



# Class of 2030

*"It takes a community to educate a child"*



Nomination for:  
Premier's Board of Education Award for Innovation and Excellence in Education  
Living Sky School Division No. 202

Ronna Pethick, Board Chair  
Brenda Vickers, Director of Education  
September 2018

## Background

Living Sky School Division Board of Education is committed to focusing on student achievement and engagement. With that in mind, we developed the Class of 2030 “it takes a community to educate a child” project and piloted it in the City of North Battleford in 2017-18. The plan was to join forces with community stakeholders (ie. city council, local businesses, community organizations, Elders, justice and health services, First Nation communities/organizations and community leaders) to collectively provide support in addressing and eliminating barriers to students’ daily attendance at, and meaningful engagement with, school. The end goal of the project is to increase graduation rates by focusing on strong beginnings.

The kickoff to the project was the innovative “Meet the Class of 2030” celebration where we introduced the community to the Kindergarten Class at McKitrick Community School. Family members, school/division staff along with leaders of the community attended the celebration during Education Week (October 19, 2017). The students were excited to wear their adult-sized “Class of 2030” t-shirts, take pictures with their families, and show off their parfleche time capsules.

The community participated in a promise to offer support and guidance to ensure the 19 kindergarten students are successful graduates of 2030.

The Class of 2030 project has evolved in to so much more than a graduation project. It has become a true community project with authentic partnerships and opportunities for strong relationships. It has offered students an opportunity to be exposed to positive community role models and has allowed them to have genuine experiences within the community. It has ultimately brought a community together to begin a journey of hope and healing. The City of North Battleford and the Living Sky School Division truly believe that *“it takes a community to educate a child.”*

## Board Participation

The Board of Education supports the provincial Education Sector Strategic Plan and is committed to focusing on student success, meaningful relationships, pride and joy at work, and innovative operations. The Living Sky School Division 2017-2020 Strategic Plan was approved by the Board of Education on January 17, 2018.

The Class of 2030 project is represented in the following areas of the Living Sky School Division Strategic Plan:

1. Successful Students:
  - 1.1 Increase children’s Readiness to Learn Exiting Kindergarten
  - 1.2 increase Students’ Literacy, Numeracy and Technological Skills

## Meet the Class of 2030



*Lorne*

wants to become a firefighter



*Conner*

wants to become a pilot



*Gracelynn*

wants to become a doctor

- 1.3 Increase Students' Graduation Rates
- 1.4 Reduce the Disparity between FNMI and Non-FNMI Students

2. Meaningful Relationships

- 2.1 Enhance Meaningful Relationships with Students, Parents, Staff and Community Partners
- 2.3 Improve Student Attendance

3. Pride and Joy at Work

- 3.2 Advance the Integration of Living Sky School Division values into everyday practice

4. Innovative Operations

- 4.2 Maximize efficiencies and provide services that add value

The Board of Education attended the Meet the Class of 2030 celebration and had an opportunity to get to know the students, parents, staff and community leaders in attendance. Other events the Board members personally attended with the Class of 2030 included the community Christmas lunch and the year end celebration at the Western Development Museum organized by RBC Dominion Securities. On June 18<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Education visited the Class of 2030 students at McKittrick Community School. They enjoyed interacting with the students and answering their many questions.



*The Class of 2030 has been and will continue to have an inspiring, positive, and influential impact on our students. It focuses on the importance of attendance and graduation. It has given the opportunity for our business community to have a substantial impact on our youth who will be our future leaders in our community. The Class of 2030 will receive the benefits of our adage "It takes a community to educate a child." – Ranna Pethick, Board Chair, Living Sky School Division*



*Dallynn*  
wants to become a firefighter



*Lukas*  
wants to become a police officer



*James*  
wants to become a firefighter

The Class of 2030 is displayed with pride on a bulletin board in the Living Sky School Division Board Room. The Board is proud to share stories about the students and their families with visitors. The bulletin board and the Class of 2030 project is often referred to during Strategic Plan reports throughout the year. Updates on the project are also brought to the board during monthly Communication Reports.

## Innovative Nature of Initiative

The Class of 2030 project was formulated during a hallway conversation between colleagues. That, of course, is where the greatest ideas come from!

A Superintendent was sharing that in the Ukraine the first day of Kindergarten is the most important day in a student's school life. The children dress in their Sunday best and families join them at school to participate in the beginning of their important education journey. At Living Sky School Division, we also believe that Kindergarten is the kickoff to creating successful high school graduates. We asked ourselves, "What could we do to draw attention to the importance of Kindergarten?" "What could we do to share that our students are not only taught by teachers but also by parents and community members?" The answer was the Class of 2030 "It takes a community to educate a child" project!

There is a great deal of research that backs up the importance of early learning in the future success of students. Leading expert, Dr. Jean Clinton from McMaster University, believes that children's experience of positive, caring and responsive interactions have a significant impact on the brain and children's learning, development, health and well-being. In Dr. Clinton's article *The Power of Positive Adult Child Relationships: Connection Is the Key*, she states "There is now an explosion of knowledge that tells us that healthy development cannot happen without good relationships between children and the important people in their lives, both within the family and outside of it." As Dr. Jack Shonkoff states, 'Young children experience their world as an environment of relationships, and these relationships affect virtually every aspect of their development' (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004). Relationships are the active ingredient in health development, especially brain development."

Parent Engagement expert, Dr. Debbie Pushor, wrote "So, how might one walk alongside? A new school year often begins with a "Meet the Teacher Night," a historical and deeply ingrained schoolcentric practice that places the focus on the teacher and the curriculum to be covered in each grade level or course that year. How do we interrupt such a practice for parents with a residential school history and a resulting distrust of schools? For newcomer parents who do not yet speak the dominant language or understand the school system in Canada? For parents who do not have



Anistashya  
wants to become a firefighter



Chase  
wants to become a  
race car driver



Fox  
wants to become a policeman

the right words or the right clothes? For parents who do not have childcare, transportation, or a work schedule that enables their attendance? We can discard this practice and replace it with a familycentric approach in which teachers go to homes and communities to meet families and to learn with and from them. This creates an opportunity to build trust and relationships early, for teachers to learn of parents' hopes and dreams for their children, and to become awake to the capacity parents possess."

We took those words to heart when developing the Class of 2030 project and have made efforts to not only visit parents in their home environment but to make the McKittrick Community School environment one that is welcoming and open to all family members. This project also reached past the school environment into the business community. Students and parents never pass by the Royal Bank without excitedly proclaiming, "That's where Rob works!" [Rob Rongve is the vice president of RBC Dominion Securites, the business that adopted the Class of 2030]. These students and their families are on their way to feeling welcomed and a part of our business community.

## Sustainability

The Board of Education not only committed to the implementation of the Class of 2030 "It takes a community to educate a child" project but is committed to following the Class of 2030 to their graduation.

The project is also imbedded into the Board's strategic plan.

The Class of 2030 project has been expanded to all of the Kindergarten Classes in North Battleford for the 2018-19 school year. Each class has a business that has come forward to sponsor the class. Upcoming celebrations include:

- McKittrick Community School – Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Lawrence Elementary School – Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>
- Bready Elementary School – Oct. 9<sup>th</sup>
- Connaught Elementary School – Oct.18<sup>th</sup>

In 2018-19, September and October have been declared Kindergarten Kickoff months and a social media campaign that includes messaging on the importance of Kindergarten has been developed for all schools to use (See Supporting Information: Kindergarten Kickoff Campaign). Each Board member has personally signed a Welcome to Kindergarten card that has been mailed to every Kindergarten student in the division. The Board will also be sending out personal notes to students and families when attendance goals are met. A toolkit for businesses is being developed to give businesses tips on how they can get involved with the education of students in their community.



*Hailey*

wants to become a cop



*Alazne*

wants to become a mom



*Cory*

wants to become a bus driver

## Cost vs. Benefits

Class of 2030 Kickoff Celebration costs included the cost of lunch, student mascot gift, and photography/videography.

All other costs of the project have been covered by the business sponsor. RBC Dominion Securities have really take an lead in this initiative and have obtained grant money from RBC to be used to buy books, sponsor outings and celebrations. The benefits of the project, as highlighted throughout this document, far outweigh the minor costs of the Kickoff Celebration.

## Client Support

From the inception of the Class of 2030 idea, school administration and staff have been a part of the implementation. At first, staff were cautious about getting involved in *another project*. Now, they are true ambassadors of the project and are happy to participate and lead meetings with community members and to share ideas with other schools so they can implement the same project. The project has encouraged SCC's to openly share goals and data and to start conversations about attendance and

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Wilfred Whittles, whose grandson Keagan was one of the kindergarten students taking part in the launch, likes the idea of the school and community working together to guide the kids to do well in school.

*"It gives the kids something to look forward to. If they are here in 2030 they'll have that time capsule to look at," he said, adding: "I think it's mostly the parents, grandparents and the community who will help them graduate."*

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graduation with their families. All students at McKittrick Community School know when they will graduate and are happy to share that with you. Parents are encouraged to share their ideas and to be a part of their child's education.

## Partnerships

One of the unexpected and greatest things that came out of the project was the partnership/relationship that has been developed with RBC Dominion Securities in North Battleford. The group of financial advisors were invited, along with many other businesses, to the Meet the Class of 2030 celebration. The kindergarteners stole their hearts and they decided to buy them each the book that was read at the celebration. They thought that would be the end of their relationship but the future held so much more for all of them. The gift of books turned into the gift of time. A heart-warming relationship was forged between this young group of students and these six kind-hearted community leaders. If you ask Rob Rongve about the relationship, he will tell you that he has received as much out of the relationship as the students have. He lights up, and some times mists



*Emily*

wants to become a dancer



*Tyra*

wants to become a firefighter



*Adley*

wants to become a nurse

up, when he talks about the time spent with the kindergarteners. He has been a passionate advocate of the project and has arranged a number of community meetings to promote “it takes a community to educate a child” project with other businesses. He has spoken formally with a group of businesses at Community Futures, the Chamber of Commerce at a Rotary Club meeting. Informally, he has spoken to anyone who will listen over a cup of coffee about the importance of getting involved with the project and how much fun they will have!

Our newest business sponsors include Battle River Treaty 6 Health, Dental on Main, Bridges Chevrolet Buick GMC, and Anderson Pumphouse. We recently held a mug & muffin meeting and introduced the business sponsors to the administrators and Kindergarten teachers and EAs from their schools. They are all so excited to get started on this adventure and to make a difference in the kindergartener’s lives.



## Evidence of Improved Student Achievement

The Class of 2030 “It takes a community to educate a child” project is a long-term project. We will not be able to fully analyze the effects on graduation rates for a number of years. We can, however, talk about the current effects on engagement and attendance.

### Engagement:

Dawn Lessard, Kindergarten teacher is very proud to tell us that it is the strongest parent engagement she has seen in her career. “Parents feel very comfortable coming in to the school and feel like they are a part of the McKittrick School family.” 17 of 19 families attended the fall Student Led Conference, the best attendance in the school!



*Keagan*  
wants to become an artist



*Hadasha*  
wants to become a doctor



*Dominic*  
wants to become a daddy

In a school with a history of transiency, the return of 12 of the 19 students for grade 1 is something to be celebrated.

Attendance:

Comparative data:

McKitrick Kindergarten Class – 87% attendance rate

Elementary School in North Battleford (similar school community) – 75% attendance rate



There are 31 students enrolled in Kindergarten this year at McKitrick Community School. There is much speculation that the high enrollment number is due to the positive impact of the Class of 2030 project.

*I think one has to recognize why getting our kindergartens focused on graduation at 5 years old is so important. In this province, the number of students that are not graduating high school is alarming. In the Battlefords, only 32% of First Nations students graduated. That is less than half of the Non-First Nations population. And so here we are, and these numbers shouldn't be okay for anyone. At McKitrick the majority of our student population is First Nations and Metis, and we believe we have a responsibility to our students to close this gap and see our students as graduates from high school. – Amanda Risling, McKitrick Principal*

## Supporting Information

**Class of 2030 video:**

<https://www.lskysd.ca/AboutUs/videos/Pages/default.aspx>

**Living Sky's Class of 2030 introduced to public:**

<https://www.newsoptimist.ca/news/local-news/living-sky-s-class-of-2030-introduced-to-public-1.23071592>

**Living Sky launches project to help more kids graduate:**

<https://battlefordsnow.com/article/581220/living-sky-launches-project-help-more-kids-graduate>

**PR firm taken on to repair Battlefords' reputation:**

<https://www.newsoptimist.ca/news/local-news/pr-firm-taken-on-to-repair-battlefords-reputation-1.23438646>

*The thinking, according to Machniak, is that now was the time to “start to move on the great news stories in the Battlefords.”*

*One example she pointed to was the business community's potential involvement in the “Class of 2030” initiative, a long-term initiative launched last October to address high school graduation rates in the division.*



*Zoey*

wants to become a firefighter



*Mrs. Lessard*

wants to be retired and sitting on a beach in 2030



*Mrs. Duchseher*

wants to be retired by 2030



**Class of 2030 photo album:**

[https://lskysd-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/shannon\\_lessard\\_lskysd\\_ca/Ekjqxf26q4pCs3IE7t-zzxABTE1C8UgwCfjU2\\_wBbG6Nxx?e=EpFqCo](https://lskysd-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/shannon_lessard_lskysd_ca/Ekjqxf26q4pCs3IE7t-zzxABTE1C8UgwCfjU2_wBbG6Nxx?e=EpFqCo)

**Kindergarten Kickoff Campaign:**

[https://lskysd-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/shannon\\_lessard\\_lskysd\\_ca/EqOoOgzcrKlKm7ETxqNKloUB4WaEjK7uov47vCKLEJeeA?e=vpgw1v](https://lskysd-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/shannon_lessard_lskysd_ca/EqOoOgzcrKlKm7ETxqNKloUB4WaEjK7uov47vCKLEJeeA?e=vpgw1v)

**Bankers invest time in kindergarten students:**

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/class-of-2030-1.4811179>

*Tonya Lehman, Superintendent of Learning with the Living Sky School Division, said there are other benefits to the partnership as well.*

*"It's helped to start build some strong connections with our parents," Lehman said. For instance, attendance is up for meetings between parents and teachers of the class of 2030.*

*Lehman said making school a positive experience is a new concept to some of these families. "They didn't always have — as parents — the most positive educational experience and maybe even just as part of our community not the most positive connections," she said.*

*She said the partnership is, "really bringing all of us together and seeing it as our work and our role to make sure that our youngest people in our community feel valued, feel accepted."*

*"They feel that sense of hope — that they have people around them everywhere really rooting for them," she added.*

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*"As a director, I can say I want to see a day when everybody is graduating. That's the ideal. This is a start towards getting there," Vickers said.*

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