

Mental Health Strategic Plan

2018-2021

Introduction

Rainbow District School Board is committed to addressing the mental health needs of students as well as improving mental wellness for all.

Our vision states *"we are leaders in learning, inspiring success for all students by reaching minds and touching hearts"*.

This vision embodies the Board's commitment to provide authentic and engaging learning opportunities, set high expectations and create excitement for learning, support students to reach their potential, foster 21st century skills and competencies, and deepen literacy and numeracy skills while nurturing physical, mental, social and emotional well-being, forging strong relationships and building resiliency, honouring diversity and enhancing cultural understanding, valuing student, staff, parent/guardian and partner voice, and celebrating student, staff, school and system success.

The Mental Health Strategic Plan aligns with the Board's Strategic Directions, creating a learning environment where young people become strong, healthy and vibrant individuals, without discrimination.

Mental Health Vision

In Rainbow Schools, we envision a learning environment that promotes mental health and well-being for all.

Rainbow District School Board is committed to creating the organizational conditions required to successfully communicate and deliver evidence-based programs that promote resiliency and wellness for all students.

In the three-year Mental Health Strategy, we will build structures, processes, resources and learning opportunities to enhance staff knowledge and skills related to mental health awareness and literacy. We will work collaboratively with families and community partners throughout the process, and communicate our key messages consistently throughout our system.



Guiding Principles

As we implement our mental health strategy, we will be guided by the following principles:

1. Mental health and well-being is imperative to all students' academic and personal success, personal growth and identity development, ability to reach their potential, and full and meaningful participation in all aspects of life.
2. Working closely with families and community partners is important in successfully meeting the mental health needs of all students. We have a long history of positive working relationships with our families and with agencies within the Sudbury, Espanola, Manitoulin communities. These valued relationships will assist us in moving forward collaboratively to implement mental health programs, training and supports in our schools, and ultimately, create suicide safer communities.
3. Evidence-based programming is essential. We will explore feedback about existing programs and data from other sources to determine which ones best suit the needs of our students and schools. We will strive to align the programs being offered in our system, selecting programs based on evidence available regarding their effectiveness and outcomes.
4. Supporting educators with the knowledge and resources required to ensure the creation of mentally healthy schools within our Board will create a school culture where all students feel safe, accepted and welcomed.
5. Reducing the stigma associated with mental health within our schools is key to empowering students to develop healthy self-advocacy skills and provide them with the courage to seek assistance when they require it.
6. Universal mental health promotion, stigma reduction and early recognition of mental health problems are more effective through systematic whole class intervention and whole school involvement.

Goals

The goals for the mental health strategy are:

1. Embed student mental health policy within the Board's strategic planning, supporting sustainability.
2. Raise educator, staff, student and parent mental health literacy in order to decrease stigma and increase the capacity to recognize the signs of mental health problems early and how to access the appropriate intervention.
3. Implement evidence informed promotion, prevention, and intervention mental health services to promote mentally healthy classrooms.
4. Enhance supports for students who are experiencing distress or are in crisis.



Organizational Conditions

Priority Areas /Strategic Themes

Rationale for Area of Focus

Key Activities

Resources Needed

Timeline

Responsibility

Cultivate leadership and instill accountability for student mental health promotion and integration at all levels of the Board

Successful implementation of mental health strategy is possible in environments where education stakeholders are committed to sharing the responsibility for supporting implementation within a culture of learning.

- Implement Mental Health Steering Committee
- Disseminate mental health information to staff
- Assist staff in navigating pathways to service

Collaboration across systems

September 2018 to October 2018

Mental Health Lead
Superintendent of Schools

Implement evidence informed standard processes

None exist for mental health. Need to develop standards for access to services and consent.

- Improve speed for accessing appropriate services
- Create standardization across the Board and its schools
- Focus on electronic documentation

Funding for program evaluation activities
Docushare training for Social Workers

September 2018 to September 2019

Mental Health Lead
Superintendent of Schools
Mental Health Team
Information Services staff

Foster mental health literacy and awareness training

Building a mentally healthy classroom for teachers, including access for professional learning and the necessary clarification of the teacher's role in supporting the mental health of their students

- Provide ongoing information regarding mental health for staff and classroom strategies for supporting students with mental health concerns
- Increase mental health First Aid training and include elementary school staff

Funding for release for teacher training

September 2018 to September 2021

Mental Health Lead
Superintendent of Schools
Mental Health Team
Mental Health Steering Committee

Capacity Building

Develop and implement a communication strategy

Sustaining and enhancing organizational conditions at Board level, school level and in the community to communicate the mental health strategy, including shared language, clear and focused vision, key messages, and commitment to implementation of the mental health strategy for the Board

- Mental health newsletters for school websites
- News releases and media coverage to showcase upcoming events as well as mental health initiatives that strengthen key messages
- Share links of mental health promotion, stigma reduction and resources
- Continuous updates to learning resources, protocols, and classroom messages, sharing links to mental health promotion, stigma reduction and resources
- Continuous updates to learning resources, protocols and classroom tools in Conference Folder
- Develop further information and resource links for parents/guardians and students on mental health promotion and where to get help on the mental health web page on the Board website rainbowschools.ca
- Send key information/bulletins/media guidelines out to system to support mental health promotion and intervention following tragic events or issues of concern
- Ongoing agenda items featuring mental health learning, including updates for leadership teams, professional teams, school councils, and school staff meetings

Development of parent/guardian and educator resources/ newsletters for distribution

Ongoing

SMH-ASIST modules from Supporting Minds Decision Tools, protocols, special bulletins and mental health resources

Mental Health Lead
Senior Advisor,
Corporate Communications
and Strategic Planning
Mental Health Steering Committee

Lead and promote mentally healthy schools
Create mentally healthy classrooms
Provide specific targeted mental health training

Ongoing system implementation for building capacity of leaders and educators, standard processes and system integration across departments, initiatives and settings

- Promote Mentally Healthy Schools with mental health champions and School well-being teams
- Develop, implement and evaluate whole school mental health promotion and targeted mental health activities with ongoing coaching
- Create tiered model of mental health promotion, prevention and intervention
- Create mentally healthy classrooms through teachers, support staff, administrators, New Teacher Induction Program, consultants with resources for learning opportunities at staff meetings
- Provide training in mental health First Aid
- Offer Suicide ASIST training for targeted staff groups

SMH ASIST-Leading Mentally Healthy Schools document, Mental Health Strategy, Well-Being Strategy

Funding for release for teacher training

Targeted professional learning opportunities at Principal meetings and for staff meetings
Ongoing mental health training sessions

Mental Health Lead
Superintendent of Schools
Mental Health Team
Mental Health Steering Committee
Professional Staff

Implementing evidence-based mental health promotion and prevention programming

Priority Areas/Strategic Themes	Rationale for Area of Focus	Key Activities	Resources Needed	Timeline	Responsibility
Build resiliency	Enhance resilience through programs which build positive social engagement and generate a sense of connectedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement Kids Have Stress Tool!® a research based program designed for children in the primary grades developed by the Psychology Foundation of Canada Develop resiliency skills in all students in Grades 1 and 6 to reduce stigma and foster a resilient school climate 	Funding to support initiative	Pilot September 2018 Review May 2019	Mental Health Lead Superintendent of Schools Public Health Sudbury & Districts Local Health Integration Network
Support students who are experiencing distress or crisis	Provide mental health services that are student centered, informed by strength-based approaches, professionally staffed, evidence-based, and readily accessible to at-risk, vulnerable student populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop multi-system response to student needs BRISC 	Funding for training, professional development and implementation	September 2018 to September 2020	Mental Health Lead Mental Health Team SMH-ASIST
Develop programs that raise awareness and eradicate stigma and discrimination against students with mental health issues	Provide students with opportunities to understand mental health issues by learning from individuals with lived experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host HEADSTRONG Summit (Mental Health Commission of Canada) 	Transportation for students, lunch, take-aways and speaker gratuity	September 2018 to June 2019	Mental Health Lead Mental Health team Mental Health Commission of Canada Other local and federal school boards

Supporting Specific Populations

Parent Engagement and Learning	Engage Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) as key partners in mental health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a strategy that aligns with PIC goals 	Parents Reaching Out Grant submitted to support conference on mental health Other resources to be determined	Fall 2018 to Spring 2020	Parent Involvement Committee Mental Health Lead Superintendent of Schools Public Health Sudbury & Districts
Student Engagement and Learning	Engage the voice of youth to enhance the pace of student mental health literacy development and help to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness and addictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer workshops for students to build capacity for accessing available resources and supports as well as providing literacy for healthy coping strategies 	Work with students to determine required resources	Fall 2018 to Spring 2020	Mental Health Lead Student Senate
Indigenous Knowledge Integration	Incorporate Indigenous well-being components into mental health strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with Indigenous Education Lead, Superintendents and community Indigenous mental health workers for learning and resources about Indigenous mental health and well-being Provide learning to Mental Health Steering Committee and the mental health team about Indigenous well-being 	Engagement with Principal of Indigenous Education and team Time allotted for in-service	September 2019 to September 2020	Mental Health Lead Principal of Indigenous Education Mental Health Steering Committee
Addressing poverty	<p>Develop a strategy to specifically address poverty</p> <p>15 of 20 schools who completed the mental health survey indicated that poverty is a significant contributor to mental health problems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a clear understanding of need Create partnerships with community agencies to invest in our students and families 	To be determined	January 2019 to June 2020	Mental Health Lead Rapid Mobilization Table (RMT) Mental Health Steering Committee

Supporting System Coordination

System integration and coordination of Board strategies for mental health and well-being	Align policies and practices that support optimal student mental health with strategic goals, planning and resource allocation decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed policy within strategic planning Increase data collection and assessment of key indicators of student mental health Evaluate programs currently in place, as well as new programs to be implemented 	To be determined	September 2019 to September 2021	Mental Health Lead Superintendent of Schools Mental Health Team Mental Health Steering Committee
Clearly identified internal and external pathways for mental health support and services	Create awareness of available referral options to facilitate appropriate supports for students. Linking and mobilizing resources, schools and community services can then achieve significant positive outcomes for students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define pathways within and between schools and local service organizations with clear goals and responsibilities of each party Engage in activities to help each service understand the perspective of the other Have clear points of contact between respective organizations and clearly identify who can troubleshoot any difficulties 	Gathering data, providing in-service and document algorithm	Fall 2018	Mental Health Lead Mental Health Team Child and Family Centre Health Sciences North
Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention Protocol	Continue community collaboration and coordination of school pathways with community planning tables for suicide prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in community suicide prevention tables to share resources and information to identify and close gaps for children and youth in crisis Share Board protocols for suicide prevention, intervention, postvention and media guidelines Create pathways of care and collaboration for students in crisis 	<p>Suicide prevention, intervention and postvention protocols</p> <p>Media guidelines</p>	August 2018 to October 2018	Mental Health Lead

Mental Health Leadership Team

Mary Jago, Mental Health Lead

Kathy Wachnuk, Superintendent of Special Education Programs and Services

Norm Blaseg, Director of Education

References:

<http://teenmentalhealth.org/>

<https://mindyourmind.ca>

<https://smh-assist.ca>



Rainbow Schools

Reaching minds. Touching hearts.

rainbowschools.ca