



REPORT

Recognition of Excellence

***Strength-Based Practices
Building a Stronger School Community
Mine Centre School***



RAINY RIVER DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Strength Based Practices Building a Stronger School Community

The staff of Mine Centre School works to purposefully teach and employ strength based practices in order to build a stronger school community. During the 2013-2014 school year, students from Grades 4 to 8 at Mine Centre School participated in the Tell Them From Me Survey, a survey designed to provide schools with information and insight into student engagement, well-being and effective teaching practices, from the perspective of students. The results indicated a need to improve school culture with the goals of creating a stronger sense of belonging, improved self-esteem, enhanced interest and motivation to learn in order to reduce anxiety and to prevent bullying.

Based on the results, the staff listened to student voice, creating clubs and activities that were suggested by the students. More cross graded activities and learning opportunities were implemented and the staff worked to incorporate more Ojibwe language and culture into the daily learning at school. Staff was trained to deliver a brain based curriculum to help reduce stress and anxiety and to teach coping mechanisms to kids. Students and staff are recognized for their strengths and accomplishments in monthly assemblies, through positive office referrals and through daily positive messaging on our school announcements.

Some specific strength based practices employed this year include:

- Implementing the 'Mind Up Curriculum' and Me Moves
- Positive messaging in the school: announcements / free positive thoughts/ student messages
- Bucket Filling
- Star Thunderbird Assemblies
- Clubs: Lego club, Girls' Club, Make a Change Group, Culture Camp
- Incorporating more Ojibwe language into our classrooms and daily school setting
- Cultural teachings at staff meetings and weekly Language table for staff
- Mental Health Awareness bulletin boards for students and staff
- Reading Buddy Challenge
- Math Buddies
- Newsletters & Facebook page that focus on school activities / student strengths and recognition of accomplishments of students and staff
- Positive Office referrals
- Positive framing of language by all staff

In addition, Mine Centre School reached out to the parent community by having more community visits, focusing on student strengths and recognizing accomplishments through the school newsletter and on the school's Facebook page, and inviting the parent community into the school more frequently.

As noted in *Reshaping School Culture: Implementing a Strengths-Based Approach in Schools* (2014),

The links between classroom and school climate, student motivation and school success are well supported, both in research literature and in the experiences of educators. Students need to feel valued and supported by educators and to feel part of a school community in order to be successful. This is particularly true for those who may struggle with the social or academic aspects of school.

The journey towards reshaping the culture at Mine Centre School is well underway. Students and staff have responded positively to the strategies. Staff are recognizing improved attitude, engagement and self-regulation amongst students. Staff and parents feel valued as members of the school community.