

Indigenous Education for All Stawaatsimaan (Raising Children)



LETHBRIDGE SCHOOL DIVISION

Indigenous Education

3 Year Assurance Plan (Year 1) 2024-2025

2024-2027

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), Aamskaapiipiikani (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 People 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.

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.

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>

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: 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.

Melanie Morrow: Tansi! I am a proud Métis living in beautiful Sikoohkotoki. 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 lipiowo (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 MiiaantsaSaanaAkii (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 Shih tzu/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.

Indigenous Education Assurance Plan Priority: Truth & Reconciliation

Assurance Framework Domain: Learning Support

Domain Priority: Truth and Reconciliation

Desired Outcome: School communities take action to advance Truth and Reconciliation

Strategies: How does the Indigenous Education team 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.

Area of focus 2024-2026: Indigenous Education Handbook for schools:

- The Indigenous Education team will develop a handbook for schools to help them more effectively advance Truth and Reconciliation for all students. The handbook may have the following elements:

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School Inquiry: Schools will be asked to reflect on the following question: In what ways and to what extent do we support Indigenous Education for ALL?

Indigenous Education Assurance Plan Priority: Indigenous Student Achievement

Assurance Framework Domain: Student Growth and Achievement

Domain Priority: Indigenous Student Achievement

Desired Outcome: To provide learning environments that nurture and support Indigenous student achievement

Strategies: How does the Indigenous Education team support current Indigenous student achievement?

- 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.

Area of focus 2024-2026:

- The Indigenous Education team will consult and collaborate with Blackfoot elders to create the 10 monthly Blackfoot values to be shared with the Division.

School Inquiry: Schools will be asked to reflect on the following question: In what ways and to what extent do we, as a school, support our current Indigenous students?