



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rainy River District School Board is HERE for students

The Rainy River District School Board is launching the “HERE” campaign to address a very important focus. Working together with eight district school boards in the Thunder Bay Region, the Board aims to support student achievement by addressing persistent student absenteeism. The “HERE” attendance campaign was first introduced at a meeting of the Northern Ontario Education Leaders (NOEL) in the spring of 2017. Designed to build awareness around the attendance issue in Northwestern Ontario, the “HERE” campaign provides communications support tools to Boards and schools to help improve attendance.

According to data collected in the 2013-14 school year, students in the Thunder Bay Region (from Kenora to Manitowadge) had the highest rates of persistent absenteeism in the province. Students are considered persistently absent if they miss 10% of the days they were expected to be in school. In the Thunder Bay Region, the rate of persistent absenteeism was 21.6%.

The reasons for persistent absenteeism across the region are diverse and varied and can include mental health issues, issues associated with low socio-economic status, sporting events, illness, medical appointments, family travel, and family commitments. The “HERE” campaign provides resources to schools to build awareness among all stakeholders about the importance of regular school attendance:

- For students, “I’M HERE” means they are present. They are “here” physically and mentally.
- For parents, “I’M HERE” means they are ready to assist and encourage their children.
- For teachers and staff, “I’M HERE” tells us that there are dependable, concerned, and caring adults ready to help students achieve to their full potential.
- For community, “I’M HERE” demonstrates that organizations support the children in their District.

“We know that persistent absenteeism greatly impacts students and their ability to achieve and prepare for their futures. We recognize that there is not a one size fits all solution to solve the issue, but this campaign provides a starting point for staff, students, and parents to work together in the interest of student achievement and well-being,” said Heather Campbell, Director of Education.

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Mission: *“Together, we empower all students to believe in themselves, to achieve, and to dream.”*

Vision: *“The Rainy River District School Board is an innovative community, nurturing hearts and minds, to build a foundation for tomorrow, today.”*

This publication is available in accessible formats upon request.