity, social economic status and skin colours. Once completed, the Equity Plan will highlight evidence-based practices to support equity and inclusion at the school and classroom level.

April 11, 2019 marked the International Day of Pink. It is a day where communities across the country, and across the world, unite in celebrating diversity and raising awareness to stop homophobia, transphobia, transmisogyny, and all forms of bullying. The International Day of Pink was started in Nova Scotia when two high school students saw a classmate being bullied for wearing a pink shirt. To provide solidarity, the pair got everyone at school to arrive wearing pink. The result was that an entire school took a stand and began working together to prevent bullying. The Day of Pink is a symbol, a spark, that empowers and inspires youth across Canada to create amazing social change!

The RRDSB supports this initiative and other days of significance each year, encouraging students and staff to participate in lessons and activities focused on acceptance, respect and inclusivity.
Equitable workplaces

The Rainy River District School Board is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities have equal opportunity of access to employment opportunities and services as do all employees and prospective employees. The Board strives to ensure that key principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity are reflected and valued in our learning and working environments. We believe that diversity brings strength to our communities.

Recruitment

• Job vacancies are advertised on a variety of mediums including Board website and email, Facebook, and local employment agencies including First Nations employment centres. All publications are available in an alternative format upon request.
• All internal and external job postings indicate “Accommodation is available for applicants with disabilities in the recruitment process upon request.”

Hiring

• All principals, hiring managers and HR staff maintain the integrity of the hiring process by adhering to the guidelines provided in the “Recruitment and Selection Resource Manual for Management Staff” when filling a staff vacancy. This includes the interview and selection process being completed by a committee, thereby not relying on one person’s sole judgment. A standard set of questions asked of all candidates, scored against pre-determined job-related criteria and competencies, is used.
• New hires are provided with an orientation which reviews the availability of workplace accommodations and introduces them to our Board’s Accessible & Healthy Workplace Program.
• Upon hire, each staff is given the opportunity to optionally complete a FNMI Voluntary Self ID Form.

Retention

• Disabilities Management Program: The Human Resources Department has a process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities. The Department also developed and distributed the “Understanding Your Sick Leave” flyer in October 2018.
• Accessibility: The Annual Accessibility Report for the period September 2018 to August 2019 highlighted the progress the Board made during the school year to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities who work, learn and participate in the school board community.
The 2018-2019 Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) results, along with other assessments, help the Rainy River District School Board to develop and refine strategies for achievement in all areas of the curriculum, including Literacy and Math. The 2018-2019 results show continued success in specific areas, as well as assist in identifying areas where further growth and improvement are needed.

### Math skills

The mathematic results for Grade 3 indicate that Primary teachers set high - yet achievable - standards, and met the needs of the majority of their students. Primary teachers across the District received professional development in the area of small group Guided Mathematics, as well as effective fact fluency instruction. In order to continue to increase student achievement, Primary teachers will continue to receive support in effectively balancing between inquiry/discovery lessons and careful practice of skills and procedures to increase fluency; between group-work activities and individual tasks that ensure all students are working within their zones of proximal development (where students make the most academic gains, as the work is neither too easy nor too hard).

The results for Grade 6 mathematics remained stable. In order to bolster Junior students’ confidence and mindset in mathematics, teachers will be supported in shifting toward a student-driven pedagogical approach. Specifically, teachers will be supported as they get to know their students as learners, and develop math programs that provide “just right,” and “just in time” lessons and remediations to individuals and small groups. Having students work within their zones of proximal development allows them to experience challenges, successes, and mastery equally - thus improving mindset, and increasing confidence and achievement. Additionally, practices such as small group instruction, routine utilization of manipulatives, engaging centres, and technology-enabled assignments will work to improve students’ mathematical mindsets.

Historically, Grade 3 and 6 EQAO data are strong indicators of future success for students participating in Grade 9 EQAO math assessment. In 2018 - 2019, 30% of students in the Applied course who did not meet the standard in Grade 6, met the standard in Grade 9. This is a significant increase in achievement. Furthermore, 29% of students in the Applied level course achieved a Level 2 on the assessment. Results from Academic mathematics were very similar to the provincial results, with only a two percentage point difference. In 2018/2019, 23% of students in Academic math who did not meet the standard in Grade 6 met the standard in Grade 9. This represents a significant increase in achievement over time.
Literacy Skills

In 2018-2019, elementary teachers focused on Guided Reading - a high yield instructional strategy which allows teachers to group students based on similar reading strengths and needs. An increased focus on small group, Guided Instruction in reading, will allow teachers to provide a more personalized approach to instruction. Teaching small groups of students provides teachers with the opportunity to consider student interests when selecting a text for reading, to use assessment data to plan lessons based on the most immediate needs of students, as well as to directly monitor students as they read in order to provide immediate feedback and help set learning goals. This daily, precise and engaging instruction will increase student achievement in a very short time.

Reading Recovery™ continues to be implemented in schools in order to increase student achievement in early literacy. This intervention is designed to accelerate the rate of learning so that Grade 1 students can catch up to the average achievement level of the classroom in both reading and writing, eliminating the learning gap as soon as it becomes evident. Teachers involved in Reading Recovery™ training also benefit from intensive professional development over a period of at least three years, allowing them to develop expertise in literacy acquisition theory, skills and strategies.

In writing, teachers continue to provide meaningful and engaging tasks to our earliest writers, capitalizing on motivation to increase perseverance and participation. In order to maximize achievement in early writing, students take part in small group, Guided Instruction. This instruction allows teachers to plan for and monitor student growth, provide immediate, responsive feedback and help students set achievable writing goals. While continuing to implement this successful writing instruction, more Grade 4 to 6 teachers will be supported to add individual writing conferences and small group, Guided Instruction to their programming.

In March 2018, the Rainy River District School Board had 194 students attempt the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test for the first time, with a success rate of 67% among these students. This is an eight percentage point increase over last year’s results.

As students transition toward greater subject specialization in their classes from Grades 7 to 10, a cross-disciplinary approach to literacy is key. Cross-curricular literacy teams established at each secondary school use EQAO data to identify specific literacy skills in need of development and to embed teacher training focused on improving these skills into staff meetings, school-based PD sessions, and coaching. Using this knowledge, teachers from Arts to Technology have developed and implemented lessons focusing on specific literacy skills relevant to the curricula in their classes.

Graduation Rates

In reviewing our achievement, successes and areas for further development and growth we also analyze our graduation rates. The Ministry of Education calculated rate by cohorts from 2014 through to August 31, 2018, with a provincial goal set of 85% graduation rate.

• Provincially the 4-year graduation rate for Aug 31, 2018 is 81.2%.
• Provincially the 5-year graduation rate for Aug 31, 2018 is 87.1%.
• The Rainy River District School Board 4-year graduation rate is 74%.
• The Rainy River District School Board 5-year graduation rate is 78.3%.
Mental Health and Well-Being

Our students experience a sense of belonging in caring environments that address their well-being.

There are four main priorities identified in the RRDSB Mental Health and Addictions Strategy.

1. Mental Health Promotion:
The mental health of every student and staff member matters and is supported through the promotion of well-being. To date, this occurs through
• the identification of, and training for, Educator and Student Mental Health Champions;
• presentations to staff, students and parents regarding identified mental health.

2. Engagement with Stakeholders:
When stakeholders are engaged and relationships have been formed, we are able to better identify the well-being needs of students and enhance the system of care together. This priority is demonstrated through
• our partnership to provide dedicated clinicians within all schools;
• our revised School Climate Surveys for students in Grades 4 to 12, which included a Health Living Component;
• RRDSB participation in community collaborations (e.g. Situation Table).

3. Evidence-Based and Informed Practices and Programming:
In line with best practices, the selection, implementation, and monitoring of mental health promotion, prevention, and intervention programming and practices is evidence-based and informed whenever possible. Our work, to date, has included:
• training provided on the five domains of self-regulation through the MEHRIT Centre;
• a focus on increasing staff awareness and understanding of trauma-informed practices.

4. Capacity Building and Safeguards:
Continued work to increase mental health and wellness knowledge and skills across the RRDSB is crucial so that all staff are able to support the well-being of all students. Our Plan, therefore, looks to:
• continued education to support both staff and student mental health and well-being;
• safeTALK training for staff and students.

Mental Health Supports for Students
The Rainy River District School Board is committed to providing our students with timely, effective mental health support within our schools. The current agreement between the Rainy River District School Board and Kenora-Rainy River Districts Child and Family Services allows qualified clinicians to provide services to students within their school. Services can include individual counseling, drop-in support, small group sessions, and classroom/staff presentations.

A total of 289 students were served through the school-based Mental Health Clinicians last year, which includes individual counseling, small groups and classroom presentations.
Our staff is supported in mutually respectful and productive working relationships to enhance the success of all our students.

The topic of mental health is on the rise. Like our physical health, it’s something to be nurtured, developed and cared for. The more we talk about mental health, the more top of mind it will become – especially at work. Our jobs play a significant part in our lives. Rainy River District School Board wants to ensure every employee feels comfortable talking openly, without judgment and can get any help necessary.

Not Myself Today® is a mental health initiative presented by the Canadian Mental Health Association. It aims to change the way we talk about mental health and support our own mental health, as well as that of our colleagues. The different resources, tools and activities are all designed to raise awareness on the issue, reduce stigma, and ultimately to help us build a safe and supportive work environment. At Rainy River District School Board, we are excited to be on the forefront along with other organizations that are stepping up and making a difference in how mental health is supported at work.

Dr. Greg Wells PD

Dr. Greg Wells, one of the world’s leading experts in health and human performance, addressed all RRDSB staff during a system-wide professional development session on November 26, 2018. His insightful presentation focused on the importance of sleeping soundly, eating smarter, moving more, and thinking clearly as an interconnected platform to improving one’s health. Dr. Wells shared strategies and techniques to improve these four factors in the daily lives of our staff members, which could ultimately lead to improved health and performance. Staff also received a copy of Dr. Wells’ book, *The Ripple Effect*, to take home.

Employee Recognition

The Rainy River District School Board recognizes that employees are our greatest asset in supporting and enhancing the well-being and achievement of our students. Upon reviewing our employee recognition program, a new Employee of the Year award was added, along with the Board formally recognizing employees who have reached 15 years of service.

The Board also recognizes 25 years of continuous service and retirements. Each spring, Recognition of Service Awards are presented to the Employee of the Year, Bus Driver of the Year, Volunteer of the Year, and Community Partner of the Year. The awards are a way to celebrate the exceptional and outstanding contributions that staff members, bus drivers, volunteers, and community partners make to the school community.
Financial Report

EXPENDITURE BY FUNCTION

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<th>FOR YEAR ENDED AUGUST 31</th>
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EXPENDITURE BY OBJECT

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About us

Trustees (term 2018-2022)

Administration (2018-2019 school year)
Director of Education - Heather Campbell
Superintendent of Education - Al McManaman
Superintendent of Education - Andrew Harris
Superintendent of Business - Laura Mills
Executive Officer of Employee and Labour Relations - Kevin Knutsen
Manager of Information Services - Stephen Danielson
Manager, Plant Operations & Maintenance - Travis Enge

Quick facts (2018-2019 school year)

SCHOOLS:
Elementary - 10
Secondary - 3

STUDENTS:
Total headcount - 2619
Elementary - 1747
Self Identification Rate - 43%
Secondary - 872
Self Identification Rate - 25.7%

TEACHING STAFF:
Elementary - 89
Secondary - 139
Self Identification Rate - 25.7%
Support Personnel - 114

OTHER DEMOGRAPHICS:
• 320 km east - west; area coverage 10,552 square km
• Students bussed safely every day with over 7,000 km traveled each day by our bus drivers.
CONTACT:
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522 Second Street East
Fort Frances, Ontario P9A 1N4
Phone: (807) 274-9855
Fax: (807) 274-5078
Toll free: 1-800-214-1753
Website: www.rrdsb.com

This publication is available in accessible formats upon request.