

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE

Supporting families.

Strengthening communities.

Helping students succeed.

SCHOOLS, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES WORKING TOGETHER

“At Fort Rouge School, we value community involvement. We are also proud of our diverse student population. Our students come from all over the world, reflecting the changing face of Canada.

Together with the Fort Rouge Community Resource Centre, our school has hosted a unique holiday celebration involving the services of the entire neighbourhood. Among other things, our school also provides a space for Frontier College to provide a weekly English as a Foreign Language (EFL) community learning program as a valuable outreach, especially to new immigrant families, and Macdonald Youth Services runs a weekly Lighthouses youth recreational drop-in program every Thursday night at the school.

We continue to encourage outreach services and community partnerships to fulfill our school mission – Parents, students, and teachers working together to achieve academic excellence.”

*Leslie Maxwell-Joseph,
Principal
Fort Rouge School*

The Community Schools Partnership Initiative (CSPI) is designed to support schools in low socio-economic communities enhancing education outcomes by developing and strengthening partnerships. The CSPI is meant to be a long-term effort to encourage families, organizations and schools to work together to improve students' success and strengthen communities.

Schools are a traditional meeting place for community residents and the community school concept builds on that relationship. The community school model is based on the idea that children are better able to achieve their educational and developmental potential when there is a working relationship among family, teachers, local service agencies and the general community.

By renewing a community schools concept in Manitoba, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (MECY) wants to improve student learning, strengthen families, and build healthier communities throughout the province.

Community schools can strengthen the parent/school relationship and encourage a wide range of activity in a neighbourhood. Parents, community, students, and service delivery agencies can come together in the community school's welcoming environment, nurturing a greater sense of inter-dependence and community spirit. These schools provide gathering places where adults and children are provided opportunities for educational, social, cultural and recreational activities.

Community Schools are not only about school-aged supports. Programs may be offered to meet the needs of pre-school children, youth and adults. They may be sponsored by partnerships of parents, government, the education community and other interested partners. They are based on the specific needs of the whole community, such as after-school programs or community health care, and recruit the resources to meet them.

Strong community schools are based on strong partnerships between students, parents, school and community. A successful community school will help:

- children start their school days alert and healthy with their basic needs met

- school staff draw on the community's resources to help students succeed academically and socially
- provide the health, recreational, cultural and social services students need at the school
- parents and community partners provide support to the school and its activities
- the entire community as a resource centre to strengthen schools and the community as a whole

ENCOURAGING RESULTS

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth studied the approaches taken by Saskatchewan on the establishment of community schools and has based the CSPI on the SchoolPlus model, a framework that provides a comprehensive range of supports and approaches intended to meet the diverse needs of children, youth and their families. It also provides the basis upon which schools will develop their own responses to meet their specific objectives.

An initial community school pilot project was introduced at Thompson's Wapanohk-Eastwood Community School in the Mystery Lake School Division. Surveys of parents and students showed that most people were very satisfied with the results of the project. Survey results also suggest there are fewer behaviour problems among students, stronger participation rates of students in school cultural activities and more awareness among parents about the importance of school success. Community schools build relationships that contribute to community identity and a neighbourhood sense of commitment and caring.

Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth and its partners are working to organize interested funders, develop a pool of resource to promote the bridging of service delivery systems, and to organize leadership training programs for educators, human service providers, parents and community residents through the Community Schools Partnership Initiative.

“A community school not only takes responsibility for educational aspects of its students, but also incorporates initiatives regarding the social, recreational, cultural, judicial, and health aspects of students and their families. Wapanohk-Eastwood Community School has been able to increase the role of community in a meaningful way by embracing parent and community involvement and partnerships.”

*Excerpt from
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Submitted by
Margaret Dumas*

“The Hamiota Community Schools Partnership is truly developing a collaboration among young people, their families, schools and the community. Partnerships for asset building are being explored and a steering committee formed to review the feasibility of the ideas. This is a project driven by data about young people, by young people and for young people – a true partnership.”

*Mike Boyle and Dennis Schoonbaert for the
Hamiota Community
Schools Partnership*

“*Building Character Today for Communities of Tomorrow is the name of our exciting, new project launched by the Community Schools Partnership Initiative at Oak Lake Community School. We are so thrilled to have this great opportunity for our school and our community. Our innovative project involves K-8 character education complete with an after-school component. As students learn their new skills, they are given opportunities to demonstrate their positive images in the community. Our project leader co-ordinates this collaborative effort among the school, community, local First Nations and other stakeholders. We are encouraged by the favourable feedback from our students, parents and community members.*”

*Oak Lake Community
School Team*

“*River Elm School has initiated numerous community-school initiatives. Our school runs a gym club together with the Elmwood Community Resource Centre and Lighthouses for grade 3 students after school once a week. City of Winnipeg Recreation employee and parents volunteer their help in organizing and conduct gym activities every week.*

Our Community Support Worker initiates visits to homes to invite parents to become school volunteers and/or join the parent advisory council. The worker also provides parents with valuable information and resources available in our immediate community, parent/child arts-and-crafts workshops and organizes a series of evening parenting workshops to be conducted by professional social workers.

River Elm School and its immediate community are greatly enriched by the Community School Partnership Project and by the Community School Worker who works so tirelessly for the betterment of our students and their parents.”

*Tom Chan, Principal
River Elm School*

**For more information about the
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