

ANNUAL REPORT

to the community • 2009–2010



Creating student success



PURPOSE

The River East Transcona School Division exists to educate students to be inspired, skilled, responsible citizens.

VISION

The River East Transcona School Division will be forward-looking, innovative and service-oriented, offering superior, comprehensive programming to meet the emerging needs of our students and community.

MISSION

To fulfil our purpose and in our journey toward our vision, the River East Transcona School Division is committed to provide:

Relevant, progressive educational programming and supportive services in a safe, stimulating learning environment.

GREETINGS



On behalf of the board of trustees, I present River East Transcona School Division's 2009–10 annual report to the community. It captures just some of the stories that demonstrate how we work to fulfil our purpose—to educate students to be inspired, skilled, responsible citizens.

Our divisional priorities act as a guide and are reflected in the stories you will read in this report. They highlight the ways we are nurturing student success, instilling an attitude of care and respect for the community and world, introducing new technology to advance education and business practices, and building partnerships in the community.

As a school board, we are proud to be the guardians of these programs, services and initiatives, and pleased to have this opportunity to tell you about some of them.

Robert Fraser
Chair, Board of Trustees 2009–10



I am pleased to provide you with this opportunity to learn more about some of the new projects, ongoing initiatives and valued staff and students that make up River East Transcona School Division.

Each year, RETSD covers a lot of ground, fulfilling the individual and widely varying needs of its students, rising to meet the inherent challenges and celebrating our many successes. In this report, you will find stories that demonstrate how we are working toward ever-present objectives—providing challenging academic programming, nurturing our students' commitment to citizenship, and helping those who need extra supports feel embraced by the educational community.

This has been another successful year for River East Transcona School Division and this report provides just a taste of the important work being done by our staff to inspire students to work, care, give, dream and achieve.

Dennis Pottage
Superintendent/CEO

DIVISIONAL PRIORITIES 2010–11

1. Strengthen assessment practices to inform teaching and enhance learning.
2. Create and enhance safe, respectful and inclusive cultures.
3. Enhance student performance through information and communication technologies.
4. Enrich educational opportunities for students through purposeful connections between the division and its community.

DIVISION FACTS

2009–10 SCHOOL BOARD MEDAL WINNERS



GOLD

Jane Samaroo
Miles Macdonell
Collegiate

SILVER

Joshua Aquin • River East Collegiate
Cara Campbell • Kildonan-East Collegiate
Jamie Chalmers • Collège Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau
Devon Hudson • Murdoch MacKay Collegiate
Kayla Kraus • Transcona Collegiate

NUMBER OF STAFF

Academic	1,234
Support	1,077

SCHOOLS OF CHOICE

Incoming	611
Outgoing	383

GRADUATION 2010

Regular	1,002
Vocational	109
Dual diploma	105
French Immersion	117
Mature student	99
Special	7
Total	1,439

NUMBER OF STUDENTS

Elementary (K–8)	10,359
Secondary (9–12)	6,259
Adult Education	652



CARING SCHOOLS

CHANGE BEGINS WITH LOCAL INVOLVEMENT

The regular appearance of recycling programs, green teams and sustainable development projects in River East Transcona, signifies changing attitudes about the environment and how we view our impact on the world. That attitude shift is also seen in the small changes creeping into daily life, from the type of cups being used in the cafeteria to the keen questions being asked by kindergartners in class.

It all speaks to the great efforts expended by division staff to establish various environmental programs and initiatives, encourage student involvement and bring enthusiasm to their tasks—whether developing a biosphere project, picking up litter for Take Pride Winnipeg! or exploring the local environment at Oak Hammock Marsh and FortWhyte Alive.

A key belief within the division is that by working together, staff can make a significant difference in the lives of their students. Taking that one step further, RETSD schools are expending great effort to teach students themselves how to make significant differences in the lives and environments of others, both locally and globally. One example is Collège Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau, John Pritchard School, Munroe Junior High School and River East Collegiate, who are members of the Associated Schools Project Network, created by UNESCO to focus on world concerns and the United Nations system, human rights and democracy, intercultural learning and environmental issues. These themes all touch on key notions of sustainable development; to positively shape the way we live our lives and respect others, both near and far, present and future, and to maintain healthy attitudes about the world around us, striving to develop economies that protect ecosystems and social well-being.

RETSD students are increasingly aware of both local and global issues and, with the encouragement of the division's educators, more committed to making a difference than ever before.

INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS RELY ON STUDENT SERVICES

The division makes great use of student services to create an inclusive learning environment in all of its schools and help all students reach their full potential. The number and variety of supports it provides and facilitates make up a long and diverse list, which is divided into three sections—personnel, programming and placement. These in turn are broken into school, division and community levels—the structure of which is referred to as the Continuum of Supports and Services. School staffs work directly with the students and rely on student services to provide division-level support. In turn, student services works with many community-level organizations that provide specialized support.

The type of supports provided to students depends on their level of need, which can fluctuate throughout their school years. There are three main groups of interventions in what is called the Behavioural Support Continuum—universal, targeted and intensive.

Universal interventions are strategies that support 80 to 90 per cent of the student population; those who work within the provincial curriculum and benefit from good teaching, differentiated instruction and adaptations for academic, social, emotional and behavioural development. Targeted interventions support five to 15 per cent of students; those who work within the provincial curriculum but require additional supports. Intensive interventions support one to five per cent of students; those with special needs who receive funding from the government and require a modified curriculum.

TRANSITION PLANNING PAVES THE WAY

Students experience a myriad of changes during their school careers. Changing grade levels and schools are two changes that all students experience. For students with special needs, these changes call for additional support structures to ensure successful transitions, overseen by the River East Transcona student services department.

RETSD schools have common divisional guidelines to help students with special needs as they transition into and between levels, and out of school into the community. These guidelines incorporate transition processes mandated by Manitoba Education, as well as protocols required by community agencies.

The first transition—into kindergarten—requires the student's parents to provide information to the school about their child's health-care needs, skill levels, diagnostic information, and current support and service providers. A team of division and community support personnel are involved in the process, which includes applying for funding and developing an individual education plan—a document that outlines a plan to address the individual needs of the student.

The transition from early to middle years is the first school move and co-operation between the sending and receiving schools, along with input from the family, is important to ensure student-specific programming is not disrupted. This applies to the transition from middle to senior years, as well, which also requires an assessment of the student's current skill levels and the beginning of preparations for life beyond school.

The transition from school into the community is a process that unfolds throughout the student's high school years and involves not only the student and their family, but many dedicated school and student services personnel, as well as community agencies. This stage of transition planning helps minimize the challenges a student and his or her family can face when preparing for adult life.



TECHNOLOGY

KEEPING TECHNOLOGY CURRENT

Students in vocational programs should be trained using the latest in industrial equipment and technology if they are going to enter the labour market with the skills they need to succeed.

The division recognizes this and applies annually to the provincial Technical Vocational Initiative (TVI) for funding to support equipment upgrades. In 2009–10, the division received grants from TVI for four upgrades:

Car-O-Tronic Vision® X3, purchased for the autobody shop at Kildonan-East Collegiate, uses laser guidance and Bluetooth® technology to adjust and measure car frames to within 3 mm, as required by Manitoba Public Insurance.

The Hofmann geoliner™ 550 four-wheel alignment system uses high-definition cameras encased in heavy-duty magnesium pods that mount to the rear wheels of a vehicle. A set of targets mounted to the front wheels transfer information via Bluetooth technology to a computer display. This system was purchased for the automotive programs at Kildonan-East and Murdoch MacKay collegiates.

The Gerber AccuMark Pattern Design System was purchased for the fashion technology program at Murdoch MacKay. A computerized pattern design and industrial production system, it allows students to create and alter patterns for apparel, and adjust the size of the pattern.

CATIA (computer aided three-dimensional interactive application) software, a 3-D modelling program that supports product development from conception to design, manufacturing and engineering, was purchased for use by the division. The software is a key component in the F1 in Schools Project, an international competition that sees teams of students design, build and race miniature Formula One cars. RETSD is taking a leadership role in the development of the F1 in Schools Project in Manitoba.

Working with cutting-edge technology in the classroom allows vocational students to meet learning outcomes that are consistent with current industry and business standards, and greatly enhances their opportunities for post-secondary training, apprenticeships and meaningful employment.

LOWERING THE CLASSROOM WALLS

Technology has the power to transform classrooms and in 2009–10, students studying digital communications at River East Collegiate were part of an international project that both experienced and explored that notion.

River East was the only Canadian participant among 14 schools from eight countries in the “Flatten Classrooms and Expand Minds” project. It figuratively flattened classroom walls, allowing students from around the world to collaborate on analyzing the emerging technologies likely to have an impact on future teaching and learning.

Twenty-four Grade 10 students learned how to use a variety of state-of-the-art technologies to communicate with each other in the same classroom. Next, they were interconnected with other classes at REC to work on joint projects. The third phase connected students globally using Skype™, Google™, wikis and blogs under the control of the teachers, while the fourth phase allowed them to communicate with each other independently. Proper English and etiquette were required at all times.

Using their social networks, students then formed international teams to study the educational impact of six emerging technologies cited in the 2010 Horizon Report: mobile computing, open content, electronic books, simple augmented reality, gesture-based computing and visual data analysis. The final step in the project required each team to make and share a video about what they had learned and post it on the NetGenEd Flat Classroom Project 2010 website.

The project helped students at REC learn more about technology, grow their appreciation for careers in the field, and develop strategies for digitally communicating and collaborating with their peers around the world. It was such a success the school will be participating in a similar project in 2010–11.

SMART TECHNOLOGY MEANS SMARTER TEACHING

In September 2009, River East Transcona began an interactive white boards pilot program in nine schools—three each at early, middle and senior years—using SMART™ technology. This technology consists of an interactive white board, a projector that creates the images on the board and a remote “clicker” that enables further interaction.

Teachers are taught how to use the hardware and given extensive training to use companion software called SMART Notebook™, which allows them to incorporate multimedia lessons for use on the SMART Board™. The lessons they create can include websites, videos, audio clips and interactive questions and answers. Students can touch the board and interact with the content or can answer questions and interact while seated at their desks, using the clickers. Teachers can embed questions throughout the lesson, asking if the students understand the lesson up to that point and students can use the clickers to respond positively or negatively, alerting teachers to areas that require more or less focus.

Not only are the features of this new technology impressive, but the boards have proven to enhance the curriculum and help teachers achieve their objectives. So far, the SMART Boards have increased interactivity in the classrooms and have engaged students in new and exciting ways. With the help of feedback from teachers, the division intends to expand use of the boards in its classrooms.



STUDENT SUCCESS

STUDENTS SHOW THEY CAN DO IT

River East Transcona School Division's theme is "creating student success" and each year it takes special care to recognize the success of its exceptional students by nominating them for "Yes I Can!" Awards.

In 2009–10, five students in the division earned "Yes I Can!" Awards presented by the Manitoba Council for Exceptional Children. The council is dedicated to advocating for, and highlighting the achievements of, students with special needs.

The following students won "Yes I Can!" Awards: Michael Gerl, a Grade 12 student at River East Collegiate who has multiple disabilities but who attained a high academic standing throughout his schooling; Marshall Block (Polson School), Anthony Hurry (Sherwood School), and Heather Wilson (Murdoch MacKay Collegiate), who have all worked hard to learn to use technology to help them communicate; and Jordan Laverdure, from Murdoch MacKay Collegiate, who has demonstrated a remarkable transformation in response to changes to her individualized program.

The council also recognizes the efforts of employees who assist exceptional students in achieving their goals. In 2009–10, the following four employees of RETSD were recognized: Henri Braga, a school psychologist who works with school teams and families to develop education plans that will enable exceptional children to succeed; Mick Carevic, a paraprofessional at Arthur Day Middle School who goes "above and beyond" in working with children with special needs; and maintenance employees Neal Hastings, director of maintenance, and Craig McFeetors, supervisor of capital projects, who are instrumental in preparing schools to accommodate students with special needs.

STRENGTHENING ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

Teachers appreciate that assessment is integral to a student's growth and development and in recent years, new approaches to assessment have taken root in the division. Strengthening those practices continued to be a priority in 2009–10.

"Assessment of learning" is a familiar concept: teachers look at proof of what students have learned and how they are doing, compared to curricular outcomes. Added to that is the concept of "assessment for learning," which provides timely, descriptive feedback and support during the learning process to help students understand what they did well, where they went wrong, and what they need to do differently in relation to their learning.

Involving students in their own assessment is another key practice. Research shows when students are involved in their own assessment they learn and achieve more and are more motivated. They use their own language to self-assess, so it becomes more understandable to them and they recognize more easily where they are on the learning continuum and how far they have to go to reach their goals.

In 2009–10, a set of information sheets for parents, entitled "What's New in Student Assessment?" was written for publication in school newsletters. Professional development workshops, teacher learning communities, and assessment residencies—a specialist helps school teams deepen their understanding of assessment philosophies and practices—also continued. In April, an assessment fair gave teachers and administrators an opportunity to share their schools' assessment practices and learn from each other.

PHYSICAL/HEALTH EDUCATION CREDIT A SUCCESS

Grade 11 and 12 students in RETSD are doing everything from yardwork to weightlifting to fulfil the requirements of the compulsory 110-hour physical/health education credit introduced for their grades in September 2008.

Prior to 2008–09, about one-quarter of the students took physical education. Now, all are required to "get active." Half of the credit is earned in class, completing a personal physical activity plan and risk assessment for the out-of-class fitness practicum, and taking health education. The other 50 per cent of the credit is earned performing 55 hours of health-related physical activity out of class. Intramurals, interscholastics, physical education field trips, non-school team sports, running, walking, weight training, aerobics, dance classes, boxing, taekwondo and sailing are some of the activities students do to earn their credit.

Each activity is rated for its risk level. A rating of four has a high level of safety concerns for the activity and requires qualified instruction and adult supervision. Swimming, karate, hockey and football are some of the higher risk activities chosen by a small percentage of the students. Students (and their parents) must sign informed consent forms before proceeding with any of their chosen fitness activities.

Activities must improve cardio-respiratory endurance, muscular strength and endurance, and/or flexibility. Teachers meet with students regularly to manage and evaluate their progress for the out-of-class component of the course. On average, fewer than three per cent of the students did not complete the course in its introductory year.



CONNECTIONS

BREAKFAST CLUBS GROWING IN RETSD

The division's unique breakfast club program continued to grow in 2009–10. The program is a collaboration between the division which provides the space for the clubs, local churches which provide the food and volunteers to operate them, and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority which provides the expertise of a nutritionist and community facilitator. A committee involving all three partners has been established to ensure consistency.

Princess Margaret, Radisson and Prince Edward schools established clubs in 2009–10, joining Hampstead, Donwood and Polson schools in providing about 40 students per club a nutritious breakfast three mornings a week. About 108 volunteers from 16 local churches take turns providing the food and coming to the school to prepare it, serve it with a smile and tidy up afterwards.

The volunteers, many of them retirees, provide the intergenerational contact that is missing in some of the students' lives. They befriend the students and they become a constant and stable influence, even teaching the youngsters table manners. The clubs have made a noticeable difference in schools where they operate. Absenteeism, late arrivals and behaviour issues have decreased while attentiveness and positive relationships between students, and between their parents and the schools, have increased.

Breakfast programs also exist in some other schools in the division, but so far, only six involve a partnership between the division, churches and the WRHA.

COMMUNITY UNITES FOR LITTLE MOOSE

River East Transcona was chosen by the Manitoba Moose Yearling Foundation for an exciting opportunity in the 2009–10 school year. Donwood Elementary School and Chief Peguis Junior High participated in the foundation's Little Moose Youth Hockey Program, which gives students who might not otherwise have the resources an opportunity to learn to play hockey.

Both boys and girls participated—24 from grades 5 and 6 and 24 from grades 7 and 8. Twice a week at noon, the students were bused to the rink, fed lunch, given Manitoba Hockey Association-certified coaching and bused back to school. They participated in skating lessons, skill development and scrimmage games. Exciting perks came along with the on-ice work, such as visits from Manitoba Moose players, ice skating at MTS Centre and tickets to watch Moose games from the skybox.

Program costs, including equipment, are funded by the Yearling Foundation, and operation of the program is overseen by the Winnipeg Aboriginal Sport Achievement Centre. The program was very successful in its first year at RETSD and the intent is that it continue to grow to include more schools and teams.

RETSD CHOSEN FOR FIRE SAFETY DEBUT

The Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service chose River East Transcona to debut a new fire safety resource and program for young children and their families. The WFPS teamed up with RETSD, Casera Credit Union, the Firefighters Burn Fund, and Community Safety Net to launch the program in October 2009.

Fire Safety: Smart Choices for Life was produced by Community Safety Net. It is a family resource with a book and an interactive, award-winning DVD, containing tips on fire prevention and planning, first aid, and fire safety for babysitters. A WFPS public education officer provided a lesson to each Grade 3 class in the division, reinforcing the basics of fire safety and teaching the students how to use the resource at home with their parents. The WFPS plans to expand the program citywide in the 2010–11 school year.

DIVISION, PROVINCE SUPPORT FAMILIES

River East Transcona believes that a critical factor to student success is family involvement in education. As part of the Early Childhood Matters Coalition (a Healthy Child Manitoba initiative), the division offers a variety of free programs for parents and their preschool children to enjoy together.

As well, RETSD supports families through the transition into school, helping to ensure that kindergarten becomes a time of learning and joy for both the child and parents. Each family receives a bag full of resources and activities. The division partners with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority to hold Growing and Learning Days, providing vision and hearing screening, as well as fun, interactive ways to welcome children to the school community.

The division also offers Kinder Camps—weeklong, half-day programs to help parents and children prepare for kindergarten. And RETSD's Literacy Links program happens right in the comfort of home—trained facilitators will visit three to four times to provide the whole family with materials and ideas to get ready for the adventure of kindergarten.

RETSO TRENDS

STUDENT AND STAFF STATISTICS

Student enrolment (Sept. 30)					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number of students	17,687	17,323	17,124	16,843	16,618
Grades K-5	7,027	6,865	6,796	6,752	6,682
Percentage of division total	39.73	39.63	39.69	40.09	40.21
Grades 6-8	4,157	4,094	3,970	3,766	3,677
Percentage of division total	23.50	23.63	23.18	22.36	22.13
Grades 9-12	6,503	6,364	6,358	6,325	6,259
Percentage of division total	36.77	36.74	37.13	37.55	37.66

Language program participation (Sept. 30)					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
French Immersion	2,371	2,448	2,527	2,558	2,646
Percentage of division total	13.41	14.13	14.76	15.19	15.92
English-German Bilingual	499	458	438	414	411
Percentage of division total	2.82	2.64	2.56	2.46	2.47
English-Ukrainian Bilingual	89	99	103	86	90
Percentage of division total	.50	.57	.60	.51	.54

School-based staff (Sept. 30 full-time equivalents)					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Principals	42	42	42	42	42
Vice-principals	26.8	27	26	25.7	24.96
Teachers	1,069	1,071.8	1,061.3	1,048.1	1,032.8
Paraprofessionals	282.1	331.4	330.6	341.4	333.3
Library support	32.5	32.5	30	29.5	31
School clerical	78.6	78.2	79	79	79
School custodians	information not available		143.9	148	149.5

FINANCIAL DETAILS

2009–10 BUDGET INFORMATION

Each year, the board of trustees of River East Transcona School Division must make critical decisions regarding the budget, striving to find a balance between enhancing educational programming and support services and practicing financial restraint in the face of declining enrolments and pressure from taxpayers to keep school taxes in check.

Although enrolment dropped by 225 students as of Sept. 30, 2009, RETSD is still the second largest division in the province. Its \$157,122,547 budget for 2009–10 reflected a slightly below-average expenditure per student and a slightly above-average mill rate.

The following figures tell the story:

Enrolment	16,618
Staff	2,311
Student:teacher ratio	14:1
RETSD expenditure per student	\$9,572
Provincial average expenditure	\$10,364
RETSD mill rate	26.2
Provincial average mill rate	24.4
RETSD operating budget	\$157,122,547

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(Clockwise from upper left) Assistant superintendent Keith Morrison, superintendent Dennis Pottage, assistant superintendent Barb Isaak, assistant superintendent Sandra Herbst, assistant superintendent of student services Joan Trubyk, secretary-treasurer Vince Mariani.

