

Mental Health and Addictions Strategic Plan

Sudbury

Rainbow District School Board acknowledges that we are on the traditional and ancestral territory of the Anishnawbek including Atikameksheng Anishnawbek and Wahnapiitae Nations. We acknowledge that we are situated within the Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850 and want to recognize the inherent rights of the Anishnawbek that maintained these lands from time immemorial.

Manitoulin Island

Rainbow District School Board acknowledges that we are on the traditional and ancestral lands of the Three Fires Confederacy, which includes the Ojibwe, Odawa and Potawatomi. We acknowledge that we are situated within the lands covered by the Robinson-Huron Treaty of 1850. We want to recognize and honour the inherent rights of the Anishnawbek that maintained these lands from time immemorial.

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Rainbow District School Board is the largest public school board in Northern Ontario. The Board offers English and French Immersion programs from Kindergarten to Grade 12 in Sudbury, Espanola and Manitoulin Island.

In Rainbow Schools, we are committed to addressing the mental health needs of students as well as improving mental wellness for all.

Our Vision: We are leaders in learning, inspiring success for all students by reaching minds and touching hearts.

Our Mission: Together, we prepare students to become lifelong learners, achieving their full potential as confident, caring members of society.

The Board adopted the [Seven Grandfather Teachings](#) - Humility, Bravery, Honesty, Wisdom, Truth, Respect and Love - braided together with Resilience, Equity and Community as its values. Sacred in Indigenous culture, the Seven Grandfather Teachings provide a foundation for how we understand and build relationships with Indigenous students, staff, families and communities.

The values serve as guidance for staff and students as we journey together towards system growth and personal development. They provide a foundation on how to interact with people and the world around us. The Seven Grandfather Teachings also work to ground us as individuals and communities as we strive to connect with and care for ourselves and the world around us.

Rainbow District School Board's [2022-2027 Strategic Directions](#) identifies Mental Health and Well-Being as one of six priorities along with Student Success and Achievement, Truth and Reconciliation, Literacy and Numeracy, Environmental Education and Sustainability, and Equity and Inclusive Education.

The 2023-2026 Mental Health and Addictions Strategic Plan aligns with Strategic Directions. Centered on diversity, equity and inclusion, the Strategic Plan creates a learning environment where young people are strong, healthy, vibrant and resilient members of society.

Mental Health Vision

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

Rainbow District School Board has demonstrated its commitment to mental health and well-being by creating the organizational structure to support mentally healthy schools.

In this three-year Mental Health and Addictions Strategic Plan, we continue to implement sustainable mental health promotion, prevention and intervention in our schools and focus on developing community partnerships to enable students to receive the right care at the right time.

Care will be culturally responsive and identity affirming in keeping with the Board's ongoing focus on equity and inclusive education and truth and reconciliation.

Guiding Principles

The Mental Health and Addictions Strategic Plan is guided by the following principles:

- Mental health and well-being is fundamental to student success. Personal growth, identity development and academic achievement enable students to reach their full potential and participate meaningfully in all aspects of life.
- Working closely with families and community partners is essential to 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 and First Nations communities. These valued partnerships will assist us in moving forward to implement mental health programs, training and support in our schools, and ultimately, create healthier and safer communities.
- Rainbow District School Board employs a complement of Registered Social Workers that have the knowledge and expertise to provide mental health services to students. Evidence informed decision making will pave the path forward. Programs and interventions being offered will be selected based on effectiveness.
- Providing educators with the knowledge and resources required to create and maintain mentally healthy schools will foster a school culture where all students feel safe, accepted and welcomed. Nurturing a strong sense of belonging at school supports mental health and well-being.
- Universal mental health promotion, stigma reduction, and early recognition of mental health problems will encourage help seeking behaviour.
- Embracing diversity, equity and inclusion with identity affirming, culturally relevant and responsive approaches will have a positive impact on the mental health and well-being of all students, their families and staff in Rainbow Schools.
- Creating and maintaining culturally responsive and equitable classrooms and schools, while fostering a culture of high expectations and providing the necessary supports for all learners, will help students achieve and understand their inherent gifts.



Approach to Mental Health

Ontario has a comprehensive and systematic multi-year School Mental Health and Addictions Strategy that comes from scientific research and responds to student needs and service trends.

Each school board across the province follows this provincial strategy to guide the development of their local School Mental Health and Addictions Strategy. The local strategies reflect the needs, context, strengths and resources of the communities served by the area board.

Across the province, the education sector has adopted a multi-tiered system of support for the delivery of school mental health services which provides consistency and clarity. This structure helps to establish priorities, define roles and responsibilities, and ensure service coordination and quality within a complex and evolving field.

From a broad perspective, the multi-tiered system of support includes a continuum of services: mental health promotion, mental health literacy, leadership and engagement (Tier 1); early identification, prevention and early intervention (Tier 2); and service pathways/clinical support for more intensive mental health needs (Tier 3). Within a multi-tiered system of support, clear and differentiated roles and responsibilities are instrumental. There is a role for all staff in mental health promotion and mental health literacy (Tier 1). Assessment, prevention and early intervention of mental health concerns is the work of school based social workers (Tier 2). When students require intensive clinical support (Tier 3), the role of school based social workers is to bridge these students to the appropriate community resource.



FOUNDATIONS:

Leadership commitment	Engagement & collaboration	Vision & strategy	Infrastructure	Processes & protocols	Evidence & monitoring	Internal & external communications
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To learn more about this approach, visit:
<https://smho-smso.ca/about-us/our-approach/>

Effective January 2024, the Ministry of Education has established 11 requirements to support the mental health and well-being of students in Ontario.

PPM 169 requires school boards to:

- Develop and implement a three-year Mental Health and Addictions Strategy and a one-year Action Plan
- Engage in joint local planning with community-based child and youth mental health providers
- Use a multi-tiered system of supports
- Use evidence informed brief interventions and standardized measurements consistently
- Develop and implement Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention Protocols
- Provide virtual care delivery when appropriate
- Enhance educator and staff mental health literacy
- Implement Ministry approved Mental Health Literacy Modules for students in Grades 7 and 8
- Make available culturally responsive Family Mental Health Literacy resources
- Embed social-emotional learning skills in the classroom
- Code mental health absences under s. 21 (2) (b) ("by reason of sickness or other unavoidable cause") of the Education Act.



Strategic Priorities



Rainbow District School Board's Mental Health and Addictions Strategic Priorities are:

1. Create and sustain mentally healthy schools
2. Provide evidence informed, identity affirming and culturally relevant mental health promotion, prevention and intervention
3. Support the mental health and well-being of Indigenous students through the Indigenous Mental Wellness Continuum Framework
4. Enhance community partnerships to move towards an Integrated Tiered System of Care in line with the Right Time, Right Care vision (April 2022)

Strategic Priority 1

Create and sustain mentally healthy schools

Embed mental health and well-being at all levels of the school board to promote sustainable integration of trauma aware mentally healthy school practices. Raise educator, staff, student and parent/guardian mental health literacy in order to decrease stigma and increase capacity to recognize the signs of mental health concerns early and know how to access the appropriate intervention.

Key Activities

1. Have social workers deliver professional development/training for staff and educators on the following topics: Trauma-Informed Schools, Mental Health First Aid, Mental Health Literacy, Suicide Prevention and Intervention, and pathways for accessing services
2. Provide social work support to educators to implement the new Grade 7 and 8 mental health modules from the provincial government
3. Support educators to access and use mentally healthy classroom resources available from School Mental Health Ontario (e.g., Wayfinder, Everyday Mental Health Classroom resource, etc.)
4. Support administrators to lead mentally healthy schools
5. Increase parental knowledge of mental health literacy and mental health resources
6. Engage students in mental health promotion and stigma reduction
7. Monitor mental health and well-being goals embedded in School Improvement Plans
8. Support the implementation of Dare to Care in all elementary schools
9. Communicate with school administrators, educators, staff, parents/guardians and students to highlight key messages about mental health as well as how to access mental health support in the schools and in the community
10. Deliver the Mental Health Literacy Modules for students in secondary school classrooms

Indicators of Success

- Number of staff and educators trained in each topic
- Number of Grade 7 and 8 educators who delivered the curriculum
- Number of classrooms using School Mental Health Ontario resources
- Number of administrators using the Leading Mentally Healthy Schools resource
- Number of initiatives and resources developed and implemented to support parental mental health literacy
- Number of students involved in HEADSTRONG and other mental health promotion activities
- Number of schools with mental health and well-being goals in their School Improvement Plan
- Number of schools delivering Dare to Care
- Number of communications shared
- Number of classrooms delivering the Mental Health Literacy Modules

Strategic Priority 2

Provide evidence informed, identity affirming and culturally relevant mental health promotion, prevention and intervention

Using a tiered model of services ensures that students are provided with the level of service, by the right professional, that meets their needs. Mental Health intervention (Tier 2 and Tier 3) using evidence based models requires the expertise of regulated mental health professionals and is offered by the school social workers.

Key Activities

1. All board staff implement evidence informed mental health promotion and prevention programming board-wide (Tier 1)
2. Social workers provide trauma informed and identity affirming individual and family based mental health support in schools when appropriate, using evidence informed practices (Tier 2 and 3)
3. Social workers provide risk assessment, safety planning and support to access services for students when it is indicated
4. Social workers offer promotion and prevention for students at risk of problematic substance use
5. Social workers collaborate with school based partners to provide multidisciplinary wraparound support for students with the most intensive needs (Tier 3 and 4)
6. Social workers implement a measurement based care platform

Indicators of Success

- Whole group programming and topics delivered in every Grade 6 classroom
- Number of referrals/families/students receiving social worker support by school year
- Training, pathways and processes in place for students who are at risk
- Exploration of school based and community initiatives that work to address substance use from an upstream prevention/health promotion approach.
- Use and scale up of Greenspace platform

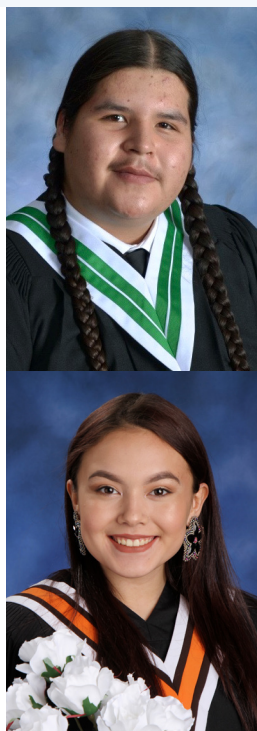


Strategic Priority 3

Support the mental health and well-being of Indigenous students through the implementation of the Indigenous Mental Wellness Continuum Framework

Key Activities

1. Have social workers increase knowledge of the role that colonization has played in traditional psychotherapy and therapeutic approaches that are most effective for Indigenous students
2. Work with First Nations communities and organizations to assist system and school leaders to embed Indigenous wellness into all school planning
3. Create psychologically and culturally safe spaces (consider physical, emotional, spiritual and psychological elements) in schools
4. Identify culturally appropriate training opportunities for social workers, educators and other board staff to support Indigenous student mental health and well-being
5. Provide mental health and well-being learning in partnership with the Indigenous Education Department through reach ahead, credit-bearing summer courses i.e. Civics and Careers, Outdoor Education, Ojibwe language
6. Explore and identify meaningful resources to support Indigenous students with appropriate prevention, intervention and follow-up care, such as the Thunderbird Life Promotion Toolkit by Indigenous Youth
7. Consult with Indigenous communities and service providers/organizations to identify reciprocal pathways to culturally appropriate services for Indigenous students and their families



Indicators of Success

- Cultural training completed
- Number of schools that have embedded Indigenous wellness in school planning
- Ability of staff to articulate how psychologically and culturally safe spaces are created in schools
- Number of staff who have completed training
- Mental health and well-being learning incorporated in reach ahead, credit-bearing summer courses
- Resources and implementation plans developed for use
- Pathways to culturally appropriate services created with and shared with Indigenous students and their families
- Increased attendance and graduation rates for Indigenous students



Strategic Priority 4

Enhance community partnerships to move towards an Integrated Tiered System of Care in line with the Right Time, Right Care vision (April 2022)

Key Activities

1. Collaborate with system partners to develop a community system of care
2. Create clearly identified internal and external pathways for mental health support and services by engaging in joint local planning with child and youth mental health service providers
3. Finalize the board Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention protocol
4. Participate in community Suicide Safer Network to share resources and information to identify and close gaps for children and youth in crisis
5. Develop and implement a board level Traumatic Events Response protocol
6. Work collaboratively with community partners on mental health promotion initiatives and education campaigns within and outside of schools
7. Consider the unique needs of rural schools and communities while developing pathways
8. Provide professional learning for staff and families with regards to system navigation

Indicators of Success

- Community tables established with system partners that meet regularly
- Processes and protocols developed for internal and external pathways
- Finalized protocol posted on website
- Attendance and participation in meetings
- Completed Traumatic Events Protocol being used board-wide with processes and committees to support implementation
- Number of initiatives completed
- Rural needs and pathways articulated in protocols and processes
- Professional learning delivered



Helpful Links Related to Child and Youth Mental Health

211 Ontario: 211ontario.ca

Anxiety Canada: anxietycanada.com

Black Youth Helpline: blackyouth.ca

Caring for Kids: caringforkids.cps.ca

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health: camh.ca

Children's Mental Health Ontario: cmho.org

Compass Child and Youth Mental Health Services: compassne.ca

EMental Health: ementalhealth.ca

Gender Creative Kids: gendercreativekids.com

Health Sciences North: hnsudbury.ca/en

Hope for Wellness Helpline: hopeforwellness.ca

Kids Help Phone: kidshelpphone.ca

LGBT Youthline: youthline.ca

Mental Health Literacy: mentalhealthliteracy.org

Mind Your Mind: mindyourmind.ca

One Stop Talk: onestoptalk.ca

School Mental Health Ontario: smho-smso.ca

Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre: skhc.ca

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- <https://ontario.cmha.ca/documents/lesbian-gay-bisexual-trans-queer-identified-people-and-mental-health/>
- Connor M. Kerns, Jessica E. Rast, Paul T. Shattuck. *Prevalence and Correlates of Caregiver-Reported Mental Health Conditions in Youth With Autism Spectrum Disorder in the United States*. The Journal of Clinical Psychiatry, 2020; 82 (1) DOI: 10.4088/JCP.20m13242
- Indigenous Wellness Framework
<https://thunderbirdpf.org/about-the-iwfw/>
- Life Promotion and Suicide Prevention, Intervention, and Postvention Protocol*, Rainbow District School Board [Appendix A](#).

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Rainbow Schools

Reaching minds. Touching hearts.

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