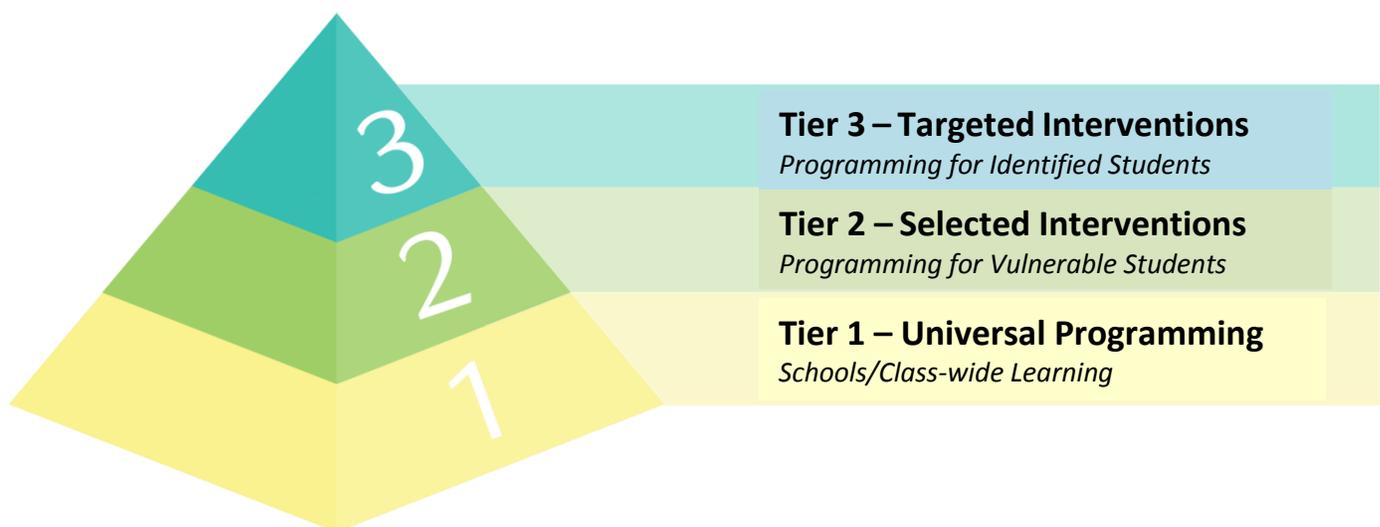# Rainy River District School Board Program Strategy

The Rainy River District School Board is committed to providing its students with the highest quality learning experience. We envision a school system in which all students can find what they need at our schools and learning environments that are respectful and collaborative and support students to meet their own needs and the needs of society in the 21st century. To do so, we provide a variety of approaches that best suit the learning styles and needs of our students, such as experiential learning, cooperative education, eLearning, and alternative education opportunities.

Our Program Strategy will meet the learning needs of all of our students. To do this, we will ask the following questions:

- What do all students need?
- What do some students need?
- What do a few students need?

In answering these questions, we will then adjust the type and intensity of our supports to meet the needs of each student. This is known as the tiered approach.

3 **Tier 3 – Targeted Interventions**
Programming for Identified Students

2 **Tier 2 – Selected Interventions**
Programming for Vulnerable Students

1 **Tier 1 – Universal Programming**
Schools/Class-wide Learning

Differentiated Instruction is based on the idea that because students differ significantly in their interests, learning styles, and readiness to learn, it is necessary to adapt instruction to suit these differing characteristics. To differentiate instruction is to recognize students' varying levels of background knowledge, readiness to learn, language ability, learning preferences, and interests, and to react responsively. Teachers can differentiate one or a number of the following elements in any classroom learning situation.

Early Learning/Full Day Kindergarten Program is designed to ensure that the strengths, needs and interests of the child are addressed. The Kindergarten schedule is flexible and open-ended, allowing for extension or revisiting of an activity, educator-team and child initiated activities, daily blocks of time dedicated to planned, purposeful play, as well as literacy and numeracy instruction, which may take place in large or small groups and at learning centers. Learning centers may include water, sand, crafts, blocks and other building tools, nature, puppets, dramatic play, library, puzzles, climbing and computers. The focus of the centers is inquiry based and modified to accommodate the changing needs and interests of the students.

All Pathways, All Secondary Schools speaks to the strategic choices a student makes based on the direction that they wish to take after graduation. We want each of our students to be able to work toward their goal, at their local school. These strategic choices include the five major pathways: apprenticeship, college, community, university, and work. Each pathway has great value and thus, each route to success is supported in each school.

All of our secondary schools offer programs that give students unique and innovative learning opportunities in their selected area of interest:

> **Co-operative Education** allows students who are heading for university, college, apprenticeship, the community or the workplace an opportunity to:
> - experience hands-on learning
> - "test-drive" career options
> - see the relevance of their classroom learning
> - develop the essential skills and habits required in the workplace
> - gain valuable work experience that will help build a resumé for postsecondary programs and future employment.
>
> **The Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM)** allows students to focus their learning on a specific economic sector while meeting the requirements to graduate from secondary school. It also assists in their transition after graduation to apprenticeship training, college, university or the workplace.
>
> **The School College Work Initiative (SCWI)** is a program that allows high school students to work concurrently towards their high school and college educations through a variety of dual credit programs. In addition, the School Within A College (SWAC) program meets the needs of students who are between the ages of 17-20 and whose learning needs are better met in a mature college environment. The primary focus is students who have left high school before graduating. Beyond this group, and when space exists in the program, it is also available to disengaged and underachieving students with the potential to succeed but who are at risk of not graduating from high school. The program helps students complete their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) and make successful transitions to post-secondary college studies. The program enables students to earn: credits towards an OSSD, including Cooperative Education, and dual credits that may count towards their OSSD and a college certificate or diploma program.

Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program is a School to Work program which allows students to explore apprenticeship occupations starting in Grade 11 or Grade 12 through the Cooperative Education program.

eLearning involves students earning online credit courses in a virtual school environment. eLearning connects students and teachers using computer technology, which allows students the flexibility to meet their personal learning styles while gaining 21st century fluency skills.

Focus courses are one credit courses offered with a theme/lens that meets the needs of a targeted group of students in the school. Various one-credit courses are offered within all secondary schools and these may include courses focused on the arts (dance, drama, media arts, music, and visual arts), and technology and physical education (which can be more than one credit).

Individual Pathways Plan At all ages in the Career/Life Planning process, students discover their interests and skills and learn about opportunities in the world in which they live. Using the educational planning tool, *Career Cruising*, students in Grades 7 and 8 will begin to create an **Individual Pathways Plan (IPP)** by setting goals, and exploring opportunities and programs that help them to make decisions. In Grades 9 to 12, students continue to refine goals, further explore opportunities for post-secondary education, and create plans for their future in order to graduate in four years.

Learning and Instructional Technology supports 21st Century learning skills: collaborative inquiry to solve real and relevant problems; creativity and innovation; critical thinking and problem solving; communication. Technology is what enables this kind of learning, and engages students by:

- Providing learning, anywhere, anytime
- Supporting teacher innovation and capacity building
- Enhancing equity of access through the use of personal devices and internet resources
- Using social media to support inquiry and communication while building social responsibility and digital literacy
- Strengthening connections with parents

Wireless access in all schools and the continued expansion of network capacity allow for an increase in the number of users on the system. Wireless network access provides flexibility for the use of mobile technology in schools, with most devices, be it tablets or computers, being able to connect to local wireless networks, allowing students to access the Internet where learning resources and assignments can be stored. Sound field systems, as well as SMARTboards and other interactive devices, allow for increased inclusion and collaboration between students, while supporting the various learning modalities (i.e., visual, tactile/kinesthetic, auditory) found within classrooms.

Tier 2 – Selected Interventions

Student Support Programming provides supports for students with academic and/or special needs in full-time regular class settings. Individual Education Plans (IEP) are developed to support any students that require accommodations in order to be successful in their programming. Students may have an IEP if they are formally Identified or Non-Identified. As well, each secondary school has a Student Success Team that monitors, identifies and supports any vulnerable students through a team-based approach, providing an educator or other caring adult assigned to provide support during transition years and a customized timetable that highlights a student's strengths, needs, and interests.

Reading Recovery is a short-term early intervention for first-grade students having difficulty in learning to read and write. This early intervention is essential because without help, these students continue to fall behind and the achievement gap widens in later grades. Reading Recovery teachers learn how to systematically observe children's behavior, build on the child's strengths, and select teaching moves that make it easy for children to learn. One-to-one instruction is essential to allow students to accelerate their learning and meet grade-level standard.

Third Wave Literacy Intervention is also a short-term literacy intervention available to support grade two students who are recommended for continued support in literacy acquisition. Third Wave is a one-to-one intervention with a trained Reading Recovery teacher.

Speech/Language Programming at the Rainy River District School Board involves the assessing and treating articulation, expressive and receptive language, auditory processing, and phonological awareness (pre-reading skills) needs. The intervention is provided in a number of service delivery methods such as one to one, group, within the classroom, educator consultation, co-teaching, and/or mediation.

Credit Rescue/Credit Recovery supports students who are at risk of not obtaining a credit. Whether during or at the end of a semester, students work with a teacher to try to complete assignments and culminating activities in order to still achieve the credit.

Student Success Programs/Rooms are available in each secondary school as well some elementary schools. The programs are another layer of supports for student that may be identified as "at-risk" of not obtaining required credits or perhaps will benefit from having a "caring-adult" check in with the student on a regular basis. Student Success Rooms are environments that differ from the regular classroom set-up. These rooms allow an alternative learning space where students can access food, and a less structured classroom which can provide a necessary break from the regular classroom.

Aboriginal Education speaks to the focus on providing supports for First Nation, Metis, and Inuit students that target enhanced engagement and inclusion. Examples include dedicated areas within schools for Native Language and for cultural presentations (e.g., Circle Rooms), resources and most importantly, teaching that is reflective of local culture and history of our Aboriginal communities.

Before and After School Programming involves designated space within elementary schools that supports and is sensitive to families' schedules and parenting roles. Research has found positive academic, behavioral and social outcomes for children and numerous benefits for families as full-day and integrated ECEC programing provides real options for parents while reducing the stress and cost of multiple care arrangements for working families.

Tier 3 – Targeted Interventions

Supervised Alternative Learning (SAL) program provides an alternative learning environment for students who are not attending school and offers students a path back to full participation in school.

Alternative Education programs are available in each secondary school to support students through an alternative learning format and Independent Learning Courses. Space within in each high school supports at-risk and vulnerable students, helping these students, of all ability levels, to work in a flexible environment to attain their secondary diploma requirements.

Special Education Programming provides targeted, personalized support in various areas (e.g., life skills, communication, personal care, physical support) and integration, where appropriate, into other programs/classes. Collaboration with parents and community partners helps to plan appropriate transition to community support. Specific Special Education programming and support options through collaboration with local agencies may include:

- Behavioral Consultant Support
- Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) Support
- Intensive Behavior Intervention (IBI) program for students with severe Autism

- Autism School Support Program (CCR)
- Community Care Access Centre's School/Health Support Services
    - Physiotherapy
    - Occupational Therapy
    - Speech Therapy
- Individual student counseling services arranged through local agencies

Mental Health Supports speak to the supports provided for students with mental health and addictions issues by the Rainy River District School Board and its partners. Each school has caring adults, trained in mental health literacy and awareness, and students are further supported through partnerships with local children's mental health counsellors. As well, schools have designated space for these essential partners and for students.   Students require these safe zones to work through their mental health issues and receive resources and programming coordinated by our Mental Health Lead and Mental Health Nurse.