



COMMUNITY EDUCATION FORUM

Creating Student Success: What Does This Look Like to You?

November 18, 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION
2	AGENDA
3	COMMUNITY PANEL
4	SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS
4	Question 1
7	Question 2
9	Question 3
11	Question 4
12	COMMON THEMES
12	1. Focus on Student Success
14	2. Parent, Caregiver, and Community Engagement
16	3. Life Skills Preparedness
18	4. Emotional and Mental Health Support
20	5. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
22	6. Effective Communication
24	Thank You

Our Warmest Thanks

We are delighted to share the results of the hard work and collaboration demonstrated at our Community Education Forum, which took place on November 18, 2023, at Bernie Wolfe School. It welcomed 138 participants from across the River East Transcona School Division community, including parents, business leaders, community members, students, trustees, senior administration, and educators.

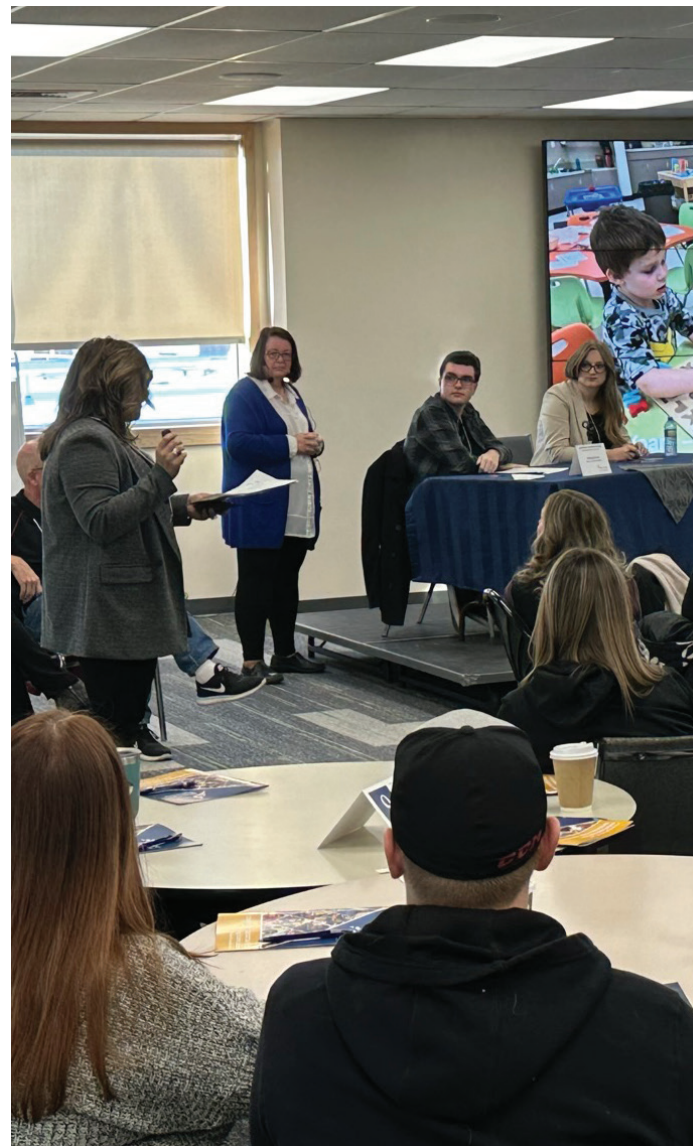
The theme of the forum—Creating Student Success: What Does This Look Like To You?—was selected based on the results of the Enhanced Engagement Survey sent to all parents in the spring of 2023. The theme sparked engaging discussions among participants, whose diverse perspectives were valuable when examining the four questions proposed during the forum. We are truly grateful for the enthusiastic participation and open exchange of ideas. This enabled the division to gather essential information that will be instrumental in shaping the future of our schools.

We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to each panelist for their thoughtful, well-crafted presentations that set a positive tone for the day, along with our school and senior administration who assisted in the organization and facilitation of the forum. These contributions were key to the forum's success.

Thank you to everyone who attended and shared their opinions on student success. We hope you found the experience rewarding and look forward to seeing you at a future Community Education Forum.

Sincerely,

Board Chair Colleen Carswell and Superintendent/CEO Sandra Herbst



AGENDA

Saturday, November 18, 2023

8:30 a.m.

Registration/Coffee

9:00 a.m.

Welcome: Trustee Sheri Irwin

9:05 a.m.

Working Together to Create Student Success: Governance and Operations
Colleen Carswell, Chair, Board of Trustees
Sandra Herbst, Superintendent/CEO

9:20 a.m.

Community Panel—Creating Student Success: What Does This Look Like to You?

10:00 a.m.

Break

10:15 a.m.

Small Group Discussions

If you were on the panel, how would you have answered the question, “Creating Student Success: What Does This Look Like to You?”

In today’s world, what do you think students need in order to be successful that is different than when you were in school?

11:00 a.m.

Recap of Small Group Discussions

11:15 a.m.

Lunch

11:40 a.m.

Introduction to Video: What It Means to be a Trustee

11:45 a.m.

Small Group Discussions

What do we need to do to work together as a community to better student success?

What do you believe is required for students to be successful during times of transition—into kindergarten, from early to middle years, from middle to senior years, and from senior years to the world of work, community, and/or post-secondary education?

12:30 p.m.

Recap of Small Group Discussions

12:45 p.m.

Closing Remarks: Trustee Sheri Irwin

COMMUNITY PANEL

The community panel consisted of two RETSD graduates, a current student, an educator, a parent, and a business leader. They spoke on the following question: Creating Student Success: What Does This Look Like To You?

Michelle Berard—Parent of several current and former RETSD students

Michelle Berard is the mother and foster mother of eight children. Six of her children attend RETSD schools, in Grades 5, 6, 9 (two), 11, and 12, one is in the work force, and one attends Red River College Polytech.

Chris Chartier—Principal at Bernie Wolfe School

Chris Chartier is the principal at Bernie Wolfe School and has been an educator for 28 years. He has taught students from K–12 and been an administrator in both English and French immersion schools. Chris serves his school communities with passion and enthusiasm, and is often outside during recess, coaching, running clubs, and in classrooms connecting with kids.



Cody McDonald—Recent graduate of Murdoch MacKay Collegiate

Cody McDonald is a Michif person and recent graduate of Murdoch MacKay Collegiate. Upon graduating in June 2023, he received 13 awards and recognitions for academics and culture, including the prestigious Schulich Leader Scholarship, the largest STEM-based scholarship in the country.

Miranda Pachal—Manager of Learning Operations from Canadian National Railway

Miranda Pachal is the manager of learning operations at the CN Campus

in Winnipeg. Her education includes a certificate in structural engineering technology and bachelor's and master's degrees in business administration. Before that, she attended three schools in our division, and she's excited to help the next generation of RETSD students succeed.

Eliana Stark—Grade 11 French immersion/sTeam student from Collège Miles Macdonell Collegiate

Eliana Stark is a student at Collège Miles Macdonell Collegiate in French immersion and the sTeam program, which focuses on hands-on, project-based learning that celebrates community and teamwork.



SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Participants spent time in groups discussing steps they felt needed to be taken to support student success at all education levels, and as they enter the working world, the community, or post-secondary.

Question 1

Creating Student Success: What Does This Look Like to You?

- Success can happen in many areas. It is important for students to be well-rounded and flexible to prepare for the future

- Supportive school system and staff that honour success for each student and support them to get there—differentiated instruction and assessment
- Kids who are respectful, kind, happy, and confident
- Meeting kids where they are at and adapting to their needs
- Students have skills and confidence to become the person they are going to be beyond school and ensuring they have the tools needed

- Having the ability to look at things through varied perspectives to make informed decisions
- Developing soft skills such as communication, collaboration, and critical thinking to become more well-rounded
- Developing skills of inquiry and exploration so students can navigate the world around them
- Helping students to find their voice so they can advocate for themselves and others
- Being accepting and open towards those around them
- Recognize and apply regulation strategies in situations where they don't have control
- Asking questions, being curious, being ok with failure but learning from it
- Teachers create supportive environment with no shaming
- Empowering our kids
- Responsible citizens
- The whole child (e.g., arts, academics, friends)

- Value time management
- Developing independence
- Success is about the ability to learn, seek out knowledge and is not about the grade
- Ability to find information and learn
- Take risks, perseverance, critical thinking
- Success in wins and losses—being a good human
- Consistency of teacher for students, especially in early years
- Information to parents about what happens in class
- Equity of supports—for all students at all levels
- Need to be able to face and learn from failures
- Supports and awareness of students that struggle at home
- Layers of support available at schools
- Happy, confident, engaged, motivated, part of a community
- See our children see themselves as a learner
- Leadership opportunities
- Feel safe, be resilient, take risks
- Realize what they need for lifelong learning
 - Academically
 - Emotionally (whole child)
 - Socially
- Having support from teachers and administrators and all adults in the building—academic and social support from trusted adults
- When my child feels safe at school, they want to go to school, they feel supported, emotionally and physically—they feel a sense of belonging and safety
- Having strength-based, positive environment with an emphasis on what is going well
- Alternative learning approaches, non-traditional learning, hands-on flexible learning should be prioritized
- Mental health supports
- Progress looks different for every child
- Belonging
- Flexibility
- Importance of diversity
- Exposure to other cultures
- Listening to kids and caregivers
- Empowered self-advocacy
- Empathetic
- Love of learning
- Having proper supports in place to support student needs that are growing
- Students need teachers who can see when students are struggling
- Focus on big ideas—communication, problem-solving, collaboration
- Understanding of the importance of well-being and mental health
- Positive, caring, meaningful relationships at school and home
- Prepping for transitions
- More connection between levels
- In today's world, what do you think students need in order to be successful that is different than when you went to school?
- Common divisional beliefs and goals that filter into all schools and groups that unite us

- Students learning life skills to be successful after school—respect, confidence, socialization
- Encouraging student curiosity, asking questions and self-reflection
- Collaboration between school, students, home, and community
- Embracing technology and being able to adapt with constant advancements—lifelong learners
- Communicating respectfully in various forms and with diverse people
- Recognize, embrace, and celebrate diversity and inclusion
- Understanding how to collaborate, work with others, be open to others' perspectives, and adapt personal points of view
- Being willing to work as a team, both as a teacher and a contributor
- Students now have the opportunity to be emotionally open and show vulnerability and develop coping strategies that are personal and effective
- Not being afraid to ask for help
- Allowing yourself to be open-minded and accepting differences
- Creating kids that are flexible, adaptable, and have a growth mindset
- Develop a strong moral compass to guide decisions
- Seeing the diversity—do they see themselves?
- Need to be heard—voice
- Mentorship—driven by students
- Open to change
- Personal safety
- Diverse thinking
- Inclusion of all cultures
- Increased parental involvement and community
- Mental well-being/strategies
- Different technology
 - AI, phones, social media
 - Students need to know how to access and use technology appropriately
- Collaboration, communication, and critical thinking are so important now that they can access so much information
- Mental health support
- Recognizing and filling the gap due to COVID learning
- Digital citizenship
- Critical thinking with social media
- Coping skills that build resilience
- Learning about how to navigate social media
- Emotional intelligence development is more important—learn to be caring, kind, and how to work with others
- Soft skills need to be explicitly taught
- Giving students the option to choose how to learn—voice and choice
- Responding to the needs of students (e.g., starting later in the morning for adolescents)
- Offering a menu of different types of learning to help meet the needs of all students
- Hybrid-model in secondary school—online and in-person

- Diverse books, staff, invite diverse speakers, artists, etc.
- Dispel myths and bias, misconceptions
- Balance of academics with social/emotional learning
- Unlearn/relearn—flexibility that is required in ever-changing times
- Smaller class size
- Understanding of how society has changed
 - Work ethic
 - Work/life balance
 - Family dynamics
 - Mental health
- Balance of fundamental skills and use of current and changing tools
- Leverage of learning tools
- Resources to assist students who are experiencing academic challenges
- Advocacy for what is needed for student success
- Building resilience in students so they can handle real-life experiences
- Problem-solving, learning from mistakes, handling pressures of life
- Applied arts and vocational education
- Education and support for mental health and wellness at all levels
- Increased funding to support student well-being
- Students need exposure to different job opportunities to understand what courses to take
- Real-life experiences (e.g., camping, sports, field trips, exposure to different people, band trips, special interests, extracurricular)
- Financial literacy (e.g., budgets, insurance, taxes)
- Understanding balance of self-care and self-discipline
- Students need to not be scared to ask for help
- Students need to set personal goals independently and be motivated to do this
- Career preparation
- Ensure all school areas are accessible
- Science, Technology, English, Arts, Math—project learning
- Make sure kids know what resources are in school for them—both academic and mental health
- Equity of access to programs across schools

Question 2

In today's world, what do you think students need in order to be successful that is different than when you were in school?

- Communication contacts—literal connection one-on-one to chat via email, phone, etc. Contact information easily accessible—have it the same across the schools
- Parent programs, such as managing big emotions, tools to promote reading and writing, dealing/coping with stress, or self-regulating strategies
- Prioritizing funding and educational resources
- Need more than a survey
- Community-based joint advocacy
- Be present in the school (e.g., PAC, volunteering)

- Be engaged (e.g., chat with people in the schoolyard, make connections with people and businesses, fundraising, events)
- Staff need to be invested in the kids (e.g., love, food time, show you care)
- Fundraising money
- Build opportunities to include community members in the school (e.g., grandparents, parent volunteering)
- Staff need to work with families to gain understanding and empathy regarding home environment
- To make change you need to make connection
- Connections with staff and students can make school feel like home
- Teachers sending letters, emails, phone calls
- “I am there”—feeling seen.
- Making space for parents in the school to help, volunteer
- Informative newsletters
- Making connection times, not just parent/teachers or meet the teacher—earlier and often
- Consistency between all schools in the division
- Virtual and in-person opportunities
- Creating more opportunities for celebrations that build community
- Community rooms with child care
- Regular updates about what is happening in schools helps with forming partnerships and conversing with your children
- Microsoft Teams is a helpful tool
- Once-a-month family night
- Parents/students need to feel safe and welcome
- Need to be transparent
- Walking school bus, breakfast programs
- Rules can be restrictive for PACs/Lunch programs
- Lunch programs need to be equitable across schools
- Community should be aware of developmental needs of kids
- Collaboration between educators and parents
- Team approach, takes a village
- Building trust
- Sense of belonging, supported, valued, respected—an inclusive environment
- Removing barriers to involvement
- Think “what can bring us together?”
- Teaching students how to be active and productive community members
- Hold forums to allow for conversations and community input more frequently to guide decision-making
- Greater focus by schools on getting parents involved in day-to-day events, including parent evenings beyond PAC
- Involving parents in problem-solving process when challenges arise with our children
- Continue to look for more and better ways to communicate with families to increase their knowledge of what is happening at schools
- Ask question of parents to determine what barriers keep them from becoming involved

- Ensure parents have the ability to connect with teachers—more frequent overviews about what is happening in class/the school and what needs exist (e.g., looking for a soccer coach)
- Reduce the stigma for parents by inviting feedback
- Increase opportunities for parents to be in our buildings (e.g., volunteers, helping during the day to get a broader scope of what happens on a daily basis)
- Inviting community members in to share knowledge and wisdom related to culture, careers, and other gifts
- Highlight diversity to build comfort and confidence
- Include community members as guest speakers—connect to outside school/real life/future
- Clear communication between sending and receiving schools
- Communication includes staff that works most directly with student when sharing with families
- Increased advocacy for PAC
- Website that is easier to navigate
- Sessions and workshops for parents to support what is happening at school and bridge to community resources
- Opportunities for families to be part of career fairs, workplace sessions, and resources
- Invite community partners to showcase possible future pathways
- Showcase success and celebrate cross-school/cross-age connections
- Access greater support for technology to enhance learning
- Need to validate all learners and accomplishments
- The baseline/bar has been lowered for celebrating student success
- Acknowledging diversity and differences—education around additional needs
- Provide training to teachers and educational assistants on specific needs
- Ensure that leaders in schools and parents are modelling the skills we want to see in the students
- Parents and teachers putting collaborative structures in place regarding social media to then influence them in a positive way

Question 3

What do you believe is required for students to be successful during times of transition—into kindergarten, from EY to MY, from MY to SY, and from SY to the world of work, community, and/or post-secondary education?

- Having safe spaces for students to go to, to have confidential conversations
- “How To” packages—info/places, where to go
- Rethinking open house/school visits
- Kinder Links
- Literacy Links
- Student support with mental and social health is very important
- Student services (counselling in SY)
- Peer support
- Student services is key for SY students in preparing for university

- Mentors in the community for SY to university
- Career development courses
- Peer mentors returning to speak to students in Grades 5–6 and 8–9
- Sources of Strength
- Practice agendas, planning ahead, using alarm clocks
- Community members speaking to K–12 students about their jobs
- Learning Buddies (elementary), SY teaching MY students how to play instruments (i.e., returning student to their MY schools)
- Preparing students long before the transition happens
- Inform parents about what is expected during transitions so they can support the students
- Family nights for the students' families who are in their transition year
 - The sooner the better
 - Even before school starts
- Use website for more information
- “A Day in the Life” videos so families know what to expect
- Recognizing that parents can't support students if they don't know what to expect
- Open house nights with takeaways— may be different name than open house
- Parents need to know deadlines and timelines
- Parents could volunteer to liaise regarding the transitions
- Schools can provide information across feeder systems so everyone is aware of resources/supports through a central directory (e.g., settlement, food directory, mental health, health, eyes checked)
- Communication between feeders
- Tours to next school are helpful
- Visitors (former students)—creates hope/vision for the future
- Opportunities for high school students to visit jobs/industry—volunteer, work experience
- Partnerships with community members in the work force
- Know routines ahead of time
- Programs like First Step to assist students with routines and transitions
- Opportunities for students to visit/ shadow/experience “a day in the life” for students considering options for schools as they transition to high school
- Consider holding information nights earlier in the year so people have the knowledge needed to make informed choices re: course selection, programs available (maybe in December)
- More exposure so kids know what to expect in the new school. (e.g., multiple teachers/applied arts), more than one tour night
- What does a typical day look like?— provide this to students in advance to ease anxiety
- Exit interview opportunities with community members so students have exposure to other adults beyond school

- Provide all students opportunities to tour a variety of spaces to know their varied options
 - RRC Polytech
 - MITT
 - U of M/U of W
 - Apprenticeship
- Have input from current teachers in conversation with new teachers
- More connections to community members, community resources
- Invite older students to speak to younger students
- Transition year teachers to have time to discuss learning needs and teaching styles/assessment
- Collaborative planning for kids for the whole day, not just during the school day
- Apprenticeship, vocational need to be celebrated as equal/alternative pathway – university is not the only way
- Annual half-day sessions to inform youth and families of post-secondary options
- Celebrate student success at the end of each year—especially when students are moving schools
- Staggered entry time to transition points (to settle in, for comfort)
- Expand club offering at all schools—keep connecting kids
- Show empathy to students when they are transitioning
- Teach coping skills early and at all levels (e.g., self-regulation, emotional management)
- Ensure students in Grade 12 understand post-secondary requirements and experience those requirements (e.g., exams in university)
- Invite people who are in specific careers to speak and share about what it looks like in that career
- Develop partnerships with different associations to promote community

Question 4

What do we need to work together as a community to better student success?

- Help with applications, career–mapping, job skills



COMMON THEMES

The Parent/Community Education Forum Ad Hoc Committee came together after the meeting to look through all the information that was discussed. From that review, the committee determined there were six main themes that came to the forefront.

Following, please find information on what the school division is currently doing in each of the six theme areas, and strategies that will be used moving forward. Please note, these strategies are illustrative and not exhaustive.

1. Focus on Student Success

This can be achieved by:

- Empowering students, encouraging self-advocacy, and giving them a voice in their education, all of which are crucial for fostering a sense of ownership and engagement.
- Prioritizing success across multiple areas to ensure students are well-rounded and flexible for future challenges.
- Creating success through accommodating schedules and fostering a supportive environment for a positive, adaptable learning experience.
- Establishing a supportive school system that honours success for each student by implementing differentiated instruction and assessment to meet diverse needs.

Currently, in RETSD, we create student success by:

- Supporting an Indigenous Student Voice Advocacy Group.
- Cohorting Grade 9 students for multiple content areas.

- Engaging in relevant, modern, and research-validated professional learning in all areas of instruction and assessment.
- Offering sTeam programming at two senior years schools—science (s) and technology (T), interpreted through engineering (e) and the arts (a), all based in mathematical (m) elements—that provides a lens to look at the world in meaningful, connected ways.
- Highlighting arts, athletics, and academics as pathways to success.
- Offering High School Apprenticeship Program (HSAP) credits in all senior years schools.
- Supporting trades awareness, apprenticeships, and school counsellor teams through the HSAP teacher.
- Offering credit for employment.
- Developing the St. Boniface Hospital Indigenous Mentorship.
- Creating Indigenous student spaces in all senior years schools.

- Providing Indigenous-focused programming for youth that endorses drumming as a form of self-care, medicine bundles, traditional teachings, Indigenous language, smudge leadership, and more.
- Developing class profiles at the beginning of the school year to support planning for the diversity in classrooms.
- Inviting parents, students, and community members to a Community Education Forum hosted by the Board of Trustees to learn what is happening in RETSD schools and discuss what student success means to them.
- Highlighting student success through presentations made by the senior administration team to the Board of Trustees during board meetings, with a focus on student success through programs, programming, and services for students in RETSD. Trustees discuss these presentations and ask questions, while community attendees learn what is taking place across the school division.

To amplify our focus in this area, RETSD is working to:

- Implement the new provincial Framework for Learning, the purpose of which is to provide a blueprint to organize the essential elements of learning and teaching in Manitoba..
- Develop short-term strategies that support students on reduced day plans to return to school full time as soon as possible.
- Enhance connections with industry and community.



2. Parent, Caregiver, and Community Engagement

This can be achieved by:

- Fostering community engagement by involving community members as mentors, industry speakers, and learning buddies, creating a network that supports students through various transitions and exposes them to diverse career options.
- Establishing comprehensive transition programs at all levels, including

initiatives like Kinder Links, Literacy Links, and middle to senior years transition meetings, to ensure a smooth progression through educational stages.

- Encouraging parent programs that focus on promoting literacy, managing emotions, and coping with stress, along with making space for parents to volunteer and be involved.
- Fostering community-based joint advocacy, encouraging community members to be present, engaged, and

actively involved in schools, building partnerships between education and home, and celebrating diversity within the community.

Currently, in RETSD, we focus on community engagement by:

- Inviting community members who do not have children in the public school system into RETSD school buildings to see and talk about what schools look like now.
- Inviting parents and constituents to biweekly business meetings of the Board of Trustees, either in-person or online.
- Honouring the RETSD Elder and Knowledge Keeper Advisory Council.
- Implementing Project LIFE. This program helps students develop skills that will increase their success in finding competitive employment and transitioning to adult independence. It combines classroom and life skill education with authentic work experiences to prepare the students for a self-determined future as confident, capable citizens.

- Implementing Project Search—a unique, school-to-work training program for students with disabilities. Students are immersed at a host business where they learn employment skills and plan their careers with guidance from a teacher and skills trainers.
- Providing thorough transition-to-school meetings for students with additional needs.
- Offering parent sessions throughout the school year on topics like online safety, anxiety, and youth substance use. These sessions are promoted through RETSD social media and on the divisional website.
- Hosting school-based events that invite community members in to celebrate diversity (e.g., smudges, full moon ceremonies, family literacy nights, divisional Powwow).
- Hosting school-based performing and visual arts events (e.g., concerts, musicals, plays).
- Hosting focused, school-based parent meetings for newcomer parents supported by divisional interpreters

to help explain school and divisional structures.

- Creating active partnerships with arts education professional associations and organizations.

To amplify our focus in this area, RETSD is working to:

- Consider future parent sessions on:
 - Student-specific plans
 - Assessment, grading, and reporting
 - Understanding adaptations, modifications, and individualized programming
 - New curriculum and the Framework for Learning
 - Global competencies
 - Digital literacy
- Rebuild relationships with industry partners (e.g., St. Boniface Hospital, New Flyer, Canadian National Railway).



3. Life Skills Preparedness

This can be achieved by:

- Encouraging critical thinking skills, which are essential in today's information-rich environment, along with fostering a sense of global citizenship and understanding of ethics and global issues.
- Assisting students in embracing

technology and becoming adept at navigating online platforms and information using phones, social media, and artificial intelligence (AI).

- Prioritizing the development of essential life skills such as self-regulation, coping ability, and time management at all educational levels.

Currently, in RETSD, we focus on life skills preparedness by:

- Implementing programming, such as:
 - Sources of Strength: “A best practice youth mental health promotion and suicide prevention program designed to harness the power of peer social networks to create healthy norms and culture, ultimately preventing suicide, violence, bullying, and substance misuse.”
 - Project 11: K–12 curriculum that supports “mental health awareness for students from an early age and aims to help them develop the understanding that they can positively influence their own mental wellness by learning skills and adopting healthy coping strategies into their lives.”
 - Thrival Kits™: “Thrival Kits are shoebox-sized kits that students fill with small, meaningful items as they complete classroom challenges and activities throughout the school year. Activities are focused on mental health promotion; these daily practices protect and promote mental well-being.”

- Zones of Regulation: “A social-emotional learning curriculum and regulation program. Learners benefit from increased self-awareness and emotional skills, and a common language for communication, problem-solving, and emotional understanding.”
- Social Thinking—We Thinkers!: Social thinking is a process we all go through in our minds as we try to make sense of our own and others’ thoughts, feelings, and intentions in context, whether we are co-existing, actively interacting, or figuring out what is happening from a distance (e.g., media, literature).”
- Offering middle years students across the division a variety of applied arts (e.g., foods and nutrition, electronics, metals, woods, clothing, and textiles).
- Developing digital literacy skills through the RETSD Digital Literacy Guidelines.
- Implementing Reading Apprenticeship at middle years to help student understand how to read in content areas like science and social studies.
- Inviting Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers into schools to share The Good Life teachings.
- Using Medicine Wheel teachings as a form of self-regulation.
- Setting goals in senior years by answering the questions raised in the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission: Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going? What is my purpose?

To amplify our focus in this area, RETSD is working to:

- Implement the new provincial Framework for Learning.
- Leverage AI in teaching and learning.
- Provide professional learning around co-regulation, as well as strategies staff can use to support students in developing life skills.
- Pilot digital literacy scope and sequence documents.
- Increase digital literacy skills in the newcomer population.



4. Emotional and Mental Health Support

- Recognizing the importance of emotional and mental health during transitions, integrating emotional support teams, peer support, and student services to provide necessary guidance, especially in critical transition points like middle to senior years and senior years to university.
- Focusing on the development of soft skills, social-emotional learning, and cultivating positive attributes such as kindness, curiosity, and resilience for overall student success.
- Developing emotional intelligence,

coping skills, and resilience that is crucial for handling the stresses of modern life, including mental health challenges.

Currently, in RETSD, we focus on emotional and mental health support by:

- Putting financial supports in place through the Board of Trustees' budget process that provide funds for programs, programming, and services like counsellors in K–12 schools and therapists in most senior years schools.
- Having substance use counsellors provide education and awareness to students in middle and senior years schools and provide individual counselling at senior years schools.
- Providing inclusion support teachers who work to transition youth in care to their community after graduation.
- Using Medicine Wheel teachings to promote social, emotional, physical, and mental balance.
- Having Elders and Knowledge Keepers in senior years schools, serving as mentors.

- Sharing information through transition meetings for students with additional needs that supports appropriate programming and a positive start for their next year.
- Providing programs such as:
 - o Sources of Strength: A best practice youth mental health promotion and suicide prevention program designed to harness the power of peer social networks to create healthy norms and culture, ultimately preventing suicide, violence, bullying, and substance misuse. (from the Sources of Strength website) <https://bit.ly/4a4La29>
 - o Project 11: K–12 curriculum that supports mental health awareness for students from an early age and aims to help them develop the understanding that they can positively influence their own mental wellness by learning skills and adopting healthy coping strategies into their lives. (from the Project 11 website) <https://bit.ly/4b3n21l>

- Thrival Kits: Thrival Kits are shoebox-sized kits that students fill with small, meaningful items as they complete classroom challenges and activities throughout the school year. Activities are focused on mental health promotion; these daily practices protect and promote mental well-being. (from the Thrival Kits website) <https://bit.ly/3yauFVe>
- Zones of Regulation: A social emotional learning curriculum and regulation program. Learners benefit from increased self-awareness and emotional skills, and a common language for communication, problem-solving, and emotional understanding. (from the Zones of Regulation website) <https://bit.ly/3UxO2PD>
- Social Thinking (We Thinkers!): Social thinking is a process we all go through in our minds as we try to make sense of our own and others' thoughts, feelings, and intentions in context, whether we are co-existing, actively interacting, or figuring out what is happening from a distance

(e.g., media, literature). (from the Social Thinking website)

<https://bit.ly/3yOdW6L>

- Roots of Empathy: A school-based program that aims to build caring, peaceful, and civil societies by teaching empathy to children and adults. (from the Roots of Empathy website) <https://bit.ly/3UM0bSi>
- Nanda Gikenin (To Learn) and Ogichidaakwe (Strong Warrior Woman) in early and middle years schools to support self-care and foster positive identity.
- Learning how to lead a smudge

To amplify our focus in this area, RETSD is currently expanding programs, programming, and services to include:

- Student Services consultants to attend level transition meetings to support appropriate programming for students.
- Consultants who will provide training for school counsellors to enhance and strengthen the services they provide.
- Continued support of clinicians in implementing Social Thinking concepts through We Thinkers! in early years

schools.

- Clinicians and consultants to support Social Thinking concepts and strategies in middle and senior years schools.
- The implementation of Sources of Strength programming and curriculum in additional schools.



5. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

- Promoting inclusion, celebrating diversity, and providing exposure to different career pathways to prepare students for success in the world beyond school.
- Striving for equity resources across schools, removing barriers to involvement, and promoting a transparent and inclusive environment where parents and students feel safe and welcome.
- Putting an emphasis on recognizing, embracing, and celebrating diversity,

and requiring an understanding of different cultures and perspectives.

Currently, in RETSD, we focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion by:

- Having policies that have been put in place by the Board of Trustees and that are supported through the budget process and operationalized by senior administration.
- Sharing current and relevant information and resources about different cultures through the internal Teams site.
- Ensuring that our social media

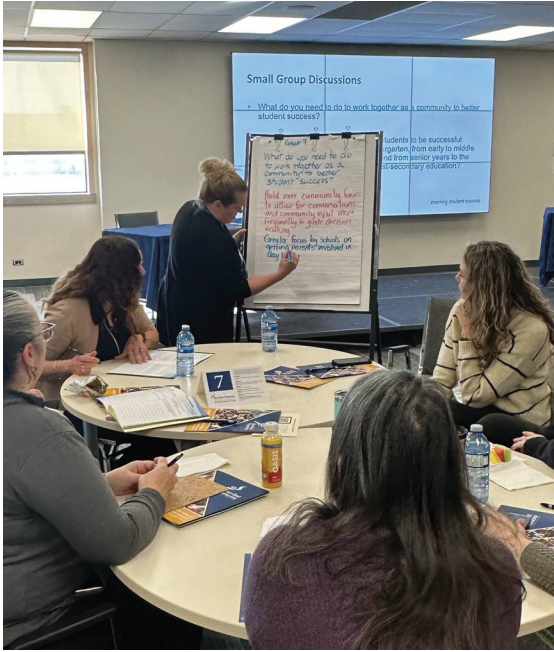
calendar recognizes festivals and observances across cultures.

- Allocating student services funds to schools based on site-based characteristics and need.
- Putting together collections of books and resources in school and classroom libraries that represent many cultures, including books used by counsellors in bibliotherapy.
- Supporting two affinity groups for staff across the school division.
- Creating spaces in schools that highlight and reflect cross-cultural learning.
- Providing access to a career-planning tool for students in Grades 5–12.
- Sharing resources across libraries, thereby increasing access.
- Making an online library accessible to all with print and audio options.
- Making a new model of technical vocational programming accessible to more students.
- Supporting an Indigenous Student Voice Advocacy Group (Debwewin).

- Creating Truth and Reconciliation residencies in schools across the division
- Holding divisional book discussions for educators across the division on Indigenous pedagogies and anti-racist education.
- Providing multiple levels of opportunity for participation in interscholastic extracurriculars in middle years.
- Offering a wide range of extracurricular activities, clubs, and sports to choose from.
- Ensuring there are accessible spaces in buildings.
- Establishing multiple entry-points and increased opportunities for students to access arts programming.
- Providing First Nations students with the access to products, services, and supports they need under Jordan's Principle.
- Developing class profiles at the beginning of the school year to support planning for the diversity in classrooms.

To amplify our focus in this area, RETSD is currently expanding services to include:

- Exploration of options to provide after-school programming for newcomer students.
- Engagement between the school division and province to establish an anti-racism policy.
- Continued professional learning for all staff in provincial accessibility standards and inclusionary practices.
- Human resources practices that increase representation of equity-seeking groups across the school division.



6. Effective Communication

- Implementing stable, consistent, yearly communication processes to ensure parents receive regular updates and are informed about school activities and initiatives.
- Establishing connections between home and school and making contact information easily accessible and consistent across schools.
- Improving communication strategies,

including clear communication between sending and receiving schools, early information sessions for parents and students, and technology like Microsoft Teams to enhance collaboration and the sharing of information.

- Recognizing the importance of effective communication, diverse supporter resources, and accessible information for parents to navigate the education system.

Currently, in RETSD, we support effective communication by:

- Having a communications plan in place that was set by the Board of Trustees as a priority; it includes strategies to enhance both internal and external communication, along with increasing community engagement.
- Having a Board standing committee for communications.
- Providing tools and avenues that allow the Board to meet and communicate with parents and the community (e.g., The Torch, ThoughtExchange, surveys, Community Education Forum, Budget Town Hall meetings; each of these

helps all the stakeholders in education learn and better communicate with each other.

- Distributing school newsletters.
- Providing information through our Parent Portal.
- Maintaining school websites that provide a translation function for multiple languages.
- Sharing information through divisional and school-based social media accounts.
- Posting and sharing RETSD TV episodes.
- Holding open houses at our schools.
- Arranging transition-to-school meetings for students and parents.
- Providing interpreters, as needed, to support clear communication when planning for students, as well as at select school and division events, such as parent/teacher evenings, open houses, and the Preschool Growing & Learning Days events.
- Creating brochures for parents on a variety of topics (e.g., Violence Threat Risk Assessments, fostering effective learning behaviours, student-specific planning).

- Sharing information about programs, programming, and available services on the divisional website.
- Holding Preschool Growing & Learning Days events for families with students entering kindergarten.
- Organizing club fairs in senior years schools.
- Putting together celebration of learning events (e.g., sTeam events, JP SDG, John W. Gunn School Cultural Fair).

To amplify our focus in this area, RETSD is currently expanding services to include:

- Connecting with parents/caregivers who may have barriers to technology.
- Creating school-based Teams chats to share timely information regarding students.
- FAQs translated in multiple languages (e.g., Questions to Ask at Student/Parent Conferences, Common Student Services Terms at Student-Specific Planning Meetings).
- Posting and sharing RETSD TV episodes.
- Holding open houses at our schools.

- Arranging transition-to-school meetings for students and parents.
- Providing interpreters, as needed, to support clear communication when planning for students, as well as at select school and division events, such as parent/teacher evenings, open houses, and the Preschool Growing & Learning Days events.
- Creating brochures for parents on a variety of topics (e.g., Violence Threat Risk Assessments, fostering effective learning behaviours, student-specific planning).
- Sharing information about programs, programming, and available services on the divisional website.
- Holding Preschool Growing & Learning Days events for families with students entering kindergarten.
- Organizing club fairs in senior years schools.
- Putting together celebration of learning events (e.g., sTeam events, JP SDG, John W. Gunn School Cultural Fair).

To amplify our focus in this area, RETSD is currently expanding services to include:

- Connecting with parents/caregivers who may have barriers to technology.
- Creating school-based Teams chats to share timely information regarding students.
- FAQs translated in multiple languages (e.g., Questions to Ask at Student/Parent Conferences, Common Student Services Terms at Student-Specific Planning Meetings).

Thank You

Every year, the Board of Trustees identifies a set of priorities that guide our work, and for the 2023–24 school year, the Board selected communications as one of these priorities. This meant conducting a review of the current communications plan, developing additional strategies to enhance internal and external communication, and increasing community engagement. As one of our steps to achieve greater community engagement, the Board put in place a Parent Community Education Forum ad hoc committee to organize and oversee this event.

The Board would like to thank the ad hoc committee of Shannon Hiebert, Sheri Irwin, Susan Olynik, Colleen Carswell, and Sandra Herbst for all their hard work. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who took part in the forum and contributed to the vibrant discussion. We hope to see you at future forums.

If you have any questions, please contact the Board at info@retsd.mb.ca or contact the principal of your child’s school.

Ward 1

Colleen Carswell (Board Chair)

ccarswell@retsd.mb.ca

Sheri Irwin

sirwin@retsd.mb.ca

Ward 2

Rod Giesbrecht

rgiesbrecht@retsd.mb.ca

Sheri Hanson

shanson2@retsd.mb.ca

Ward 3

Brianne Goertzen

bgoertzen@retsd.mb.ca

Keith Morrison

kmorrison@retsd.mb.ca

Ward 4

Susan Olynik (Board Vice-Chair)

solynik@retsd.mb.ca

Brenda Bage

bbage@retsd.mb.ca

Ward 5

Shannon Hiebert

shiebert@retsd.mb.ca

creating student success

589 Roch St., Winnipeg, MB R2K 2P7 | Tel: 204.667.7130 | Fax: 204.661.5618
www.retsd.mb.ca • info@retsdb.ca

For questions and comments, please contact the RETSD communications department. ©2024

This publication is available in alternative formats upon request.

