



ONTARIO PUBLIC
SCHOOL BOARDS'
ASSOCIATION

Leading Education's Advocates

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES IN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

(For the purposes of this survey alternative education is defined as any program/approach that supports students who are not successfully engaged in school and require an alternate delivery model)

Note: The program/strategy/initiative must have been in operation for a minimum of one year.

School Board: Rainy River DSB

Contact Person and Email Address:

Name of Program/Initiative/Strategy:

Hyperlinks to Documents or Website(s) Describing this Program/Initiative/Strategy:

Description of Program/Initiative/Strategy

The focus is on programs/initiatives/strategies that increase student engagement, confidence, achievement and well-being. In the brief description please provide answers to the following questions: Where the program/initiative/strategy is delivered (school/board locations)? Who is responsible for delivering and monitoring the program/initiative/strategy? Who is the target audience? Are there any community partnerships involved? Are there any staffing or budget implications? Are there any special resources required? What are your indicators of success, etc.?

The partnership between the United Native Friendship Centre and the Rainy River District School Board is an example of an effective alternative program for students. The United Native Friendship Centre works to provide a culturally appropriate program within a safe and structured environment, so that children and youth can develop coping skills, life skills, and enhanced awareness of proper nutrition and the importance of physical activity. Both the United Native Friendship Centre and the Rainy River District School Board recognized the need to provide additional services and options to students within the Town of Fort Frances through this partnership, and as such, the Alternative Secondary School Program located at the United Native Friendship Centre began over 10 years ago.

The Alternative Secondary School Program is one of 11 publicly funded alternative programs within Friendship Centres in Ontario. Based on the principle that every student is unique, the Alternative Secondary School Program is geared to meet each student's individual needs. The Program offers teacher-led and independent learning credits, while working to build on strengths to support students where they are in life.

Day-to-day supports are key to the success of the Program. The secondary teacher(s) and the Centre's Support Worker work together to support students, planning cultural activities and excursions, arranging additional supports through the Centre's many programs. Students always have access to healthy foods, and often, there are sessions provided to the students to help build/enhance their life skills.

The success in the Program is seen through the high graduation rates annually. Approximately 25 students graduate annually from this Program; at times, the Program's graduation numbers have accounted for over half of the provincial number of graduates within Indigenous Friendship Centre Alternative Secondary School Program.

What has been the impact on Student Learning?

Students who have struggled to find success in the traditional classroom have thrived in this setting. The flexibility, the one-to-one supports for their achievement and well-being, and the embedding of Indigenous histories, cultures, and perspectives in the lessons, activities, and excursions truly support students in achieving their diploma.