

TURTLE MOUNTAIN SCHOOL DIVISION

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Division Highlights –Winter 2018

www.tmsd.mb.ca



MISSION STATEMENT

The students are the focus of all our efforts. The Division strives to provide an education that prepares individuals for a meaningful life in a changing world. We promote a learning environment that begins in the home, continues in the school and is supported by the community.

TURTLE MOUNTAIN SCHOOL DIVISION PRIORITIES 2016-2020

We will encourage students to be active, motivated learners.

We will facilitate improvements in literacy and numeracy for all students.

We will enhance communication strategies across stakeholder groups.

We will align student experiences to facilitate success in an ever-changing world.

Resiliency Questionnaire Results Being Utilized Within Turtle Mountain School Division

As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen student resiliency and well-being within Turtle Mountain School Division, in the fall of 2017 students in grades 4-12 were asked to complete an online questionnaire. This was the second time Turtle Mountain School Division has administered this questionnaire, the first being in the fall of 2016. The questionnaire, designed by OnBoard Education, is meant to give students the opportunity to share what they feel their strengths are, what is working well for them, areas where they feel they need to strengthen their skills, and supports they may need in this regard.

Once the questionnaire is completed students have access to an individualized profile page, one which highlights several areas of strength as well as two areas where students can work to strengthen their skills. Students then work with either their classroom teachers and/or teacher

advisors, using resources provided through OnBoard Education, to develop individualized plans to strengthen student achievement and success.

In some circumstances individual students may need more intensive support. When this is the case an individualized plan is established with the intent to provide the support students need to build on their strengths and address the areas requiring greater support. This can involve classroom teachers and/or teacher advisors, guidance counselors, the division psychologist, the division social worker, as well as external supports when needed. Parental involvement is of course also critical as part of working together to promote the success of all youth in our communities.

Resources and information is available for parents as well, for more information visit the OnBoard Education website:

<http://www.onboardinitiatives.com/>

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Student Services

Character Development

This year, Killarney School has made some changes in the teaching role of the Vice Principal. The new position is based on Character Education and Wellness. The goal is to work with and alongside teachers and students to create and work in “optimistic classrooms” where students develop Character, the C within the Global Competencies for Deep Learning. The intent is to work on the essential character traits of grit, tenacity, perseverance and resilience, which will in turn strengthen mental health issues.

Madame Beaupre, along with classroom teachers, have been using a program from the Hawn Foundation called “MIND UP”. It has separate, but similar, lessons for grades K to 8. The year began by learning about the brain and the powers of our Prefrontal Cortex, Amygdala and Hippocampus. Students have also worked on breathing techniques to help them be their most present, focused and mindful selves.

Classrooms have talked about how to avoid an amygdala “hijack” in order to allow the Prefrontal Cortex to do the good work it is meant to do. This has taken students through a series of activities and learnings around their senses in order to recognize and deal with all the sights, smells, sounds and movements that are coming at them all of the time. When they do so, students can keep their Reticular Activation System in shape, which allows for open and clear pathways through their brains. The whole section is geared to helping students “become adept at sharpening their attention and using sensory experiences to enhance memory, problem solving, relationships, creativity and physical performance” (Mind UP, page 50).

The second half of the year will allow K to 8 classrooms to continue making the language of character and mindfulness part of daily routines. The program also helps students navigate through two more units called “It’s all about Attitude” and “Taking Action Mindfully”.

Throughout, students will be reminded of their Onboard education profiles (grade 4 to 12) and concentrate on focus, the mind, choices and the best options for happiness, success and preparedness for life.

Mental Health First Aid

This school year, Turtle Mountain School Division began year one of a multi-year plan to have all teaching staff trained in Mental Health First Aid. This past August, eighteen teachers were certified in Mental Health First Aid through training provided by the Prairie Mountain Health Authority.

Mental Health First Aid is a framework to describe the help provided to a person developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. Mental Health First Aid is given until the student receives treatment by a certified professional, or the crisis is resolved. The Mental Health First Aid model has five steps:

1. Assess risk of suicide or harm
2. Listen non-judgmentally
3. Give reassurance and information
4. Encourage the person to get appropriate professional help
5. Encourage self-help strategies

Over the course of two days, the teachers learned how to notice and support a student experiencing a variety of mental health issues: substance related disorders, mood related disorders, anxiety and trauma related disorders, psychotic disorders, eating disorders, deliberate self-injury, and/or suicidal behaviour.

Turtle Mountain School Division wants to ensure that all students receive appropriate mental health support, when they need it. Focusing on teacher certification in Mental Health First Aid is one way of fostering student support, as teachers increase their skills in identifying and supporting student mental health concerns when they arise.



FIRST AID

Transportation

This year the school bus transportation includes 20 regular routes. The daily transportation length to the schools and back home is more than 3380 km. Most of the routes are in a rural environment, meaning there are only gravel roads, which includes 2182 km. This is a huge day to day challenge for the families, the students, the drivers, and last but not least, for the buses too.

In addition, we have extracurricular trips. For example, at the division level, we accomplished 67 different trips from November 15th to January 20th. Most of the trips were for sport competitions, but our students were able to visit museums and theater dramas/musicals in Winnipeg as well. Our school bus transportation team is working with poor road and weather conditions at times. Thanks to the drivers and our maintenance staff, there weren't any incidents so far.

The next Professional Development day will occur on February 12th in Killarney and we will be training the all the school bus drivers for Non-Violent Crisis Intervention.

Preparation for Inclement Weather:

As winter continues we know at times inclement weather can result in classes and buses being cancelled.

In determining whether classes will be cancelled, the Transportation Coordinator and the Superintendent/CEO will check weather conditions throughout the division, as well as with the Highways Department, to determine the severity of the weather and road conditions. When a decision is made to cancel classes, an announcement will be made over radio and updates will be posted on the Division website.



Maintenance

The maintenance department has been busy working on several projects throughout the Division. The Killarney School Grooming Room project, as well as the installation of a mechanical lift to the stage, are both well under way. Both of these projects are being funded by the Manitoba Public School Finance Board, they were started just before the New Year and expected to be completed in April, 2018. Once completed the space will consist of a grooming room, quiet room, and a sensory room. In the future we will also be funding the addition of a life skills suite connected to this space, as this is something we have been targeting for a number of years. The work to install a mechanical lift to the stage in Killarney School is also in progress, when complete the stage area will be fully accessible for everyone.

The construction document submission for the Boissevain School envelope and mechanical upgrade is nearly complete. This is a

large project similar to what was recently completed at Killarney School. It will include the replacement of the exterior brick and windows throughout much of Boissevain School, as well as mechanical upgrades including a much needed replacement of the boiler system. The project is expected to go to tender within the next 30 days, and work will begin early in the spring of 2018. The complete project will be funded by the Manitoba Public School Finance Board, and is expected to cost approximately \$4 million.

Minto School will be adding a concrete pad to the grounds in order to have an outdoor space for basketball and tennis. This project is expected to be complete in the spring of 2018. We have also installed new flooring in part of the lower level of the Minto School, and hope to complete the rest of the space in the summer.

Divisionally we are also taking measures to keep our security systems up to date, including the video surveillance cameras as well as door closure systems to ensure they function in accordance with our school lockdown procedures.

Finance

Once again Turtle Mountain School Division is in the throes of budgeting for the 2018-2019 school year. As of yet we do not know what is in store for us with regards to funding from the province, but we do anticipate a further reduction to funding. A positive note though, this is an assessment year and the preliminary numbers indicate there is an increase of 34 million to the assessment base from last year. This will help us somewhat when trying to maintain current staffing and programming, honoring our commitments, and avoiding the reduction of divisional and school budgets. Budget deliberations will continue throughout February, 2018.

We will also be looking at transportation software alternatives. Our current transportation software is at least seven years old, and has become antiquated. We will be meeting with Versa-Trans (Cloud Based Software), and Transfinder respectively. We hope to have this new software implemented by July 1, 2018, provided it can be accomplished within current budget allocations.

Debenture submissions are also being completed for the following projects:

Boissevain School Grooming Room
Killarney School Grooming Room
Killarney School Heating System – final 5%
Minto School Roof Upgrade – final 2%

