



Medicine Hat Public School Division

*Developing Tomorrow's Citizens Through Improved
Learning, Living and Relationships*

River Heights Elementary School

2017-18 School Learning Plan & Report



DISTRICT VISION: Developing tomorrow's citizens through improved learning, living and relationships.

DISTRICT MISSION: As a partner in the community, Medicine Hat School District #76 will create inclusive and innovative and inclusive learning environments.

PRINCIPAL: Ms. N. Mastel

SCHOOL COUNCIL CHAIR: Vanessa Bonneville and Katie Albers

ADDRESS: 301 6th Ave. SW Medicine Hat, AB

ENROLLMENT: 283

SCHOOL VISION: River Heights Elementary School is a community of responsible citizens who are interdependent learners and critical thinkers.

SCHOOL MISSION:

- Student Centered Integrated Learning (SCIL) to engage all learners.
- Model and develop the skills for responsible citizenship.
- Utilize Constructivist teaching practices to improve student learning through our belief of *Explore, Create, Reflect*

Statement of Responsibility

The staff of River Heights Elementary School accepts responsibility for providing an appropriate education for our students within the laws, regulations, policies and guidelines of Alberta Education and Medicine Hat Public School Division. Working with Alberta Education, the School Division, and the school community, the staff accepts this responsibility by developing and implementing the School Education Plan.

This plan will support, complement and supplement the Division's Education Plan and Alberta Education Goals. Through this collaborative planning the staff gives a commitment to achieving the goals of Medicine Hat Public School Division. The schools will have aligned their learning priorities to encompass the division goals and Alberta Education Outcomes. Both the school's Accountability Pillar Report and Achievement/Diploma Test analysis will be available on the school's website.

As per provincial requirements, the School Educational Plan has been posted on the school web-site.

School Council Chair Katie Allers
V. Bonnett
Date

School Principal D. Mastel Oct 31, 2017
Date

Background

As a member of Medicine Hat Public School Division, River Heights Elementary School aspires to use a robust Learning Plan and Assurance Model to better understand and utilize stakeholder feedback. While we are not yet part of the provincial assurance model project, we intend to imbed elements of the model into our current planning and reporting. This will mean that we will actively seek avenues for stakeholders to tell us how we are attending to our goals and priorities. One important part of an assurance model is deriving stakeholder feedback through insightful comments made by parents, staff, community members and students.

River Heights Elementary School continuously gathers feedback from a variety of sources including students, parents, staff, the school division and the greater community. This past year our school also used an on-line assurance process called ThoughtExchange that enabled participants to read and rank responses based on three questions:

- What are some concerns you have about our school this year?
- What are some things you appreciate about our school this year?
- What are some other things you would like to say about our school this year?

River Heights Elementary School's Learning Plan & Assurance Report captures what we did well, where we need to improve, aspirations and expected results that we gathered throughout last year. We share this information with you in relation to our school learning priorities and in connection with our School Division's four Universal Goals and Alberta Education's five key Outcomes.

In time our reporting process will transition from the traditional school plan report format, to a learning plan that is supported by the lead indicators that we can collect in an assurance model. As we bridge to this model, our school will report and plan using the following structure:

Evidence of Strengths are highlighted as areas that are working well in River Heights Elementary School. In our commitment to quality learning, we recognize that there will always be room for growth. We are proud of the strengths and accomplishments you have recognized in the work we do.

Opportunities to Identify Learning Targets or Instructional Focus are areas for growth or attention. As a school, we recognize these as areas in which we need to focus more attention and we see that these are also important to you.

What difference do we want to see? These are presented as priorities for a preferred future. Our stakeholders have shared a vision for where we need to go and what our world will look like when we've mastered our strengths and eliminated growth areas.

How will we know we have had an Impact? Results capture expectations for measuring success. In other words, how will we know that we know we are successful?

Medicine Hat Public School Division Four Universal Goals

Inclusive Mindset: Medicine Hat Public School Division is an inclusive education system. An inclusive education system is about ensuring that all students (regardless of ability or unique needs) get what they need when they need it. This may very well mean that there are students who need us to honour their needs through creating alternative settings when needed and for as long as needed. Critical to this approach is that the goal must ALWAYS be to include all students with their peers as often as possible. Using the programs of study as the framework for learning, every student is engaged in meaningful and authentic ways. All students are treated equitably; they get the support needed when they need it, and for the intensity and duration of time for which they need it.

Optimal Learning: The Optimal Learning Environment (OLE) model will serve as a target. Formal and informal school and system leaders will work to help all teachers achieve the potential described. The model will sit at the center of our decision making process. Resources and system structures will be built and allocated to support staff in achieving the high target set in the model. We intend to incorporate the wisdom and support of individuals like Dr. Jody Carrington in the design of the OLE and in the work we do to flesh out or responses to student need where the model is insufficient; understanding that creating classroom environments that support student mental health is critical. The OLE is not intended to usurp the Teaching Quality Standard. In fact, it is intended to describe what the TQS, fully implemented and supported, could manifest in the lives of children.

Culture of Wellness: Medicine Hat Public School Division is committed to Student and Adult Success and Well-Being. With the help of representatives of CUPE, our ATA Local and staff from across the jurisdiction, we will work to explore how SD76 can support our valued staff in caring for themselves. ASEBP and others are offering excellent support to us in helping the committee examine successful wellness initiatives that have been implemented elsewhere. Our focus will not only be on what staff might do on their own but also on what collective efforts could be undertaken. Partnerships with local service providers will be explored. We believe that this effort at supporting staff in self-care is an important piece of the wellness puzzle. Coupled with efforts to build more effective, collaborative structures, we will see improvement in our collective wellbeing.

Leadership: As an extension of the classroom, formal leadership needs to be treated as a teaching position with specific, legislated responsibilities and authority. We are working to break the myth (sometimes self-fulfilling) that one must give up being a teacher and instructional leader in order to take on formal leadership. Indeed, the management part of administration is the simple part. The greatest challenges and rewards come from the relational power that teacher-leaders bring to their work as instructional leaders. If we are successful, our program will help great teachers within our system choose administration; knowing they are continuing the important work they have started while working to broaden their professional influence and legacy.

Process for Gathering Feedback

Throughout the 2016-17 school year River Heights Elementary School engaged parents in order to receive feedback in a number of ways including:

The **ThoughtExchange** process enabled participants to share their thoughts with the school community. These individual thoughts were then considered, responded to and evaluated to determine a level of confidence (assurance) in how well River Heights Elementary School is doing in the achievement of our goals and priorities. These shared thoughts are formative assessments (as opposed to numerical measurements) that can be used to evaluate progress and plan for growth.

- 25 people participated in the Share step and shared 106 thoughts
- 80 people participated in the Star step and assigned 5778 stars
- A total of 88 people participated in Share or Star or both

Alberta Education Accountability Pillar Survey is given to all staff, parents of students in Grades 4 and 7. The Accountability Pillar survey data can be compared to division data as well as provincial measures. Please see our linked APORI Report.

- 14 staff participated
- Completed by 27 parents
- 123 students participated

Other

- Parent and Community Convention Feedback (Google Form)
- Goal setting sessions
- Feedback from Learning Exhibitions

School Learning Priority #1	<i>River Heights staff will develop an understanding of the continuum of supports and implement various strategies into instructional practice to further student success.</i>	
District Universal Goals:	√	Alberta Education Outcome 1: Alberta Students are Successful
√ Inclusive Education	√	Alberta Education Outcome 2: Achievement gap between FNMI students is eliminated
√ Optimal Learning Environments	√	Alberta Education Outcome 3: Alberta's education system is inclusive
Culture of Wellness		Alberta Education Outcome 4: Alberta has excellent teachers, school & school authority leaders
Leadership		Alberta Education Outcome 5: The education system is well governed and managed.

“Love the collaborative learning environment: Gives students opportunities to think outside the box. Students work together as they learn. Covers AB Ed curriculum but in a more interesting way” ~School Parent via ThoughtExchange

Evidence of our Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Heights Elementary School continues to articulate a clear understanding of inclusion and communicate this to all stakeholders. • Classrooms are inclusive spaces, where all learners are respected, have access to the curriculum and appropriate supports. Teachers mindfully utilize differentiation in terms of engagement, representation and expression. • River Heights Elementary School will contribute to a divisional understanding of school-specific strategies that promote inclusive education. • River Heights School philosophy has a focus on subject integration, which makes meaningful connections for students. • According to the survey 100.0% of parents reported that River Heights Elementary School teachers care about their students. • According to the survey 85% of parents strongly agree or agree that their child can easily access programs and services at school to get help with school work. In the survey 85.1% of parents reported that their child is excited or comfortable coming to school every day. • An improvement in the assessment results of STAR reading will be indicated between the pre and post administration.

*“The School Philosophy and approach to education: River Heights is so far ahead of the curve in terms of approach to curriculum delivery and I love that! I think the passion of our educators in choosing to approach the curriculum in such a way is really remarkable.”
~School Parent via ThoughtExchange*

A.6 Citizenship Measure History: Percentage of teachers, parents and students who are satisfied that students model the characteristics of active citizenship.

Location	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
ALBERTA	206,735	83.4	258,603	83.4	309,506	83.5	284,921	83.9	299,972	83.7
MHPSD	2169	78.7	2138	79.9	2242	83.1	2306	80.9	2289	79.2
SCHOOL	75	82.8	76	89.5	150	79.4	148	86.4	166	86.6

Opportunities to Identify Learning Targets or Instructional Focus

- Continue to improve staff understanding of creating appropriate Individual Student Plans that are living documents, with a focus on dynamic strategies to support student learning.
- Use of specialist support from outside of the school (Speech & Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Behavioural Specialist, Educational Psychologist, Mental Health supports, etc.)
- Diversification of classroom supports for students with challenges; there are financial considerations around the provision of some supports and strategies.
- Develop continuum of supports as a staff for socio-emotional, literacy and numeracy.
- Teachers are identifying their strengths to build capacity within the school and opening their doors for teacher visits

“A Community of Learners: RHS is a community of learners and citizens. Students and teachers know one another and understand the nature of a school community. Students are supported, valued, and recognized on a regular basis in a challenging environment. Support for community members in crisis is apparent (fundraisers)”

~School Staff Member via ThoughtExchange

What difference do we want to see?

- River Heights Elementary School aspires to be a nurturing environment that strives to provide positive, strength-based programming that respects the diversity and uniqueness of all students. We aspire to teach all students the strategies they need to be independent, successful, happy, well-rounded citizens. This encompasses all parts of the individual, mind, body and spirit.
- Continue to see collaboration between staff and peers.
- Continue to implement cooperative learning strategies.
- Increase in individual MIPi results (data available each fall)

B.3 Safe and Caring Measure History: Percentage of teacher, parent and student agreement that: students are safe at school, are learning the importance of caring for others, are learning respect for others and are treated fairly in school.

Location	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
ALBERTA	206,648	89.0	258,297	89.1	309,172	89.2	284,589	89.5	299,627	89.5
MHPSD	2168	86.1	2137	86.6	2240	88.7	2306	87.2	2285	86.0
SCHOOL	75	81.2	76	91.1	150	85.7	148	87.0	166	89.8

How will we know we have had an Impact?		
Success will be recognized as:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A continuum of supports, services and environments is in place as reported through stakeholder engagement. • Collaborative practices are the way in which learning occurs in River Heights Elementary School as reported through survey and engagement processes. • Administration and staff demonstrate a sense of confidence as reported through engagement measures. • Parent satisfaction and confidence are reported through engagement measures. 		
School Learning Priority #2	<i>River Heights Elementary School will implement collaborative team meetings, focused on socio-emotional, literacy and numeracy to support academic achievement, leadership and overall wellness.</i>	
District Universal Goals:	Alberta Education Outcome 1: Alberta Students are Successful	
<input type="checkbox"/> Inclusive Education	Alberta Education Outcome 2: Achievement gap between FNMI students is eliminated	
<input type="checkbox"/> Optimal Learning Environments	Alberta Education Outcome 3: Alberta's education system is inclusive	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Culture of Wellness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Alberta Education Outcome 4: Alberta has excellent teachers, school & school authority leaders
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leadership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Alberta Education Outcome 5: The education system is well governed and managed.

Evidence of our Strengths		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade level teachers are committed to one hour a week of collaborative team meetings. This time is used to discuss student learning needs and then plans supports and strategies to impact student learning. • Highly collaborative teaching teams establish strong supportive relationships to promote personalized learning for students. • Utilizing of promising assessment practices whereby feedback guides instruction; students learn to use feedback to improve. Parents are regularly communicated with regarding student progress. • Fresh Grade is used by many teachers to communicate to parents and demonstrate student learning. • Students are meaningfully involved in their own assessment and assist in developing clear criteria for achieving excellence. • Flexible teaching spaces enable staff to group students in ways that are most responsive to learning needs. • Students are encouraged to bring and use their personal technology devices into school to support and enhance learning in the digital age – teachers continuously work with students to develop skills in digital citizenship. • 84.4% of parents are very satisfied or satisfied with how engaged their child is with the learning taking place. • 83.3% of parents are very satisfied or satisfied with the level to which the learning at River Heights Elementary School connects their child with skills necessary to one day enter the workplace. • Increased communication with parents regarding learning at River Heights. • Parents have many ways to connect with River Heights. Our school newsletter focuses on the 8 competencies and the 3 E's connected to the learning at various grade levels. 		

- Videos/pictures are shared through our school Facebook and Twitter accounts.
- Grade level teachers have unassigned time to plan meaningful lessons and assessments that impact student learning.

Opportunities to Identify Learning Targets or Instructional Focus

- River Heights Elementary School will promote exemplars that capture the process of utilizing the Alberta Programs of Study through competencies as opposed to content.
- River Heights Elementary School will explore, share and promote improvements to engage in literacy and numeracy teaching practices across curricula and for all students, Kindergarten – grade 6.
- River Heights Elementary School will support FNMI students using culturally relevant and responsive education practices and strategies where there is meaningful connection to the curriculum.
- 72.6% of teachers and parents are satisfied with parental involvement in decisions about their child’s education. This is a decline from 85.1% from the year before and the previous 3-year average of 79.6%.
- We will continue to strive to improve results on Alberta Provincial Achievement Tests at the acceptable standard and the standard of excellence for all of our students in all subject areas. Grade 6 Math PAT results in particular are of some concern at both achievement levels.
- Student Leadership will plan various activities and projects for our students and staff.
- Staff will participate in a Wellness PD Day in March. Wellness activities will take place for students on a regular basis, including mindfulness and universal movement activities.

What difference do we want to see?

- At River Heights Elementary School, we aspire to have a high level of parent and community engagement.
- We aspire to research, reveal and share technology processes to remove barriers to learning.
- We utilize best practices to guide professional learning to continue to improve instruction, assessment and student learning with a focus on numeracy.
- We will see that students are increasing their skills for self-regulation.

How will we know we have had an Impact?

Success will be recognized as:

- Our staff are engaged in Professional Development and demonstrating promising instructional practices based on best practices.
- Parent satisfaction, engagement and confidence are reported through engagement measures.
- Assurance measures report that staff are able to demonstrate an understanding of innovative educational practices and their role in Medicine Hat Public School Division
- Assurance measures report that learning is personalized, authentic and supports student choice.
- School staff members are perceived, through assurance measures, as exemplifying confidence in technological literacy.
- Students are able to articulate what they are learning and where they are at in their learning process. “I Can” statements, criteria, self and peer reflection are tools used at all grade levels.

“Appreciate how critical and creative thinking are incorporated into the curriculum. Teaching kids thinking skills, and how to research, and allowing them to use their own ideas for learning gives them so many tools for life and learning.”

~School Parent via ThoughtExchange

A.6 Citizenship Measure History: Percentage of teachers, parents and students who are satisfied that students model the characteristics of active citizenship.

Location	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
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ALBERTA	206,735	83.4	258,603	83.4	309,506	83.5	284,921	83.9	299,972	83.7
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SCHOOL	75	82.8	76	89.5	150	79.4	148	86.4	166	86.6

B.3 Program of Studies – At Risk Students Measure History: Percentage of teacher, parent and student agreement that programs for children at risk are easy to access and timely.

Location	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
ALBERTA	196,262	83.4	147,622	83.8	132,601	84.2	159,115	84.6	160,737	84.9
MHPSD	2167	84.0	2137	83.7	2240	85.3	2305	84.8	2286	83.7
SCHOOL	75	76.1	76	79.3	150	73.8	148	80.9	166	80.0

B.4 Safe and Caring Measure History: Percentage of teacher, parent and student agreement that: students are safe at school, are learning the importance of caring for others, are learning respect for others and are treated fairly in school.

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SCHOOL	75	81.2	76	91.1	150	85.7	148	87.0	166	89.8

“I feel the teachers at our school genuinely care about student's emotional and intellectual learning. You can tell they like their jobs and enjoy working with kids.”

~School Parent via ThoughtExchange