



REPORT

Recognition of Excellence

GSA
Robert Moore School



RAINY RIVER DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD Robert Moore School GSA

Date: January 5, 2016
To: Rainy River District School Board Trustees
From: Donna Kowalski
Vice Principal, Robert Moore School

Recommendation: It is recommended that the report be received for information only.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Well-Being of Students and Staff

- The emotional well-being of all students is the foundation for their achievement.
- Our learning and working environments are safe and inclusive.

CONTEXT

PPM No. 145, Promoting and Supporting Positive Student Behaviour, speaks to a positive school climate such that all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted. It is a climate that actively promotes positive behaviours and interactions.

The *Education Act* outlines that “every board shall support students who want to establish and lead activities and organizations that promote a safe and inclusive learning environment, acceptance of and respect for others, and the creation of a positive school climate, including activities or organizations that promote... awareness and understanding of, and respect for, people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, including organizations with the name Gay-Straight Alliance.”

SUMMARY

A GSA club is a proven evidence-based strategy that supports student health and wellness. We know that emotional well-being provides the foundation for academic achievement and, as such, we strive to provide all students with a safe, caring space that lets them be themselves, free from bias and/or discrimination, and supports them in their academic, social and emotional growth. The Robert Moore School GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance) club was initiated by students and has the full support of the school staff and School Council. It consists of a group of students from Grades 6 to 8, those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning, their allies and three staff advisors. The student-run group, with support from the Board Mental Health Lead and resources from EGALE, provides a safe place for students to meet and support each other while working together to end discrimination. The group promotes equality for all and promotes a welcoming, caring, respectful, safe and inclusive school environment.

Members of the group meet to socialize, talk, support each other, ask questions, share stories and plan events. The group planned a walk in support of the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, made rainbow bracelets to raise awareness, watched and discussed student-made videos, participated in sharing circles, accessed the EGALE website as a means of initiating discussion, and has been instrumental in the posting of Positive Space signage. Staff are excited to see caring and support from allies, an increase in student self-esteem, and overall improved student well-being.



Students and advisors are eager to continue with this student-led initiative. Future plans include helping organize activities for Pink Shirt Day in February, Day of Pink and Day of Silence in April, and International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia in May. A guest speaker from the Fort Frances High School GSA club will also be invited to speak to the group. The students will continue to support each other, and, with the support of the advisors, promote awareness and initiate and plan activities for students in Grades 6 through 8 that support a positive space for all - one in which all students feel included.

ROUTING

SPT/Senior Administration	January 5, 2016
Board	January 5, 2016
