



# North East School Division

Box 6000, 402 Main St.  
Melfort, SK S0E 1A0

Phone: (306) 752-5741  
Fax: (306) 752-1933

Toll Free: 1-888-752-5741  
Website: www.nesd.ca

**School Division:** North East School Division

**Board Chairperson:** Kathy Ponath

**Director of Education:** Don Rempel

**Program:** Kinawind Partnership Youth Mentors

## **Goal of the Program:**

The goal of the Kinawind Partnership is create a mutually beneficial and respectful relationship between Kinistin Salteaux Nation and North East School Division that builds on the strengths of both in providing greater opportunities for all children and youth.

A student mentorship credit was introduced in the fall of 2013 for Kinistin high school students. This program was introduced to build confidence, self-esteem and leadership in students while assisting grade 9 students in the transition to Tisdale Middle and Secondary School. The aim of the program was to provide new students with someone they could turn to, learn from, and seek out for support. From all accounts, the work of these seven mentors proved invaluable to not only their mentees but their own personal growth. The program was successful beyond the wildest expectations as all mentees (save one who moved away) were comfortable and happy in TMSS and prepared to complete their grade. Seven grade 10 students earned mentorship credits.

## **Direct Board Influence:**

The 2013-2014 school year marks the seventh year of the partnership between Kinistin Salteaux Nation and the North East School Division. The partnership continues to serve as a model for other partnerships between First Nations and school divisions. Timely meetings, amicable relationships, and a genuine desire to follow the vision of “creating opportunities for the success of all students” makes this organization an exemplary First Nations-school division partnership.

## *Method of Operation*

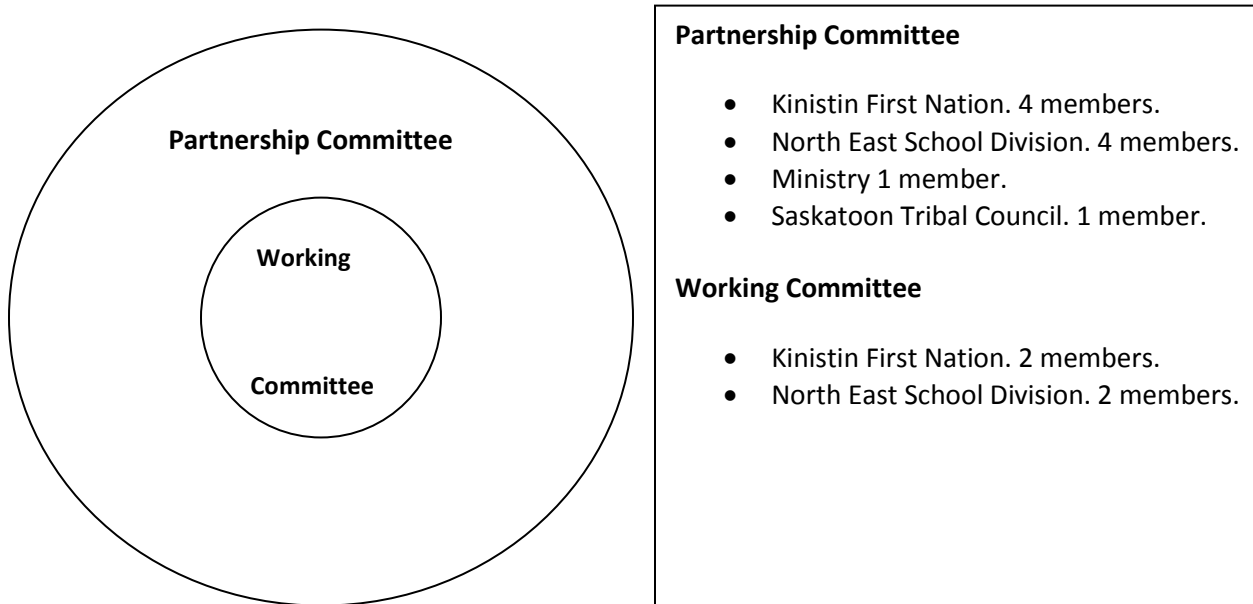
### *Strategic Plan and Work Plan:*

The Partnership will function through the development, implementation and assessment of a strategic plan. The strategic plan is formulated on the basis of a three year cycle. An annual work plan will be derived from the strategic plan that will:

- Review and update the strategic plan
- Establish annual objectives
- Plan initiatives for the year
- Assign responsibility for the various initiatives
- Determine indicators of success for each initiative.

### *Partnership Committee and Working Committee*

The Partnership carries out its mandate through a Partnership Committee and a Working Committee. The Partnership Committee is the overarching inter-organizational committee that is ultimately responsible for both the strategic plan and the work plan. The Working Committee takes direction from the Partnership Committee and is responsible for the day to day undertakings within the Work Plan.



### *Partnership Committee*

Membership on the Partnership Committee is set as follows. Each governing body appoints their own representatives, the preferred representation is: **Kinistin Salteaux Nation:** Chief or designate, Counsellor with the Education portfolio, principal and an education committee member from Nibwakawigamig Kinistin Education Centre. **North East School Division:** Board Trustee representing Tisdale, Director, Superintendent responsible for Tisdale Middle and Secondary School (TMSS), and TMSS principal. **Ministry:** Superintendent of First Nations and Metis Education. **Saskatoon Tribal Council:** Director of Education or designate.

### *Working Committee*

A working committee consisting of the principal and an education committee member from Nibwakawigamig Kinistin Education Centre, the principal of TMSS and the NESD Superintendent responsible for TMSS are assigned tasks by the Partnership Committee specific to the development, implementation and assessment of the strategic plan and the work plan. This committee is responsible for seeing that the annual work plan is carried out. The working committee may be expanded to include other personnel to assist in specific aspects of the strategic and work plan.

### **Innovative Nature of the Mentorship Program:**

In 2013-2014 the partnership and working group supported the implementation of a Mentorship Program as a priority in the annual work plan. The North East Board of Education is proud to nominate seven outstanding youth, Reese Lumberjack, Serenity Scott, Gage Scott, Wade Burns, Tyrea Lumberjack, Keanu Smokeyday, and Kaleel Scott, for the Premier's Board of Education Award for Innovation and Excellence in Education.

Since 2007, Tisdale Middle & Secondary School (TMSS) has been in an educational partnership with the Kinistin Salteaux Nation youth from Kinistin attend school at Kinistin Education Centre from grades K-9 and then transition to TMSS in their grade ten year. Such a transition and change can present obstacles to Kinistin students; obstacles for some that can be quite difficult. In 2012, for various reasons, the decision was made to transition grade 9 students to TMSS. The transition from a small K-8 school to a large high school in a neighbouring community off reserve is a significant and often challenging transition. For our group of nominees, they have not only overcome such challenges they have soared beyond them. It was with their success in mind that the concept of a Mentorship program at TMSS was born.

Retaining students throughout the school year at TMSS has been a challenge and in 2013 the idea of using the success of our Kinistin students to mentor the new grade nine students was identified as a strategy in the work plan of the Kinawind Partnership. In May, 2013 the seven nominees were approached about becoming mentors to the seven grade 8 students who would be coming to TMSS in the fall. Each of the mentors accepted their role with a great deal of enthusiasm and with their acceptance began a journey of learning, reflection and mentoring.

To begin their mentorship journey, the mentors underwent a full day training workshop, which included preparation for a parent-mentee evening that spoke to what life at TMSS was like. The parent-mentee evening took place at Kinistin and proved to be an incredible evening that was well received by the grade 8 students and extremely appreciated by parents who's minds were put at ease knowing that their children were going to be well looked after in their new school environment which was off-reserve in Tisdale.

As classes began in the fall, our mentors immediately went to work at checking in and meeting with their mentees on a weekly basis, which sometimes included activities such as bowling, lunch, attendance to a hockey game, etc. Regardless of the activity, constant check-ins occurred, and where mentees fell on difficult times, they received tremendous "in-house" support provided by our mentors.

Beyond supporting their mentees, the mentors committed themselves to increasing their capacity to become leaders. In particular, our mentors attended We Day, Saskatoon Tribal Council's: "Explore Your Gifts Career Camp", and a presentation by Donny Parenteau called, "Chasing Dreams". In all instances, mentors were asked to reflect on the experience relative to their own personal life and goals, as well as in their work with their mentee.

Whenever one creates such a program the question that always arises is whether it was a success or not. By the end of the 2013-2014 year every single one of our grade 9 mentees were not only still attending TMSS, but they were comfortable and happy and completely prepared to successfully complete grade 9 and enter grade 10 with a level of confidence and security that will lend itself to credit attainment, graduation and achievement beyond. There is no denying that this feeling of confidence in school success

is a testament to them as individuals, but they themselves would each agree and acknowledge that their mentors have played a key role in that as well. Servants to their community and committed to education, all seven mentors have exhibited a high level of courage to become leaders committed to not only their own achievement, but unselfishly those of others as well.

The North East Board of Education proudly nominates Reese Lumberjack, Serenity Scott, Gage Scott, Wade Burns, Tyrea Lumberjack, Keanu Smokeyday, and Kaleel Scott for the Premier's Award for Innovation Excellence in Education.



**Sustainability of the Innovation within the Present System:**

The partnership's work has continued to focus on the first two of its goals, **"to build a sustainable partnership"** and **"to have all students reach their full potential"**.

The efforts of previous years to build a sustainable partnership continued in the 2013-2014 year. Seemingly minor activities provide the cement for the partnership. Inter school communications occurs daily regarding students and upcoming events. TMSS includes a partnership report at the staff meeting each month. The KEC principal regularly discusses partnership activities with staff, and chief and council. School administration attends functions in the other's school. Lunches are planned with each meeting so members have an opportunity to visit in a casual atmosphere.

The partnership continues to receive provincial and national recognition. The Western Canadian First nations Education Conference was held in Saskatoon On February 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>. Members of the committee did presentations on successive days about the Kinawind Partnership. From all

reports, the presentations were very well received. Such initiatives strengthen the sustainability of the partnership.

A number of areas, in addition to the mentorship program were for better articulated involvement/participation was identified in this year's work plan. This resulted in a broader identification of personnel responsible for undertaking specific actions which in turn led to a better understanding of and support for the partnership.

#### **Cost of the Innovation Related to Benefits Achieved:**

The cost of the Kinawind Partnership is largely captured in the time that the working group and partnership committee members commit to working together. The partnership committee meets twice per year and the working group has between 4-6 full day planning meetings to work on a detailed work plan complete with smart goals which updated annually and reported to business meetings of the North East Board of Education and the Kinistin Salteaux Chief and council. A partnership facilitator has also been retained on a part-time basis to support the partnership to date and in 2014 this became a half time contracted position was put in place with the hope of starting new partnerships based on this model, with other First Nations in the northeast.

#### **Client Support for the Innovation:**

**Rob** (NESD Superintendent): the partnership has been successful this again year due to the efforts and support of Randy, Janet, the Care Bears, Barry and the representation of STC, NESD and Kinistin Saulteaux Nation. The relationships have been a driving force behind the partnership's success.

**Randy** (Principal TMSS): Communications and relationship continue to be the strength of our partnership. Beyond the work we continue to do in transitioning Kinistin students to TMSS, I am extremely excited about the increased focus/work that has gone on relative to transitioning beyond grade 12. As always, a special thanks to our Care bears and Janet for the diligent and co-operative work.

**Wayne** (Kinistin Education Counselor): I think the partnerdhip has come a long ways since the start of it. There are a lot of successes and I think we should showcase it more in the communities.

**Janet** (Kinistin Principal): As a new member joining the committee and the partnership this year, I am very impressed with the communication, dedication and hard work that goes in to this committee. I truly believe that everyone has our student's interests and needs as #1. The huge success that I have witnessed is phenomenal. I look forward to the future successes, changes, programs and discussion. I am proud to be working with a very welcoming, co-operative and caring group of people.

**Marvin** (STC): I applaud the work of the partnership but will also have to look further into the reciprocity aspect and what Tisdale/TMSS can gain from Kinistin.

**Josephine** (STC): There is such a good working relationship among all the partners at the table. Significant progress has been made toward many of the goals in the Strategic Plan. Looking forward to continued success.

**Barry** (Partnership Facilitator): Excellent work has occurred in the areas of emphasis this past year. The Kinistin Academic Support personnel (KASP or Care Bears for short) are integral to communication and student support. The special subject credit has been a roaring success. Partnership review at the May meeting identified a number of areas in the agreement to update. At a minimum, the broader identification of responsibilities in the work plan shows the partnership is larger than the committee.

#### **Partnerships in Support of the Initiative:**

The Kinawind Partnership has remained strong over the seven years it has been in place. The members of the partnership and working group have all changed over time as new directors, superintendents and principals are hired and chiefs, counsellors and board members are replaced and sometimes return through elections. There are many reasons for the continued success of the partnership, and the support for the youth mentorship program is one example of how effective governance and management can support great work with students.

#### **Evidence of Improved Student Achievement:**

The partnership is focused on **“improving student attendance, credit attainment and graduation rates”**. This section will highlight some of the partnerships initiatives.

Again this year, the Saskatoon Tribal Council was able to procure funding for Kinistin Salteaux Nation to hire a Transition Worker, Community Liaison Coordinator, and Academic Coach. The persons in these positions have come to be known jointly as the “Care Bears”. They work primarily with students at the Kinistin School but they have proven to be invaluable in supporting the partnership’s undertakings. Staff at TMSS cannot say enough good things about their work and support.

The TMSS tracking system has been improved so that there is now a record of individual class attendance and group attendance as well as both individual and group credit attainment. Should a student leave TMSS, reasons are also recorded. Tracking is a significant initiative. As such it will be looked at across the division in the fall. Likely, the TMSS model will serve as a model for the division.

A student mentorship credit was introduced in the fall of 2013 for Kinistin. This program was introduced to build confidence, self-esteem and leadership in students while assisting grade 9 students in the transition to TMSS. The aim of the program was to provide new students with someone they could turn to, learn from, and seek out for support. From all accounts, the work of these seven mentors proved invaluable to not only their mentees but their own personal growth. The program was successful beyond the wildest expectations as all mentees (save one who moved away) were comfortable and happy in TMSS and prepared to complete their grade. Seven grade 10 students earned mentorship credits.

These seven students were nominated for a Sasktel Aboriginal Youth Award. Additionally, one grade 12 student was nominated for an Individual Education Award. Three tables of nominees, parents, school and band personnel attended the Awards Ceremonies to support the nominees. Although the nominees did not win in their categories, they did receive the recognition they deserved. Both the school and community are very proud of their accomplishments.

The mentorship program will be continued in 2014-2015. Plans are to integrate it with a program titled Gen 7, a Canadian Tire Jump Start program that will be running at Kinistin and TMSS.

Student transition continues to be an important undertaking. The mentorship program described above has clearly helped junior students in their move from Kinistin Education Center to TMSS. The transition from high school to post-secondary received additional attention this year with staff from Kinistin and TMSS working collaboratively to provide better services. In the words of Principal Kerr, “Students are now viewing graduation as a step rather than a goal.”

Finally good work continues in the area of cultural integration. The integration of First Nations and Metis perspectives was included in TMSS Learning Improvement Plan for 2013-14. NESD’s First Nations and Metis Education Consultant has continued with classroom visitations based on teacher request. She has provided a number of cross cultural workshops and classroom activities to support curriculum in the classrooms in the division. A Cultural Exchange Workshop relative to the Arts was brought to TMSS in the fall of 2013 and in the spring. These workshops included Moccasin measurement by Body Part and Jingle/Beat Dancing for Gr. 6-7’s. The grade 7 mentor’s fancy dancing was really well received in the school. Finally, another 2 day training will be scheduled in September to complete the OTC Treaty Catalyst teacher training.

Statistical summaries are always interesting inclusions in a report. The following table has been in the annual reports for a number of years. As the number of students is small, one cannot consider the summary hard data. Statistical anomalies occur when dealing with small numbers The table does suggest that TMSS is retaining more students and that students are earning more credits.

#### **Kinistin Grades 10-12 Students Attending TMSS**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Students Sept. 30</b>	<b>Students June 30</b>	<b>% Full Year</b>	<b>Credits</b>	<b>Graduates</b>
2006-2007	28	6	21.43%	?	0
2007-2008	32	12	37.50%	?	1
2008-2009	30	11	36.67%	47	4
2009-2010	29	17	58.62%	93	3
2010-2011	31	14	45.16%	110	1
2011-2012	21	18	85.71%	113	6
2012-2013	25	15	60.00%	119	0
2013-2014	32	15	47%	133	4

In 2013-2014 of the 17 student who stopped attending TMSS:

5 moved away

3 were removed with request from parents to support mental health

1 we removed and set him up as an adult learner with Cumberland College which was a success

1 actually never really attended fully in September much to the frustration of parent

1 was removed due to traumatic family loss, and

The remaining 6 had multiple supports provided including lighter loads, support services etc., but still opted to no longer attend (In all six instances the parents were supportive of the school's efforts.)

In semester 1 68/69 credits were obtained from the 16 students registered and who full attended the semester, though some extensions were granted to facilitate some of the credits obtained. In semester 2, all 62 credits were obtained and on time.

This is the second year that Kinistin’s grade 9 students have attended TMSS and the first year of the Mentorship Program. A second table has been prepared that summarizes this group. The attendance of this group at TMSS has been positive and it appears that the Mentorship Program has been a success!. These students along with their senior counterparts like attending TMSS. Undoubtedly, the mentorship provided by peers at TMSS for grade 9 will serve this group of students well when they enter the credit system commencing in Grade 10.

**Kinistin Grade 9 Students Attending TMSS**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Students Sept. 30</b>	<b>Students June 30</b>	<b>% Full Year</b>
2012-2013	8	5	63%
2013-2014	7	6	86%

*Thank you mentors!*

