



NORTHERN LIGHTS SCHOOL DIVISION No. 113

Bag Service #6500

La Ronge, Saskatchewan

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Nomination

Premier's Board of Education Award for Innovation and Excellence in Education

This nomination is being submitted on behalf of Northern Lights School Division 113 Board of Education. Northern Lights School Division 113 serves twenty communities within northern Saskatchewan. The information provided below is required for this nomination:

Director of Education:

Mr. Jason Young

Board of Education Chair:

Mr. Joey Maccullum

Name of Program:

Graduation Team Initiative

Goal of the Program:

To support students at risk and increase graduation rates in communities where an NLSD high school is located.

This includes Hector Thiboutot School in the Village Sandy Bay, Charlebois School in the Village of Cumberland House, Churchill Community High School in the Town of La Ronge, Valley View School in the Village Beauval, Minahik Waskahigan School in the Village of Pinehouse Lake, Twin Lakes Community School in the Town Buffalo Narrows and La Loche-Dene High School in the Village of La Loche.

1. The Northern Lights School Division 113 Board has supported this initiative by allocating resources to the initiative and prioritizing the need to increase and support graduation rates through the Graduation Team Initiative. Support was also provided by allowing for job description changes and new Administrative Procedure development specific to putting student achievement and success first. The board receives regular data updates of progress within each of our high schools.
2. This project is innovative as it used a team like approach to tackle the need to further support an increase in graduation rates by developing graduation teams at each of the NLSD 113 high schools. This is an explicit HOLISTIC strategy based on a growth mindset and a circle of support around students, which helps them tackle any barriers they may face. NLSD 113 graduation teams have been tailored and built to meet the needs of students in Indigenous communities. Our teams involve a variety of staff including the school administrator, the school career transitions teacher, the school social worker/counsellor, the resource teacher, the student support worker and other staff as needed to inform student needs and provide individual supports. The Graduation Team Initiative also provides a consistent framework that supports connections with other human service agencies that provide services to our students.

September 26, 2018

3. This project is sustainable as no additional staff were utilized and duties were redistributed amongst existing staff members. The “team” concept supports collaboration and teamwork. This format also allows for the strengthening and building of multiple connections between the students, school staff, families and communities, due to the diversity of the team members
4. Programming dollars were allocated to support students, the NLSD 113 Board of Education will continue to fund this initiative.
5. Students supported the innovation by attending tutoring and homework completion sessions offered, participating in celebrations of their success, identifying personal challenges and sharing what these were. In schools, students identified what their needs were, tools such as the Our School Survey, SACYW and student conferencing has informed this practice. The SK Ministry of Education provided support through a \$15,000 Learning Opportunities Grant. Different partnerships grew at the school and community level that were non-existent in the past, this allowed for diffusion of the importance of supporting student success. A partnership through an ISSI agreement with Lac La Ronge Indian Band Education has developed as a result. This partnership will allow continuity and expansion of the initiative.
6. Overall, our school division 3 year graduation rate improved by 6%, with two of our schools increasing their graduation rate by over 20% as reported by the SK Ministry of Education 2017-2018 Graduation Rate Report and retrieved from Saskatchewan Data System.

Graduation Rate Percentage of Original Cohort (Gr 10) by Entrance Year				
3 Year Graduation Rate				
High School	Entrance Year	2014-2015	2015-2016	Overall Change
	Grad Year	2016-2017	2017-2018	
Churchill Community High School		49.28%	46.77%	-3.01
Hector Thiboutot Community School		20.83%	43.48%	+22.65
Valley View Community School		54.17%	61.90%	+7.73
Twin Lakes Community School		36.36%	55.56%	+19.20
Charlebois Community School		17.65%	47.06%	+29.41
La Loche Community School*		29.82%	20.93%	-8.89
Minahik Waskahigan Community School*		26.32%	35.71%	+9.39
Division Average		36%	42%	+6%

7. Please see attached document for a full description of the Graduation Rate Initiative.

Graduation Team Initiative




sītoskawihkwāw oskayak
dēnēgódhe házē bētśēn dedi

Revised September 2018



NORTHERN LIGHTS
SCHOOL DIVISION NO. 113



Graduation Team Initiative Package

- ◇ Graduation Team Initiative Overview
- ◇ Initiative Pillars
- ◇ At-Risk Dashboard Information
- ◇ School Year Plan
- ◇ Bibliography/Acknowledgements



GRADUATION TEAM PROGRAM PILLARS

Relationships and Mentoring:

building close, supportive relationships with students.

Culture: developing a sense of belonging through cultural activities.

Career Planning: exposing students to career possibilities and supporting their pursuits.

Academics: tutoring, course planning, peer mentoring and role modeling.

Parental Engagement: encouraging dialogue between parents, school and students.

Transitions: supporting transitions between high school and post-secondary school.

School Graduation Team:

School Division Support Team

Overview

Target Groups: High School students, that are at risk of not meeting SK Graduation Requirements as indicated by attendance/disengagement, course achievement and credit attainment data.

Our student population for the 2018-2019 school year consists of : 57.4% Status First Nations students, 34.7% Metis students and 8.13% non Status First Nations.

Curriculum Focus: Ensuring pre-requisite/requisite core and elective credit achievement and attainment in the required areas of study at each grade level and meeting ministry mandated outcomes and time allocations.

Saskatchewan Educational Sector Plan Priorities:

Outcomes identified for June 2020:

-Saskatchewan will achieve an 85% three year graduation rate and a 90% five-year graduation rate;

-collaboration between First Nations, Metis, and Inuit and non-First Nations Metis and Inuit partner will result in significant improvement in First Nations, Metis, and Inuit student engagement and increase the three year graduation rates from 35% in June 2012 to at least 65% and the five year graduation rate to at least 75%.

Improvement Targets identified include:

-achieve an annual increase of three percentage point in the provincial three year graduation rate;

-achieve an annual increase of four percentage points in the First Nations, Metis and Inuit three year and five year graduation rates.

FINAL (November 9, 2017) Education Sector Strategic Plan, 2014-2020 Level 1

Cycle 3 (2017-2019)

<p>Curriculum culturally relevant and engaging</p> <p>Instruction differentiated and high quality</p> <p>Assessment: culturally appropriate and equitable</p> <p>Supportive First Nations, Metis, and Inuit context, perspectives and ways of knowing</p> <p>Professional Learning: targeted and equitable</p> <p>Strong Pedagogical Leadership</p> <p>Alignment: human, physical and mental</p>	<p>In partnership with First Nations, AMEs and local stakeholders, schools will implement the following three target (T2) initiative. Consistent on-reservation education from the sector, implement and sustain the provincial limited student intervention system.</p> <div style="border: 2px solid blue; padding: 10px; margin: 10px auto; width: 80%;"> <p style="color: blue; font-weight: bold;">Strategic Intent:</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em;">I am ready to learn. I am valued. I belong. I am successful. I am preparing for my future.</p> </div> <p>By June 30, 2020, 80% of students will be at least ready to learn, engaged, and ready.</p> <p>By June 30, 2020, graduation rates between First Nations, Metis, and Inuit and non-First Nations, Metis and Inuit students will result in significant improvement in First Nations, Metis and Inuit student engagement and at least a 10% increase in the three year graduation rate from 35% in June 2012 to at least 65% and the five year graduation rate to at least 75%.</p> <p>By June 30, 2020, Saskatchewan will achieve an 85% three-year graduation rate and a 90% five-year graduation rate.</p> <p>By June 30, 2020, 100% of schools will be connected to their management by means of a provincial learning management system for learning in the province.</p> <p>By June 30, 2020, 100% of schools will be connected to their management by means of a provincial learning management system for learning in the province.</p> <p>By June 30, 2020, 100% of schools will be connected to their management by means of a provincial learning management system for learning in the province.</p>	<p>Supporting children</p> <p>Supporting children</p> <p>Supporting children</p>
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These are the changes we have seen in Year 1 as we enter into Year 2.

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Division Average		36%	42%	+6%

What does this mean?

We will work toward an increase in graduation rates by supporting student **achievement**, **credit attainment** and **attendance**. Targeted supports will focus on our most vulnerable students as we wrap our resources around them. Students will be exposed to a variety of strategies and supports oriented towards: student independence and engagement, confidence and self-esteem building, positive learning experiences and interactions with significant adults, and parental involvement. Students will be identified by the school graduation team and any student who self-identifies as needing additional supports will also qualify for this program.



(Northern Lights School Division #113 Graduation Team Professional Development Session, 2018)

School Roles

1. Administrator:

- oversees the program and leads the identification of at-risk students.;
- uses data to inform planning;
- participate in the team and provide support as needed;
- ensures accountability and fidelity to the program through the use of the template and expenditures;
- advocates and support students within the program;
- model trust and embrace and support new innovative ideas;
- model and practice distributive leadership;
- facilitate communication processes between the school graduation team, students and families and;
- ensure myblueprint.ca is implemented school wide (Grade 7-12) with fidelity to the program guide.

2. Student Support Worker :

- monitor attendance;
- will contact parents/guardians on a regular basis and will document contact within log entries on PowerSchool;
- act as a community liaison to bridge school communication between the school and the community to identify barriers, and create socio-economic awareness for school staff;
- coordinate home visits and;
- create awareness to staff and community of the role of the student support worker.

3. Career Transitions Teacher:

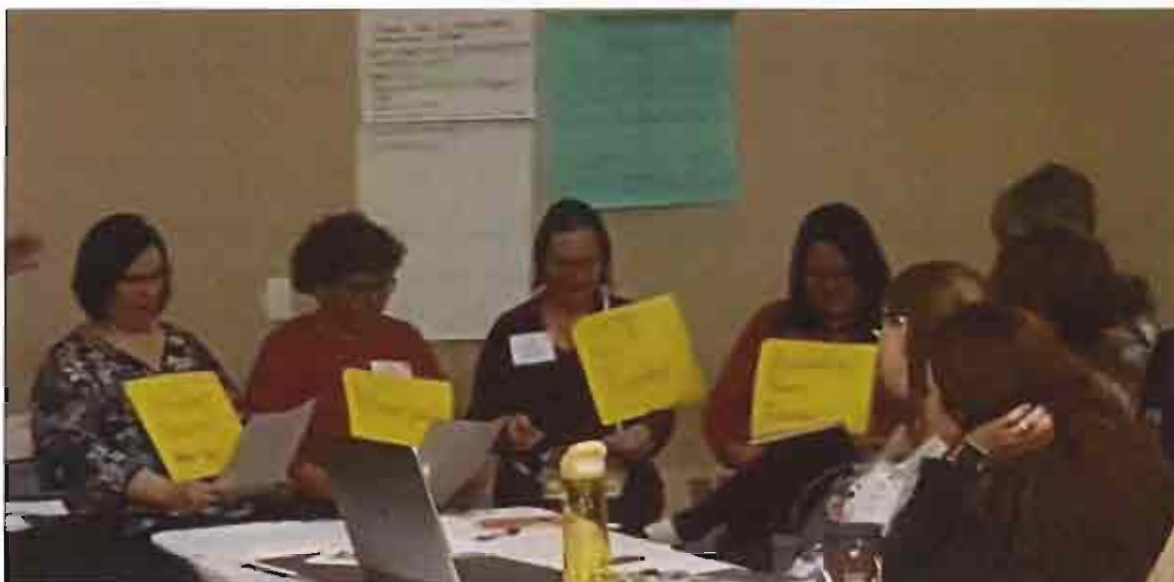
- be a visible person who provides initial transitions programming guidance and class scheduling for the creation of a graduation and post-graduation plans, including support for classroom teachers of identified students;
- student conferencing;
- supports academic planning, coordination of credit recovery and interventions.
- develop and foster relationships with students and their caregivers;
- track the progress of individual students and submit reports bi-weekly to the administrator.
- act as a targeted **graduation coach** for identified students.
- raise awareness of future possibilities and encourage students to reach their maximum potential and;
- coordinate career awareness events.

4. Resource Room Teacher:

- inform modified, alternate and FIP programming;
- support through required student testing to determine programming needs;
- recommend differentiated instructional methods and provide parents, students and classroom teachers with the information;
- participate in home visits;
- use interagency resources and;
- support and participate in graduation team meetings.

5. School Social Workers/School Counsellors:

- build supportive wholistic support systems to connect students to services;
- break down barriers;
- provide targeted counselling to identified at-risk students to determine challenges a student may be facing;
- provide support for specific issues and barriers to help students identify options, coping skills and potential solutions and;
- build relationships with students.



Charlebois School Staff 2018

The school team will strive to provide opportunities for family engagement and access to supports such as social workers, mental health, medical services, tutoring, peer mentoring and other community resources. Monthly cultural activities will be planned, when appropriate. A common space within the school will be designated as an access point for supports and activities associated with the initiative.

Community and school based resources will be elemental in the delivery of this program and contribute to a variety of experiences at each high school in alignment with the core pillars: Relationships/Mentoring, Academics, Career Counselling/Transitions, Parental Engagement, Culture Activities/Student Clubs.

At the division level, educational consultants and other resources will be available to support school teams as needed in response to school needs and requests.

School teams are encouraged to meet bi-weekly as a minimum to review student status and engage in ongoing consultation and communication with special education teachers, classroom teachers and tutors. The team must be familiar with any special education recommendations and accommodations a student may require. In "Following Their Voices" schools, it is important to involve the F.T.V. facilitator and participate in co-construction meetings.

The Graduation Team Initiative is modeled after the Graduation Coach Program with the objective of increasing student on-time graduation rates and credit attainment as per the Education Sector Strategic Plan and establish a process for a graduation and post-graduation plans utilizing a variety of tools and resources available. The intent is to decrease student risk levels and factors, with fluid plans geared towards student success.

See:

[https://www.ecsd.net/Programs/Overview/AboriginalLearning/Pages/Graduation-Coach Initiative.aspx](https://www.ecsd.net/Programs/Overview/AboriginalLearning/Pages/Graduation-Coach%20Initiative.aspx)

<https://education.alberta.ca/media/564019/ecsd-graduation-coach.pdf>

Relationship Building and Mentoring

Team members are encouraged to meet with each student to exchange contact information, introduce services and start a plan. At a minimum there should be monthly face to face check ins. Absences, referrals, class performance, the number of graduation criteria met and participation at school events are monitored. It is important to take the time to really get to know a student. Students are actively encouraged, mentored and supported in gaining access to opportunities at the school and community level, which may of interest to them.

"The best teachers are the ones who are interested in us as people. They don't just ignore you when you are having a bad day; they try and make it better."

(Student, 2017)

Strong, healthy relationships between students and teachers were identified as a key factor in a student's ability to excel in school. Students believe that strong relationships grew out of teachers being respectful, noticing student absences and showing genuine interest and care for the student.

According to students, teachers and parents/caregivers, strong relationships are:

- the foundation of learning;*
- supportive of learning;*
- key to building trust;*
- accepting of student experiences; and*
- unique to the student and community.*

(Student First Engagement Discussion Guide, 2014)



Photo Credit: Ragner Robinson

Culture

Culturally affirming, location specific experiences reinforce belonging and pride, while exposing students to a variety of supports including access to Elders and community Knowledge Keepers. Opportunities will be unique to each community and culture, allowing students to make meaningful connections based on local worldviews.

"It is important for us to learn traditions like trapping from Elders so that we can pass it on to our kids."- (Student)

Cultural connections are of particular importance to engaging students, encouraging attendance and achieving learning outcomes. Elders and community school coordinators/ liaison workers support student engagement by connecting to the community. Elders act as role models and help understand culture and traditions. Opportunities to learn traditional language and participate in cultural activities increase student engagement and improve school, family and community relationships.

(Student First Discussion Guide, 2014)



Career Planning

Target group students are supported in exploring a variety of career pathways and understanding what is needed for each of them. Career education will develop and support career management competencies, learning and work pathways, personal life and work plan. Involvement in Practical and Applied Arts will provide the opportunity to explore career paths through a variety of course offerings. Portfolio development will provide opportunity for exploring interests, strengths and skills to set goals and explore career options. Exposure to post-secondary institutions and industry through on-site visits or school presentations is beneficial for students and will familiarize them with the multitude of opportunities available.

Career development components can be integrated across the curriculum. This can be accomplished through various guests and/or workshops in the schools and participation in career related excursions, career fairs, experiential learning, participation in apprenticeship programs and events. Students are to be encouraged to participate in as many career related activities as possible to address their career development needs.

Support will be provided in selecting the right courses, examining options, applying for scholarships, apprenticeship opportunities, work placement programs and post-secondary applications. Students will be offered use of all available career planning tools with priority for myblueprint.ca from grades 7-12.



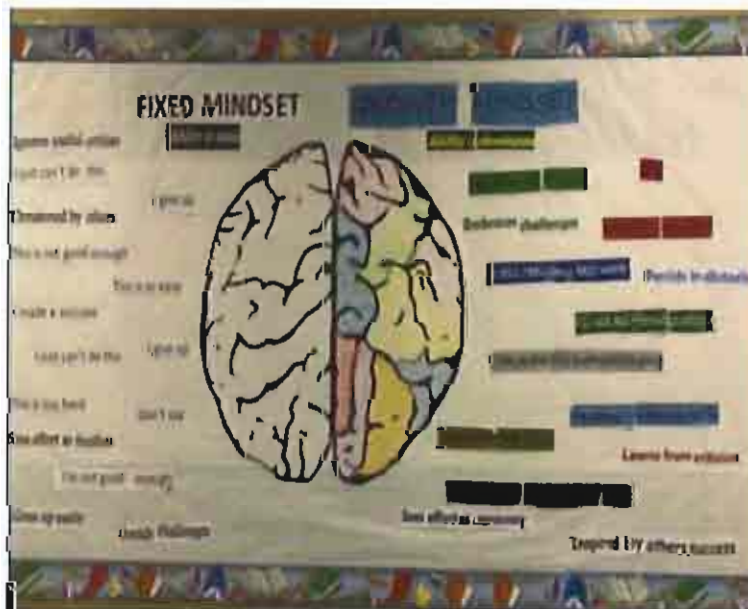
(Charlebois School Students. 2018)

Academics

The Graduation Team will establish close working relationships with teachers of identified students. The team will support teachers in knowledge of Indigenous history, culture and historical barriers in order to create an understanding of Indigenous students who may be part of the target group. This may include providing or developing materials, access to classroom resources or workshops in and out of the classroom as required for both students and teachers.

The team will monitor and track student academic achievement and maintain contact with the caregiver of each student and the student on a regular basis. It is important to connect with students who may be struggling academically, socially or personally and provide support. This may mean **individually tailored programming** for some students. This would include a variety of strategies with a focus on outcome based learning and continuing have high expectations yesterday.

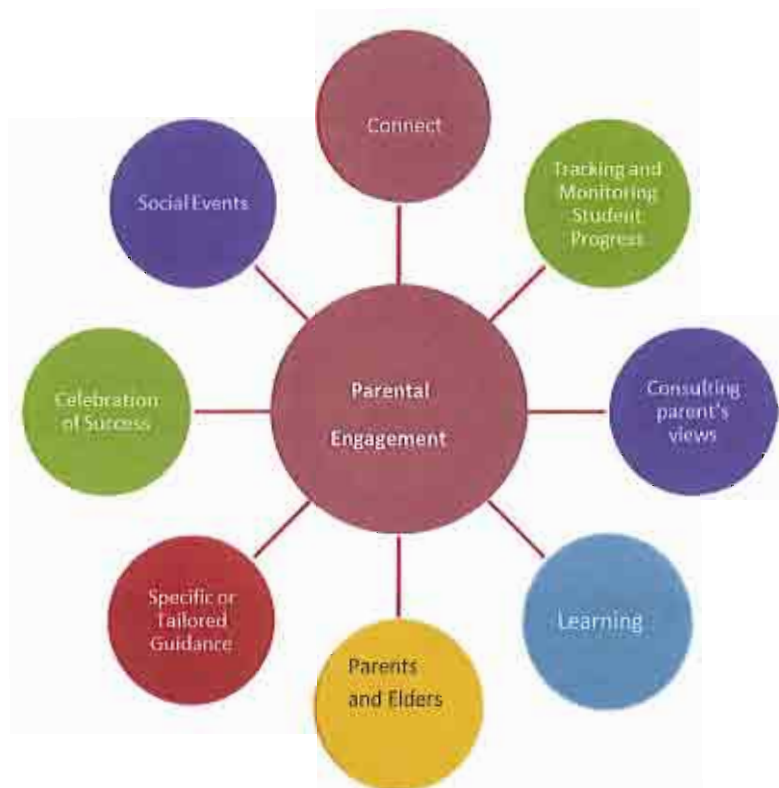
Online or in person tutoring services, peer mentoring, homework club or role modelling may be provided or arranged by the team as needed for each student to provide the necessary academic supports for success. Online opportunities for additional courses are available through our online school, **edcentre.ca**. The development and management of after-school programming and workshops will also be conducive to student academic achievement.



Parental Engagement

It is important for the graduation team to personally connect with parents on a regular basis to discuss academic standing, student transitions, activities and other services accessed each month. A newsletter, a home visit or other means the school may have are suggested, to provide monthly updates about the program's activities.

Parental Engagement can also be encouraged through monthly activities like a parent tea, a family games night, a Feast to celebrate a special occasion or season, honour ceremonies or celebrations when students reach goals or milestones. This may also include moving parent/teacher nights to "feeder" communities to allow access for families who may face transportation or other barriers.



Transitions

Transitions from a smaller school to a larger school, or from grade nine into grade ten can be an exciting yet challenging time for many students. It is important to provide a welcoming environment and to have a key person within the team be a main point of contact for each of these students, **prior** to their entry into high school. A focus on transitions plans is essential for new students. Grade nine is a crucial time to learn about what high school is all about and explore the possibilities during their high school career and beyond. Grade nine *Graduation and Post-Graduation plans* can be developed at this level, using a variety of tools available. This will include a regular review of the plan with a member of the school based Graduation Team.

Developing and maintaining a graduation and post-graduation plan will assist every student in exploring their interests, skills, values and personal traits while considering the many career pathways available to them in Saskatchewan, Canada and beyond; it will guide them in making informed decisions that impact their present and future lives. A graduation and post-graduation plan is a tool to assist students in transitioning smoothly through high school and beyond—to a future that is personally fulfilling and rewarding.

-SK Ministry Education Graduation and Post-Graduation Plan 2017

This is also an important time to provide opportunities for students to interact with peers in school sponsored events, preparation tours of possibilities beyond high school.



Tracking System

The tracking system monitors monthly attendance, relationships, participation, credit attainment and whether or not students are on track to graduate. Schools are expected to monitor students and track them on a monthly basis. This data will identify student needs and supports required. It will also serve as a measure of success for the program.

STUDENT SUCCESS RUBRIC					
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Notes
A) Attendance*	Has not attended on a regular basis	Has missed 4 or more days in month	Has missed 2-3 days in month	Has missed less than 2 days in month	
B) Relationships	Is not able to maintain positive relationships with adults at school	Beginning to feel comfortable with adults in the school	Has positive relationship with at least one adult in the school	Creates positive relationships with more than one adult in school	
C) Participation	Does not participate in any school-based sport, cultural, or recreational activity	Involved in one school-based sport, cultural, or recreational activity	Involved in 2 or more and various school-based sport, cultural, or recreational activity	Initiate or provide leadership for 2 or more school-based sport, cultural, or recreational activities	
D) Credit Attainment	Not enrolled in classes needed to graduate	enrolled in courses needed to graduate but not passing all	Enrolled and succeeding in courses needed to graduate	Enrolled and succeeding in more courses than needed to graduate	
E) On Track overall	This is a Y or N based on your informed opinion looking at all the factors that contribute to being on-track. Consider the 4 key factors that we are monitoring, and use your best informed judgement to indicate whether or not you believe this student is on track to graduate in June. One question to ask yourself (and perhaps the mentee as well) is "If things keep going as they are going now, will this student graduate with their current cohort group?"				

GRAD TEAM MONTHLY TRACKING SHEET																																		
Instructions for Completion	Mentee name	Ministry St. Id. Number (DIN)	Grade	PWA (Self-Decl)	Gender	Date Identified as at risk	Withdraw Date	Sept		Oct		Nov		Dec		Jan		Feb		March		April		May		June		Promoted (Y/N)						
								A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E		A	B	C	D	E	A
1. Add new mentees to this list as they are identified throughout the year.	Student Name John Carter	123456789	10	Y	M	10/1/2018	3/12/2019	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1							
2. Enter a score for each of the 5 indicators on the rubric for each month the student is enrolled and identified as being at risk.																																		
3. Do not remove mentees from the list. Once a student withdraws, enter the withdraw date. No other data needs to be entered.																																		
4. At the end of the school year, enter whether or not the student graduated.																																		

Year Plan Template

Northern Lights Graduation Team Initiative 2018/2019		
School:		
The funds requested are to enable each school to create ongoing opportunities and experiences that will support student involvement in the school community and create exposure to possibilities that may otherwise be unattainable. Funding will enable schools to host regular events to engage targeted students and their families with the school community, allowing opportunities to create strong relationships and participate in a variety of activities.		
Months	Scheduled Bi-Weekly Meetings/Dates	Plans –The plans for each month need to relate to the pillars.
	<p>Week 1 decide which students need to be on the monthly tracking sheet.</p> <p>Week 3- discuss how the student is doing and if further plans need to occur.</p> <p>Each month the graduation team needs to re-evaluate if students need to continue to be on the at-risk student list.</p>	<p>Relationships and mentoring – building close, supportive relationships with students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitions – addressing the high dropout rate between Grades 9-10, and supporting transitions between high school and post-secondary school. • Culture – developing a sense of belonging through cultural activities. • Career planning – exposing students to career possibilities and supporting their pursuit. • Academics – tutoring, course planning, peer mentoring and role modeling. • Parental engagement- Ongoing relationships with parents are encouraged to help support student academic achievement and development.
September	<p>Week 1-</p> <p>Week 3-</p>	<p>Relationships and mentoring</p> <p>Transitions</p> <p>Culture</p> <p>Career planning- My Blueprint Learning Goals and...</p> <p>Academics</p>

The template will help guide monthly activities and provide a basis for the graduation team program. A completed year plan template must be submitted by October 1, via One Drive each year. A mid-year review will occur in the new year with a final evaluation at the end of the year.

Funding

There is funding available for each school. Once students have been identified and the year plan is in place, funds will be released into the school's SRB account. Each school will receive a base of \$1,000 with an additional \$100 per student identified to a suggested maximum of 25 students at a time. Spending of funds is expected to be gradual and are meant to support student success.

The following resources were used in the creation of this document:

1. Edmonton Catholic Schools (n.d.). Retrieved June 2017, from Edmonton Catholic Schools, [https://www.ecsd.net/Programs/Overview/AboriginalLearning/Pages/Graduation-Coach Initiative.aspx](https://www.ecsd.net/Programs/Overview/AboriginalLearning/Pages/Graduation-Coach%20Initiative.aspx)
<https://education.alberta.ca/media/564019/ecsd-graduation-coach.pdf>
2. Lessard, Sean (2014, November). Indspire Institute High School Graduation Coach Program Evaluation. Retrieved from <http://Indspire.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/indspire-nurturing-capacity-graduation-coach-model-2014-en.pdf>
3. Northern Lights School Division (n.d.). Annual Report 2015-2016. Retrieved from http://nlsd113.com/ckfinder/userfiles/files/Business_Admin/Public_Accounts/NLSD%202015-16%20School%20Board%20Annual%20ReportWithStatements%20-%20PDF%20161206.pdf
5. R.A. Malatest and Associates Ltd. (2014, September). Student First Engagement Discussion Guide. Retrieved from: <http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/details.cfm?p=79160>
6. SK Ministry of Education (n.d.). Annual Report 2015-2016. Retrieved from <http://www.finance.gov.sk.ca/PlanningAndReporting/2015-16/2015-16EducationAnnualReport.pdf>
7. SK Ministry of Education Edonline (2018, September) 2017-2018 Graduation Rates Report.

