

**Indigenous Education for All
Stawaatsimaan (Raising
Children)**



LETHBRIDGE SCHOOL DIVISION

Indigenous Education

3 YEAR ASSURANCE PLAN (Year 3) - 2023-24

2021-2024

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Lethbridge School Division Indigenous Education Territorial Acknowledgment

Oki Niikso'kowaiksi (Hello all my relations),
 Kiitsiksimaatsimmoohpinnaan omi Sikoohkotoki (We welcome you to Lethbridge). Sikoohkotoki (Lethbridge/ Black Rock) is in the heart of Niitawahsin (Blackfoot Territory). Niitawahsin is home to the Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy) and consists of Kainai (Many Chiefs/ Blood Tribe), Piikani (North Piikani/ Peigan), Aamskaapiiikani (South Piikani/ Blackfeet) and Siksika (North Blackfoot).

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge that we live, work, and play on the traditional territories of the Blackfoot Confederacy and acknowledge the signatories of Treaty 7, the Métis Nation (Region 3) as well as the Inuit that call Niitawahsin home. Lethbridge School Division acknowledges and deeply appreciates the Siksikaitsitapi peoples' connection to their traditional territory.

Lethbridge School Division staff and students living and benefitting from Blackfoot Confederacy traditional territory, honour the traditions of people who have cared for this land since time immemorial. Lethbridge School Division also acknowledges all the Indigenous students and staff who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our school community in the past, present, and in the future.

Mission

Lethbridge School Division is dedicated to delivering and providing culturally authentic learning opportunities that build capacity among all learners. A proactive, professional, and positive team puts relationships at the center of learning. Consistent, collaborative, and culturally sensitive supports are delivered through successful practices for schools and families.

Vision

With respect to the traditional Blackfoot Territory, we reside on, all staff and students will understand our historical and social context. This foundation informs a culture of inclusion where all students and staff are successful, confident, valued, and proud of who they are in Lethbridge School Division.

Introduction

We acknowledge that The Lethbridge School Division is located within the traditional territory of the Blackfoot First Nations. We have had the privilege of accessing local knowledge and wisdom to guide us through the development of this strategic plan, while keeping our lens focused on student learning. Lethbridge School Division recognizes the long-standing challenges that Indigenous students have encountered in their educational journeys in public school systems. The Division also recognizes the important role education plays in facilitating authentic Indigenous learning for all staff and students.

This plan focuses on outcomes that develop all staff and students as learners who possess the skills and attributes necessary to achieve and be successful, as well as enhancing and building upon inclusive practices that honor and celebrate Indigenous Ways of Knowing. Acquiring and applying FNMI (First Nation, Metis and Inuit) knowledge for all students is the basis of this plan.

Building trust and collaboration among teachers and parents can increase staff capacity to infuse Indigenous foundational knowledge to increase Indigenous student success. Using Bryk and Schneider's (2003) model of Relational Trust, a leader must use trust to support teachers to reach out to Indigenous parents. Hargreaves' (2012) "Fourth Way" is one important approach to educational change. He suggests that educational systems need a national vision. In the Canadian context, this is certainly the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. He uses the "six pillars of purpose and partnership" as a framework to develop this trust (Hargreaves, 2012, p. 9). Hargreaves (2012) also discusses coherence as a methodology to integrate the efforts and outcomes together.

To achieve the "fifth competency" from the Teacher and Leadership Quality Standard specific focus must be placed on understanding the historical, social, economic, and political implications of treaties and agreements with First Nations people (Alberta Education, 2016). To bridge this gap, relational trust must be embedded through first recognizing that the Canadian Residential School System built a legacy of distrust among First Nations people that continues to affect students to this day.

Canada became a country in 1867 with the signing of the *British North America Act* (Education is Our Buffalo, 2006). The *Act* defines the relationship between "Indians and Lands Reserved for Indians" and the federal government of Canada. How the "Indians and Lands Reserved for Indians" was to be governed

was by the passing of the “Indian Act” in 1876 (Education is Our Buffalo, 2006). The Indian Act restructures every aspect of First Nations life. The Indian Act deprives First Nations peoples of the right to govern themselves and denies them Canadian Citizenship, barring them from voting in federal and provincial elections up until 1960 (Education is Our Buffalo, 2006).

Once legislation is in place on how to govern “Indians and Lands Reserved for Indians”, the Canadian Government, entered a Treaty making process, where land was taken away from Indians and Indians were now placed on reserves. A cycle of distrust begins as the treaties were very disadvantageous to the Indians and they did not understand the implications of what they were signing (Education is Our Buffalo, 2006). First Nation leaders who signed treaties believed they were sharing the land. If leaders knew they were going to be constricted to the confines of the reserve, First Nation leaders would not have signed treaties.

In 1920, the Indian Act is amended, making it mandatory for all First Nations children to attend Indian residential schools (Education is Our Buffalo, 2006). Children aged 5-16 were forced to go to these schools. The objective of the residential school system was to remove children from the cultural influence of parents and family and assimilate them into the greater dominant culture. The following stories were put together from an unpublished interview with a residential school survivor on the Blood Reserve (Education is Our Buffalo, 2006):

One time, some girls were singing a song in Blackfoot in a corner of the dorm. They were sitting close to a window. They did not know that a priest was in a chapel right above us and could hear them. Those girls were caught and forced to kneel by the pillars. The priest also beat them with his cane, which was really a broomstick. When he finished beating them, the broomstick was broken in three pieces! (p. 45)

This example highlights the physical abuse that was endured in these schools. You can't leave out the emotional and mental abuse this may cause. Because this common type of "discipline" was always meted out by a white educator in a supervisory capacity, First Nations people have come to associate violence with the education system. One Blackfoot survivor reports:

I did not lose my Blackfoot because I went to residential school. I still speak it, but I also speak English. My children all speak good Blackfoot, but they can also speak English. They had to learn to speak good English while they were in school or they would get punished. My grandchildren are learning some Blackfoot. They can't speak it fluently nor do they understand it. I hope that they can learn our language. (p. 45)

This example shows the generational effects of residential schools. The goal of these schools was to assimilate First Nation children into the "white" dominant culture. One of the keys to culture is language. The example shows how two generations were able to cope with residential school and keep the Blackfoot language alive. The third generation shows the effects of generational trauma. **The greatest trauma is the loss of trust in the education system.** This sentiment is echoed in the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Bryk and Schneider (2003) define relational trust that role relationships characterize the social exchanges of schooling: teacher with students, teachers with other teachers, teachers with parents, and all groups with the school principal. Fostering effective relationships within your school, "The principal builds trust and fosters positive working relationships, on the basis of appropriate values and ethical foundations, within the school community-students, teachers and other staff, parents, school council and others who have an interest in the school" (Alberta Education, 2009, p. 4). The principal needs to create a school culture that emphasizes the importance of competency five. By focusing on professional development about treaties and agreements with First Nations people as well as the intergenerational effects of residential schools, principals

will be able to begin to accomplish the objectives of competency five. This work cannot move forward however, without focusing on building trust with Indigenous parents. This requires planned collaboration between educators so they feel comfortable connecting with Indigenous community members who can help them infuse Indigenous experiences into the curriculum.

Bryk and Schneider (2003) establish that relational trust is organized around four specific considerations: “respect, personal regard, competence in core responsibilities, and personal integrity” (p. 42). For this plan we will only consider the implications of Bryk and Schneider’s (2003) explanation of “respect” (p. 41). Relational trust is grounded in the social respect that comes from the kinds of social discourse that takes place across the school community (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). Teachers must break down this distrust by communicating with Indigenous parents in a respectful way. Teachers must go out of their way to build respect, as once respect is established, when people disagree, individuals can still feel valued if others respect their opinions (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). Once trust and respect has been built, helping parents cope with attendance issues, discipline and other issues that arise in schools becomes easier.

Parents in Indigenous communities remain highly dependent on the good intentions of teachers (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). Bryk and Schneider (2003) emphasizes that “Teachers need to recognize these parent’s vulnerabilities and reach out actively to moderate them” (p.44). These vulnerabilities can be in various forms; families living on fixed incomes such as social assistance, family’s dependency with substance abuse such as alcoholism and drugs.

Class and ethnic differences between teachers and parents in the educational setting can create conditions that are ripe for misunderstanding and distrust. Effective schools need teachers who not only know their students well, but also have an empathetic understanding of their parent’s situations and the skills needed to engage adults effectively. (p. 44)

Teachers and principals may not know it all. Sometimes the trust between Indigenous families and schools lies in the Indigenous Education teacher or Indigenous grad coach. As Kohm and Nance (2009) elaborate “The more information teachers know, the more effective they become” (p.69). The more teachers collaborate with parents, principals, councillors, Indigenous teachers, or grad coaches, it not only builds trust it will positively affect student learning.

Once trust is established through teacher/parent respect, we can then use Hargreaves’ Fourth Way to maintain this change. Central to the success of the Fourth Way is the existence of a national vision that defines clearly where the country is heading (Hargreaves, 2012). Where Canada is going is the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* (2012).

Hargreaves (2012) uses the six pillars of purpose and partnership: “inspiring and inclusive vision, public engagement, no achievement without investment, responsible corporate investment, students should be partners in change and leadership, and mindful teaching and learning” (p. 12). For this plan the purpose and partnership that builds and maintains relational trust, we will focus on the following pillars; inspiring and inclusive vision, public engagement, and mindful teaching and learning.

The first pillar is that of an “inspiring and inclusive vision” (Hargreaves, 2012). Hoy & Miskel (2001) state, “Shared values define the basic character of the organization and give the organization a sense of identity” (p.145). If First Nation parents trust the educational setting their children will become better students. First Nation students are increasingly becoming better students, yet there is still a huge gap in the level of educational success, but an inspiring vision is most likely to move a school forward.

“Public engagement” is the next step once an inspiring and inclusive vision is set (Hargreaves, 2012). Building trust between schools and communities by involving the public in the development of education policy and practice is the next driving force. If a school is truly committed to seeing the success of its

Indigenous students, then public engagement can be used in the form of parent information nights and bingos. Events need to also happen throughout the school year. These events must be student driven and once the public sees how the students are involved the trust becomes clearer and more evident.

The final pillar used is “mindful teaching and learning” (Hargreaves, 2012, p. 13). Parents must know the importance of education and pass this onto their children. Education does not end at the end of grade five, or twelve, or when you graduate from university. Hargreaves (2012) view on mindful teaching and learning, “In this understanding, lifelong learning takes learning beyond the confines of the school, throughout life, and learning is about life and for life” (p. 13).

Hargreaves Fourth Way (2012) also includes the four catalysts of coherence: “all successful systems need coherence, mechanisms that hold all the efforts and outcomes together” (p. 14). The four catalysts of coherence are “sustainable leadership, integrating networks, responsibility before accountability, and differentiation and diversity” (p. 8).

The first catalyst of coherence mentioned by Hargreaves (2012) is “sustainable leadership”. The teacher leader will be responsible for infusing Indigenous knowledge to the district he/she works in in collaboration with the Indigenous Education team that is assembled within the district. This way the teacher leader works with other leaders and helps other schools with this competency. This will be an ongoing process where according to Hargreaves (2012), “The Fourth Way regards leadership as a coherent system where a community of people work together to support each other across space and time” (p. 14).

The second catalyst of coherence involves “integrating networks” (Hargreaves, 2012). When the teacher leader is out and about sharing his/her knowledge it is important to share ideas of best practices. This is where collaboration becomes evident. Hargreaves points out the importance of collaboration, “This social

infrastructure facilitates knowledge sharing which is one of the most effective avenues to sustain the longevity of best practices and to scale them up beyond individual clusters” (p. 14).

The third catalyst of coherence, according to Hargreaves, is “responsibility before accountability”. As teachers it is our responsibility to infuse this FNMI foundational knowledge so all students benefit. It is also the teacher’s responsibility to maintain and uphold trust between themselves and parents and especially Indigenous parents.

The fourth catalyst of coherence is “differentiation and diversity” (Hargreaves, 2012). Teacher leaders must understand that the teachers you are sharing your knowledge with learn at different levels. Differentiated instruction is a practice that teachers do every day. Diversity of learning is dependent on the teacher’s skill and experience level but as Hargreaves (2012) puts it “Understanding learning styles and multiple intelligence enables teachers to customize their teaching according to their learner’s needs” (p. 15).

In today’s educational setting teachers must understand the historical, social, economic, and political implications of treaties and agreements with Indigenous people and residential school and its legacy. Once teachers gain this foundational knowledge, they will see the importance of building trust with FNMI parents and may begin the collaboration that is needed to increase Indigenous student success.

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Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) Calls to Action in Education:

The Lethbridge School Division Indigenous Education department will ensure that the TRC Calls to Action in Education will always be a priority. Indigenous Students within Lethbridge School Division are slowly succeeding in their academic journeys. It is a well-known fact that the current Indigenous students are inter-generational survivors of residential schools. Therefore, Lethbridge School Division must be reminded of the Calls to Action in Education to help improve Indigenous student success.

62. We call upon the federal, provincial, and territorial governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, to:

- i. Make age-appropriate curriculum on residential schools, Treaties, and Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for kindergarten to Grade Twelve students.
- ii. Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms.
- iii. Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.
- iv. Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education.

63. We call upon the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to maintain an annual commitment to Aboriginal education issues, including:

- v. Developing and implementing Kindergarten to Grade Twelve curriculum and learning resources on Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history, and the history and legacy of residential schools.
- vi. Sharing information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history.
- vii. Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.

viii. Identifying teacher-training needs relating to the above

64. We call upon all levels of government that provide public funds to denominational schools to require such schools to provide an education on comparative religious studies, which must include a segment on Aboriginal spiritual beliefs and practices developed in collaboration with Aboriginal Elders.

Government of Canada. Retrieved from <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524504501233/1557513602139>

Teacher Quality Standards (TQS) and Leadership Quality Standards (LQS)

The Lethbridge School Division Indigenous Education department will ensure that **all** schools are supported in implementing the following competencies. Helping schools build “Trust and Relationships” with Indigenous families as well as ensuring that all students and staff acquire foundational knowledge about First nation, Metis and Inuit. At the beginning of the TQS and LQS there are “Whereas” statements that introduce the Standards that teachers and leaders must meet.

(TQS) Whereas Alberta teachers play a fundamental role in establishing the conditions under which the learning aspirations and the potential of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students will be realized.

(LQS) Whereas principals and school jurisdiction leaders play a fundamental role in establishing and supporting the conditions under which the learning aspirations and the potential of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students will be realized.

1. Fostering Effective Relationships

A teacher builds positive and productive relationships with students, parents/guardians, peers and others in the school and local community to support student learning. Achievement of this competency is demonstrated by indicators such as:

TQS (d) inviting First Nations, Métis and Inuit parents/ guardians, Elders/knowledge keepers, cultural advisors and local community members into the school and classroom;

LQS (e) establishing relationships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit parents/guardians, Elders/knowledge keepers, local leaders and community members;

2. Engaging in Career-Long Learning

A teacher engages in career-long professional learning and ongoing critical reflection to improve teaching and learning. Achievement of this competency is demonstrated by indicators such as:

- e) enhancing understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit worldviews, cultural beliefs, languages and values;

5. Applying Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit (TQS)

A teacher develops and applies foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit for the benefit of all students. Achievement of this competency is demonstrated by indicators such as:

- (a) understanding the historical, social, economic, and political implications of:
 - treaties and agreements with First Nations;
 - legislation and agreements negotiated with Métis; and
 - residential schools and their legacy;
- (b) supporting student achievement by engaging in collaborative, whole school approaches to capacity building in First Nations, Métis and Inuit education;
- (c) using the programs of study to provide opportunities for all students to develop a knowledge and understanding of, and respect for, the histories, cultures, languages, contributions, perspectives, experiences and contemporary contexts of First Nations, Métis and Inuit; and
- (d) supporting the learning experiences of all students by using resources that accurately reflect and demonstrate the strength and diversity of First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

5. Supporting the Application of Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit (LQS)

A leader supports the school community in acquiring and applying foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit for the benefit of all students. Achievement of this competency is demonstrated by indicators such as:

- (a) understanding the historical, social, economic and political implications of:
 - treaties and agreements with First Nations;
 - legislation and agreements negotiated with Métis; and
 - residential schools and their legacy;
- (b) aligning resources and building the capacity of the school community to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit student achievement;

(c) enabling all school staff and students to gain a knowledge and understanding of, and respect for, the histories, cultures, languages, contributions, perspectives, experiences and contemporary contexts of First Nations, Métis and Inuit; and d. pursuing opportunities and engaging in practices to facilitate reconciliation within the school community.

Alberta Learning. Retrieved from <https://open.alberta.ca/educ-teaching-quality-standard-2023.pdf>

Alberta Learning. Retrieved from www.alberta.ca/system/files/custom_downloaded_images/ed-leadership-quality-standard-english.pdf

UNDRIP (The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples)

The Lethbridge School Division Indigenous Education department will ensure that the policies and procedures are applied to our school division staff and students.

The Act helps:

- Create a roadmap to advance work together to implement the Declaration in Canada
- Protect, promote and uphold the human rights of Indigenous peoples in Canada
- Forge stronger relationships with Indigenous peoples and advance reconciliation
- Respond to calls from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
- Confront the harms of the Canada's colonial history and build a better, more equitable future together

Government of Canada. Retrieved from <https://justice.gc.ca/eng/declaration/fact-fiche.html>

Indigenous Education Team



Joel Tailfeathers

Indigenous Education Coordinator



Shawnee Big Bull

High School Teacher



Oshana Christiansen

Middle School Teacher



Melanie Morrow

Elementary School Teacher



Jean Panther Bone

LCI Grad Coach



Marley HeavyShield

Chinook Grad Coach



Juliette Toledo

Winston Churchill Grad Coach

Joel Tailfeathers: I, Naatoyiinniimaa (Holy Wing) am a member of Kainai (Blood Tribe) of Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot Confederacy). I am a proud Moses Laker and have been a teacher, administrator and now coordinator of Indigenous Education for 18 years. I am married to Jodie Flamand Tailfeathers and have two children Hailey (24) and Brennan (20). I also have two Yorkies Luigi and Mach. I love to golf and play hockey and am a hard-core fan of the New England Patriots, Calgary Flames and my beloved Chicago Blackhawks.

Shawnee Big Bull: Oki, my Blackfoot name is Miianisstitaapiiakii given to me by my late maternal grandparents, Martin and Helen McDougall. My husband is Will Big Bull and we are both proud members of the Piikani Nation. We have three children, Mack (11), Sturgis (6), and Vienna (3), and we reside in Sikoohkotoki. I got my start with Lethbridge school division in 2014 as a FNMI liaison working in the Elementary Schools. It was in this role that I grew passionate about the urban Indigenous children I built relationships with, but also Indigenous Education as a whole. I got the opportunity to complete my B.Ed at the UofL in 2018 and then was promptly hired back by Lethbridge School Division as a Teacher of Indigenous Education. I have learned through this journey that Indigenous representation certainly does

matter especially in schools.

Oshana Christiansen: Oki niitaniko Aahsainisoo, my Blackfoot name translates to ‘Safely Desending Mountain’. My family originates from the Kainaiwa (Blood Tribe) First Nation. As the Middle school teacher of Indigenous education, I have the wonderful job of seeking out, learning, and sharing beautiful parts of my Niitsitapiisinni culture and other First Nation, Metis, and Inuit culture with our amazing Middle school community. I’ve learned so much from our Indigenous education team, and look forward to learning more about how to promote diversity, understanding, and reconciliation through our Indigenous education programming!

Melanie Morrow: Tansi! I am a proud Métis living in beautiful Sikookotoki. My Blackfoot name is Iikanapaiaakii and I have been teaching for 8 years. I am currently in the process of writing a thesis for my Masters in Educational Leadership focusing on professional learning specifically within Indigenous Education. I am an avid gardener, crafter, and outdoor lover.

Marley HeavyShield: Oki, niisto anakok Ipiowo (Travels Far). I am a proud Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) from Kainaiwa (Blood Tribe). My Blackfoot name was gifted to me by my great aunt Ikkinainihki, Lena Russell. I graduated from the U of L with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology in June 2021 and have been working for Aakaipookaiksi since. I am extremely passionate about supporting our Indigenous youth and working to heal the traumas caused by colonization. It fills my heart to see students grow from learners to our future leaders. My partner and I have two cats, Flea and Linguine, who are both soft little menaces. I also enjoy writing, photography, art, and film.

Juliette Toledo: I am from northern Alberta but have called Lethbridge home for over 20 years. My parents are Joyce Eskagon-Cook, (Lubicon Cree), and Harry Lambert (Metis). I love to be active, with golf, paddle boarding, biking, and baseball. My husband Dennis and our daughter Isabella love to travel. Although now my daughter is not happy with long road trips. I am working on a CYC degree through the University of Victoria. But as a busy mom and working full time it has been a lengthy process so far.

Jean Panther bone: Oki, Niitaanikoo MiiantsaSaanaAkii (Many Paint Woman) I am from the Blood Tribe, but I have called Sikookitooki my home for 20 plus years, I am married to Desmond Panther Bone, I am a proud mother of two boys Dailyn (23), Gabriel (17), and I take care of my niece Hannah (17) and nephew Joseph(8) for the past two years they have been welcomed into our home. Also, we have a 9-year-old Shitzu/Jack Russel named Cujo. I have worked in Childcare for 16 years before entering the High School and have held the title Indigenous Grad Coach for 1.4 years and I am enjoying every day, children have always been my passion from toddlers to 18 years olds I enjoy teaching them and watching learn and grow and now I get to watch them succeed in High School.

2022/2023 Year in review

At the beginning of the 2022/23 school year our team welcomed a new Co-ordinator of Indigenous Education, Joel Tailfeathers. The 2022/2023 school year focused on building trust and relationships within the Indigenous Education team. Two of the primary goals were building trust and relationships at Aakaipookaiksi (Education Center) and building trust and relationships with our Middle Schools and High

Schools. Moving into the 2023/2024 school year emphasis will be placed on building trust and relationships at Elementary Schools in Lethbridge School Division.

Melanie Morrow, Elementary Indigenous Education teacher has since focused on incorporating Indigenous Ways of Knowing into the current curriculum, classrooms, and schools. Specific grade level professional development with Grade 4 teachers in 2020/2021 and Grade 2 teachers in 2021/2022. In the 2022/2023 school year emphasis was placed on the “Think Outside” program, assisting teachers and leaders in foundational knowledge of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit and assisted in the organization and facilitation of various Elementary school events. Indigenous Education Morning announcements occurred for the third year, every Tuesday and Thursday morning with numerous elementary school sites. These announcements have had tremendous impact throughout the elementary level on explicitly teaching and raising awareness about Indigenous topics such as First Nations, Métis, and Inuit languages, traditions, games, histories, and stories.

Jenna Bruised Head, Middle School Indigenous Education Teacher, joined the Indigenous team in 2021. In the 2021/2022 school year, she championed the “Think Outside” program at the Middle School level. The “Think Outside” program was a partnership between the Lethbridge School Division and Helen Schuler Nature Center incorporating Indigenous Ways of Knowing by learning with and on the land. In 2022/2023 the “Think Outside” program focused on the Grade 4 and 5 curricula. Priority was placed in 2023 on specifically supporting Indigenous students at Wilson Middle School with Jenna facilitating the “Niitsitapiisiinnii - Our Way of Life” options class.

Shawnee Big Bull, High School Indigenous Education Teacher has been with the Indigenous Education Team, firstly as an FNMI Liaison support worker. After completing her Bachelor of Education, Shawnee returned as an Indigenous Education Teacher in 2019. Shawnee has since supported Lethbridge School Division High Schools with the implementation of foundational knowledge of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, school wide awareness events, connections to curriculum, and assisted the Indigenous Education High School Grad Coaches with mentorship and the facilitation and planning of events and student support.

In collaboration with the three Indigenous Education Teachers (Melanie Morrow- Elementary, Jenna Bruised Head- Middle School, Shawnee Big Bull- High School) we have formulated our two Indigenous Education Goals that will guide our work moving forward into the next assurance plan. These two goals are:

- In what ways and to what extent do we as a school support Indigenous Education for ALL?

- In what ways and to what extent do we as a school support our current Indigenous students?

Our Coordinator will be working closely with the teachers supporting the work they are doing as well as facilitating cultural learning opportunities and supporting our Graduation Coaches.

2023-2024 Indigenous Education Goals

1. In what ways and to what extent do we, as a school, support Indigenous Education for ALL?

Indigenous Education teachers will support all Lethbridge School Division leaders and teachers in finding resources, making community connections, teaching Indigenous Ways of Knowing, and supporting teachers and leaders in their foundational knowledge with TQS #5. Furthermore, the Indigenous Education team will aid in the advancement of reconciliation by helping school staff acquire and apply foundational knowledge of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit experiences.

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| Schools | # of Indigenous Students | What's working? | What needs improvement? |
| Chinook High School | 87 | | |
| Lethbridge Collegiate Institute | 79 | | |
| Victoria Park | 51 | | |
| Winston Churchill | 70 | | |
| Senator Joyce Fairbairn | 32 | | |
| G.S. Lakie | 52 | | |
| Wilson | 69 | | |
| Gilbert Paterson | 46 | | |
| Immanuel Christian Secondary School | 6 | | |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----|--|--|
| Lethbridge Christian School | 4 | | |
| Agnes Davidson | 6 | | |
| Coalbanks | 12 | | |
| Dr. Robert Plaxton | 14 | | |
| Fleetwood Bawden | 23 | | |
| Galbraith | 42 | | |
| General Stewart | 16 | | |
| Immanuel Christian Elementary | 2 | | |
| Lakeview | 23 | | |
| Mike Mountain Horse | 33 | | |
| Nicholas Sheran | 41 | | |
| Park Meadows | 12 | | |
| Probe | 15 | | |
| Senator Buchanan | 46 | | |
| Westminster | 17 | | |

2. In what ways and to what extent do we, as a school, support our current Indigenous students?

Indigenous Education teachers will support all Lethbridge School Division schools in exploring systems and practices to support Indigenous students in holistic learning. Wholistic learning focuses on academic achievement, co-curricular involvement, cultural opportunities, wellness, and connections to their identity. Furthermore, the Indigenous Education team will aid in advancing teachers and leaders implementing resources needed to support First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students.

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Indigenous Education teachers will support all Lethbridge School Division schools in exploring systems and practices to support Indigenous students in holistic learning. Wholistic learning focuses on academic achievement, co-curricular involvement, cultural opportunities, wellness, and connections to their identity.

Furthermore, the Indigenous Education team will aid in advancing teachers and leaders implementing resources needed to support First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students.

| Schools | # of Indigenous Students | What's working? | What needs improvement? |
|--|---------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Chinook High School | 87 | | |
| Lethbridge Collegiate Institute | 79 | | |
| Victoria Park | 51 | | |
| Winston Churchill | 70 | | |
| Senator Joyce Fairbairn | 32 | | |
| G.S. Lakie | 52 | | |
| Wilson | 69 | | |
| Gilbert Paterson | 46 | | |
| Immanuel Christian Secondary School | 6 | | |
| Lethbridge Christian School | 4 | | |
| Agnes Davidson | 6 | | |
| Coalbanks | 12 | | |
| Dr. Robert Plaxton | 14 | | |
| Fleetwood Bawden | 23 | | |
| Galbraith | 42 | | |
| General Stewart | 16 | | |
| Immanuel Christian Elementary | 2 | | |
| Lakeview | 23 | | |

| | | | |
|----------------------------|----|--|--|
| Mike Mountain Horse | 33 | | |
| Nicholas Sheran | 41 | | |
| Park Meadows | 12 | | |
| Probe | 15 | | |
| Senator Buchanan | 46 | | |
| Westminster | 17 | | |

Blackfoot Values

10 Monthly values to be shared with division with consult and collaboration with Blackfoot Elders. Will be completed for Summer 2024.

Indigenous Education Handbook (Completed for 2024-2025 School Year)

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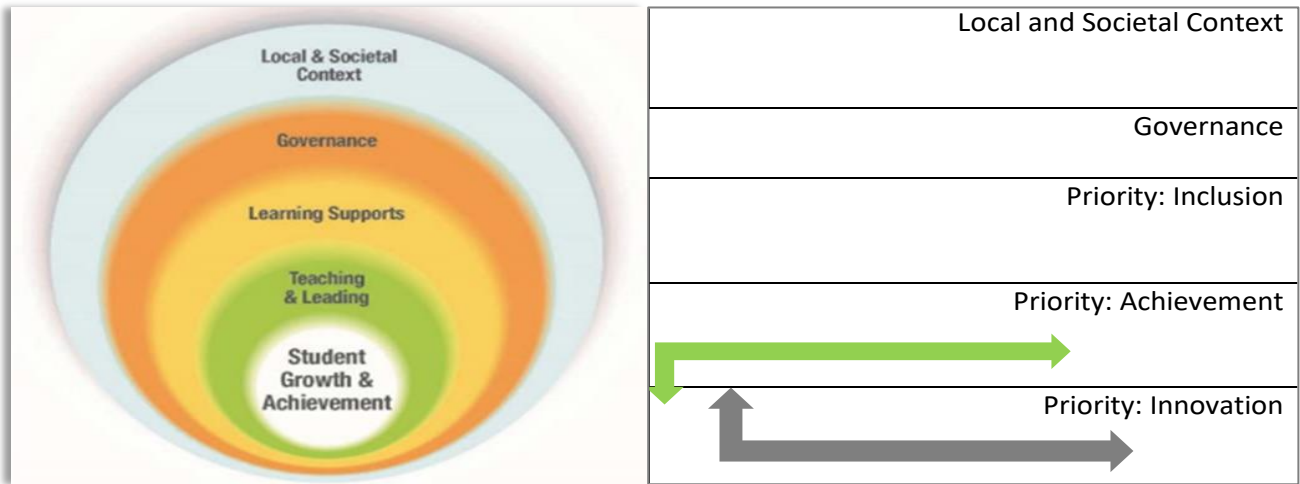
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Board Priorities and Data

The Lethbridge School Division Board Priorities and data inform division planning, as well as orchestrate and influence actions. Preparing Indigenous students for their learning journeys now and into the

future carefully considers meeting their needs as learners as well as supporting their wellbeing in our schools. To mobilize a plan that impacts learning for Indigenous students, the environment in which our Indigenous students learn also must be supported. Staff, students, and community also need to be considered and thoughtfully integrated into planning, strategies, and measures.

This Strategic Plan serves as a guide that acknowledges systems and their complexities, while creating opportunities across the school division for staff and students to continue to learn and grow. This plan includes promising practices that build empathy, enhance Indigenous Ways of Knowing, support our Indigenous students and their learning, and provide meaningful learning opportunities for our staff to fulfill the demands in the classroom of the Teacher Quality Standard 5 (TQS5). The Alberta Education Assurance Framework addresses the provincial assurance domains. We view the work in our Indigenous Education Portfolio and in our schools as three domains: Achievement, Inclusion, and Innovation as they connect to “Teaching and Learning” and “Student Growth and Achievement”. There is a connection between the strategies in the plan and the domain of Local & Societal Context within our local context in Lethbridge and Indigenous Ways of Knowing.



Indigenous Education Division Outcomes and Strategies

1. Students advance reconciliation by acquiring and applying foundational knowledge of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit experiences.

Improve growth and achievement of Indigenous students.

Strategic Actions:

- Inform Administrators and School Leaders (Lead teachers, Indigenous Education teacher reps) of Strategic Plan & gauge feedback on current practices
- Increase the level of Indigenous student engagement
- Target building the capacity of Administrators around Indigenous Ways of Knowing
- Provide Professional Learning for all Teachers and build capacity to share experiences and Blackfoot Culture and Language
- Communicate out to system regularly regarding updates about Indigenous Education and endeavors
- Targeted intervention at the High School level with Grad Coaches that work under the Indigenous Education umbrella
- More purposeful review of data relative to Indigenous students to develop strategies for academic improvement
- Support Indigenous Education Collaborative Communities for teachers to inquire into Indigenous Education and Blackfoot Ways of Knowing
- Support partnerships between the Indigenous Education department staff and district staff (Mental Health Capacity Building Team, Counselling Team, Indigenous Education Committee Reps, Wellness)
- Facilitate and Support Kainai Board of Education Partnership
- Plan events that celebrate Indigenous cultures and create pride in various Indigenous cultures
- Support Teacher professional growth in Indigenous Education (TQS, Competency 5)
- Students will access knowledge of their culture and language as resources are available
- Facilitate cross-curricular planning recognizing Indigenous Education practices in the classroom as part of new curriculum implementation (TQS, Competency 5)
- Celebrate various rich Indigenous cultural learning opportunities throughout all schools

Measures

- Increase understanding and implementation of a holistic approach to teaching methods measured from classroom visits and professional conversations with teachers
- Increase in the number of teachers accessing Indigenous Education resources allocated by the district – signing out resources at Curriculum Centre- promotion by our Teachers of Indigenous Education
- Increased percentage of Indigenous students who achieve the provincial
- Acceptable standard on PATs, DIP, High School Completion, transitions rates to post-secondary and trades, Extra-curricular, Mentorship, APORI.

- Data from Fountas & Pinnell (literacy scores grades 1-5) and MIPI, indicating a year of growth in learners
- High school graduates entering post-secondary upon their completion of high school
- Track Number of students involved in leadership opportunities (Mentorship Program, Indigenous Advisory Committee, Student School Council, Division School Council, Town Hall Participation)
- Diversity and Inclusion Parent Table participation by Indigenous parents
- Attendance and engagement increase

Support teaching and leading that ensures the success of our Indigenous Education portfolio

Strategic Actions:

- Support staff in the implementation of the learning competencies outlined in the new curriculum that develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for successful learning, living, and working, including critical thinking, communication, problem solving, collaboration, managing information, cultural and global citizenship, creativity and innovation, personal growth, and well-being.
- Provide access to Blackfoot Language and Culture classes that may be offered in the community
- Provide Professional Learning opportunities for Administrators that are culturally informative culturally and current/updated practices that encourage open, reflective practices
- Provide all students and staff with access to Elders and Cultural Consultants, Knowledge Keepers and Mentors as required
- Develop and access Indigenous resources & supports that engage students and families with literacy and numeracy
- Establish Professional Learning Communities with school based Indigenous Education Committee Reps
- Facilitate Division PL for Indigenous “teacher reps” – grade 1 and grade 6/7 level at elementary and middle school
- Continue to foster KBE and LSD connections
- Provide Indigenous Education teaching support at each of the division levels
- Build school staff foundational knowledge of Indigenous Culture and Truth and Reconciliation via professional learning, and curriculum and resource development.
- Create and/or access curriculum resources and artefacts that recognize Indigenous culture and history in support of Indigenous Education for all learners - “Indigenous Education for all”.
- Integrate Indigenous content into delivery of instruction across curriculum areas for all learners.
- Build capacity of Indigenous Education staff to feel comfortable sharing their knowledge and working more closely with staff and sharing personal and cultural experiences
- Create partnerships to access external resources that support wellness and cultural programming (Ever Active Schools, Opo’kaa’sin)
- Support staff with accessing PL for Trauma informed practice that is culturally relevant work closely with Mental Health Capacity Building learning opportunities

Measures

- Indigenous Ed Committee survey
- Regular feedback formally and informally from Administrators Committee
- Connect with & survey Indigenous student leaders, gauge feedback from them about their learning journeys
- Track administrators and teachers accessing Indigenous PL days hosted by the Division, and Indigenous resources
- Survey schools (through administrators) about their Indigenous Education Priorities for each school year and provide generative dialogue to support their priorities
- “Our School Survey”, attendance data, family participation in school events.
- All schools acknowledge the traditional territory at key events
- ATA survey (annual)
- Increase in Elder and Knowledge Keepers’ participation in schools when required
- Number of targeted events/evenings supporting initiatives related to Indigenous endeavors
- Increase in resources available to teachers of Indigenous content

