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A APPENDIX: Final Reports from Pilot School Authorities

Final reports from the eight school authorities are provided in this appendix. Each school authority shared their process and findings in the format of their choice.



Integrating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives and content can be challenging. There is no silver bullet. Instead a strategic plan to support professional learning is needed.



Wolf Creek School Division No. 72

Finding Our Way Background

Wolf Creek Public Schools (WCPS) aligns with the Ministry of Education's focus on improving student engagement and achievement among First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students in the areas of academics, with a specific focus on literacy to close the gap for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students in student achievement, retention in school, graduation rates, and advancement to postsecondary studies.

The First Nations, Métis, and Inuit portfolio is housed in Inclusive Learning Services and, as a division, supports developing a holistic understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, worldviews, histories, and current realities. Schools that embody effective principles and practices of inclusion coordinate and unify education programs and supports in order to ensure that all students belong and can learn effectively. This approach fosters relationships that welcome, nurture, and honour individual student's stories and cultures and encourage the blending of both culture and curriculum to strengthen the learning for all students.

Wolf Creek Public Schools is committed to collaboration with students, staff, district office staff, interagency partners, Maskwacis First Nations community members, Métis and Inuit organizations, and stakeholders to develop strategies, resources, programs, and initiatives that support student success in and out of school.

In order for the vision to be carried out, an understanding of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit worldview should be acknowledged and understood.

Mission and Vision

The mission for WCPS is to ensure that each student is a successful learner for a lifetime. Unfortunately, the achievement gap between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students exists and student learning needs must be identified and supported.



As part of creating learning environments that are respectful of individual needs, nurturing in focus, and centered on exemplary educational practice, educators need to understand that the needs of the whole child must be addressed in order for the student to experience success both academically and in life overall.

If each member of the organization is committed to developing the skills to create learning environments that are respectful of individual needs, nurturing in focus, and centered on exemplary educational practices, we must increase and strengthen knowledge and understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit culture. "When we stop perceiving our students' culture as an obstacle and accept it as part of the learning process, it becomes a valuable addition to the learning process." (*Why Culture Counts*, Donna Walker 2008).

Key Findings

Finding Our Way is an appropriate title for WCPS's final report, as the journey to empower educators has required a contextual understanding of the needs of the learners within the district. The discovery process has been a collaborative based inquiry model working with districts across Alberta and the Maskwacis community. Without the Provincial Professional Learning Project, we would not have had a framework to support district initiatives.

Foundational structures within the district were critical to support professional learning. The following structures formed the base of the professional learning project in the Ponoka schools.

ACE Plan

Each school admin team is required to complete an ACE Plan as part of yearly strategic planning. In the Ponoka sector, ACE (Action, Collaboration, and Evidence) plans are required to address First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives in the following three areas:

Goal #1 CRM (Collaborative Response Model- Framework to support conversations around meeting the needs of students)

What innovative ways are you using to address the achievement gap between FNMI students and all other students during CRM meetings?

Goal #2 Literacy

How are you supporting FNMI students in literacy success?

Goal #3 Interventions

What intervention strategies are used for FNMI students in the areas of academic, attendance, behaviour, and transitions?

Reference: [PES ACE Plan](#)

Excellent Learning Environments

WCPS supports Excellent Learning Environments that are highly effective and conducive to student learning. Educators within the district are versed in the ELE structure and use these twelve areas to plan for instruction. Infusing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives into this work continues to be an area of focus, as we move forward in developing "excellent learning environments" for all students.

ELE Culture and Expectations is one example of an excellent learning environment that supports the integration of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives into relational spaces.

Reference: [The 12 ELE Components WCPS](#)

Culture and Expectations

It is widely identified in the educational literature that teachers and students benefit greatly from a learning environment that is purposefully designed and framed to encourage citizenship and positive relationships. Students should be participants in an environment that respects principles such as diversity, different styles of thinking and learning differences in opinions, etc. Students will have opportunities to be involved in the process of building these principles and will have leadership responsibilities to ensure they are maintained.



Teachers will guide the processes that establishes this powerful inclusive culture and integrate their goals for learning into this environment so that students feel successful, safe, cared for and capable of monitoring their own learning.

Student engagement and learning becomes enriched when First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students feel safe and experience a sense of belonging within their school community.

Aligned Calendar Model

Wolf Creek Public Schools adopted a division-wide Aligned Calendar model, so that teachers would have the opportunity to work collaboratively to learn new skills, to create new programs, and to learn together for the benefit of students. There are several benefits to this new calendar model. Teachers in every school can collaborate, plan, and learn with each other. This creates new opportunities for teachers to work together to understand and implement the many components of the Inspiring Education Framework and the Provincial First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Professional Learning Strategy.

These opportunities have encouraged educators to learn to use new techniques, to use new technologies, and to create more inclusive spaces for all of our students.

Reference: [WCPS Approved Calendar](#)

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Student Success Coordinator

The role of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Student Success Coordinator is a relatively new position in Wolf Creek Public Schools. The position was created to support students and families, as well as provide support to educators by building educator capacity. The focus of the role is primarily working in the Ponoka sector of the division. (Ponoka Outreach School, Ponoka Secondary Campus, and Ponoka Elementary School); however, the support is being expanded across the division to ensure programming is in place.

The coordinator champions for First Nations, Metis, and Inuit students by supporting and advocating for the needs of students. The coordinator also supports professional learning, and works closely with admin to plan professional activities to increase understanding.

Reference: [First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Student Success Coordinator](#)

WCPS Website

Wolf Creek Public Schools' website focuses on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit resources. The website is in the first stages of creation, but houses resources, and supports.

Accessing and selecting resources that represent First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives and content was a focus for the three Ponoka schools this year. Navigating [fnnied.blogspot.ca](#) and exploring resources was the first step to embracing a cultural understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, perspectives and content.

Reference: [WCPS Website](#)

Building Educator Capacity-WCPS: The Professional Learning Journey

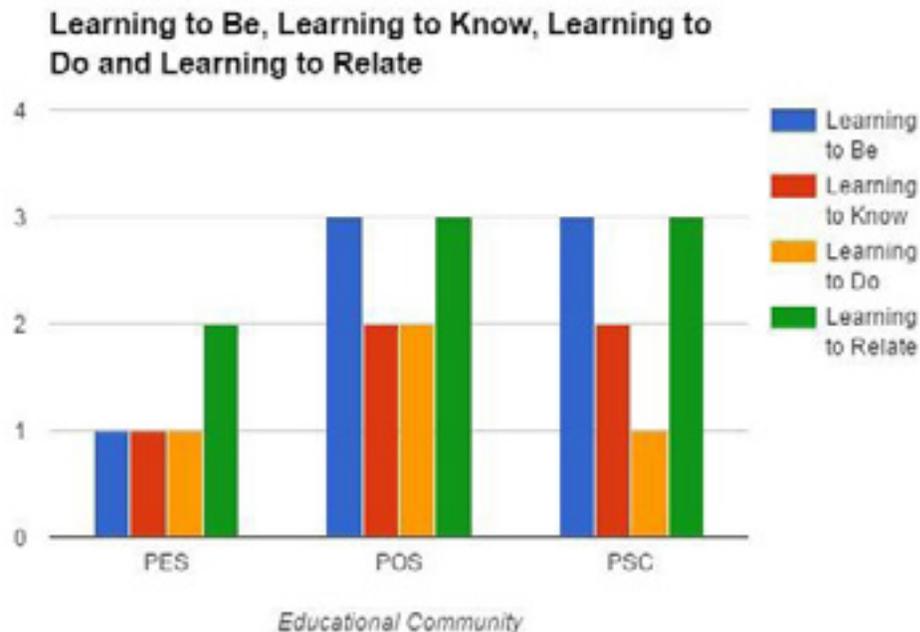
In Wolf Creek Public Schools our motto *Creating Success For All Learners* applies not only to students, but to every employee in our organization. As a result, we are committed to providing learning opportunities, and providing support structures that are necessary to ensure understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives.

The Provincial First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Professional Learning Strategy provided flexibility to meet educators where they are at in their learning. It also ensured that responsibility and accountability for results is shared at all levels of the division. A Learning Roadmap was created to outline areas of professional development related to the Provincial Professional Learning Project.

Reference: [Learning Roadmap](#)



Professional learning opportunities in Wolf Creek School Division reflect the regional needs in a provincial context by allowing flexibility in professional learning opportunities. The administrators at each Ponoka site determined the direction of professional learning by using the Capacity Indicator Tool to assess areas of strength and need.



Learning to Relate: How does where we learn influence how we learn?

Creating an inclusive environment for students in Wolf Creek School Division requires commitment in meeting the needs of diverse learners; therefore, building educator capacity is critical to ensure that educators are capable in creating curricular programs that reflect a cultural understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities.

Learning to Be: How does what we do impact who we are?

Wolf Creek Public Schools recognizes the need for educators to accurately and thoroughly describe relevant challenges and opportunities in order to create possible solutions.

Professional development activities for educators are developed based on the needs of the local context within the Ponoka sector. Through the use of the Capacity Indicator Tool, It was determined that educators required a deepened understanding of the Maskwacis community and the Cree culture.

Overview of the issues related to Maskwacis (formerly Hobbema)

National Post Jan. 4, 2014

“It’s a hamlet that has earned a reputation as one of the roughest spots in Alberta. Known as a place of gang shootings and boarded-up desolation, Hobbema attained national prominence in 2011 after the shooting death of a five-year-old boy.”

The community is divided between four First Nations reserves and Ponoka County. It serves four bands. Its population is believed to be greater than 12,500. However it suffers from an unemployment rate believed to be about 70%, although reliable statistics are difficult to come by.”

As the rest of Alberta’s economy booms thanks to oil and gas production, the benefits of that wealth seem to have passed over many of the province’s reserves like mist. In addition to the poor housing and poverty seen in many First Nations communities, Hobbema also gained a reputation as a hotbed of gang activity.”



Learning to Know: How does knowing relate to understanding?

Educators often don't know what they don't know. For many they have not thought of another worldview other than the one they hold to be true. Understanding historical events and current contextual realities, which have impacted First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people, allow educators to recognize the effect this has had on student learning. When we come from a place of understanding, then we are more engaged in meeting the needs of all students.



Learning to Do: How does empowering differ from delegating?

In order for teachers to feel empowered, options must be made available and choices offered for staff to become involved in professional development. We are fortunate that Elder Joseph Deschamps is open and willing to teach WCPS personnel about the Cree culture. Being immersed in a cultural ceremony develops understanding, appreciation, and respect for the culture.



Traditional Cree Sweat

Educators at the three Ponoka Schools were given the opportunity to participate in a traditional Cree Sweat. This experience developed a presence and connection to the Maskwacis community.

This also allowed educators to build their capacity to connect, and understand the First Nations culture and worldview. It provided flexibility and guided learning. Elders shared teachings that moved Educators to a place of better understanding. From this understanding, educators are now able to modify and adapt programming to demonstrate an awareness of the Cree culture and ceremony and are able to better attend to First Nations perspectives in the curriculum.



First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Task Force Cohort

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Task Force Cohort consists of teachers, as well as Learning Coaches, Inclusion Coaches, and Social Workers from the three Ponoka schools. The cohort meets monthly to discuss challenges, needs, strategies, and resources. Building capacity with this team increases teacher knowledge that can be shared within each school and provides strong advocates at the school level to support the infusion of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives and content into educational programming.

The cohort will develop a bank of resources and strategies to share with staff, as well as assist with planning professional learning activities. The members of the cohort work closely with colleagues and are able to better understand the needs at the school level. The cohort will be instrumental in gaining feedback to determine professional development needs at each school site.

By delving deeper into the needs of educators in the Ponoka sector, WCPS will be better situated as we continue to move into our work with Professional Development across the entire district. Building capacity will help support the work and move this division forward by empowering educators and encouraging educators to champion for the needs of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students on a district-wide basis.

Reference: [Example Agenda of Cohort](#)

Student Voice

Nitohtahwin Gathering (Translated from Cree means “Listen to me.”)

Purpose

Wolf Creek Public School Division is committed to building “student voice” initiatives to inform current practices within the division. The Nitohtahwin gathering was instrumental in providing an opportunity for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit student voice within Wolf Creek Public School Division. The gathering was similar to a Speak Out conference, and provided a platform for students to voice their opinions related to education.

The information was collected and shared with educators in the Ponoka sector. As this initiative was powerful for both students and educators, WCPS is committed to providing this opportunity on an ongoing basis.

Reference: [Nitohtahwin Gathering Results](#)

Elder Program

Role of an Elder in Wolf Creek Public School Division

The purpose of the Elder program is to create a sense of identity that equals a sense of belonging in schools for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students within Wolf Creek Public School. Identity plays a vital role in developing healthy children, who feel they belong to their school community, and are able to build resiliency skills in order to better handle adversity. It is equally important for non-Aboriginal students to have an understanding, both historically and culturally, of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students. This, in turn, creates a school climate that is respectful and accepting of other cultures.



The role of an Elder in the Wolf Creek Public School Division varies depending upon the needs of the school and the specialization of the Elder.

Some examples of the most common roles of an Elder are listed below:

- Elders often visit classrooms to explain traditions. Through everyday contact they help students and staff understand traditional ways and values.
- Elders play an important role in enhancing communications between the school and the Aboriginal community.
- Elders may conduct home visits in conjunction with the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Student Success Coordinator.
- Elders may present protocol to Elders on behalf of Wolf Creek School Division.
- Elders provide a vital social and cultural link between the school and the community.

- Elders can play a critical role in promoting Aboriginal languages.
- Elders provide guidance to students and their families. This can take the form of individual counselling at the request of the student, teacher or administrator. It is also common for an Elder to provide guidance to groups through storytelling in classrooms or participating in talking circles.
- Elders provide cultural perspective and advice on interactions with students and families.
- Elders work closely with school social workers, division office staff and community agencies.
- Elders provide support for students and families who are grieving.
- Elders, when requested, may assist teachers in adapting the curriculum to include Aboriginal content and perspectives.
- Elders often act as resource people in the classroom by explaining traditions and ceremonies.
- Elders may assist in planning Field Trips and participate in visitations to museums, historical sites, etc.
- Elders participate in Tea Dance functions, passages of rites, and other ceremonies to mentor and guide students.

Reference: [Mosom Time at PES](#)

The Elder program has been instrumental in providing a culture connect for both students and educators. We are pleased to expand the Elder program and include a female Elder to bring teachings and understanding from a woman's perspective.

Wisdom and Guidance Committee

Wolf Creek Public Schools formed its Wisdom and Guidance Committee in September 2014. The Wisdom and Guidance Committee provides an opportunity for First Nations, Métis Elders, parents, and students to meet with Wolf Creek School Personnel to discuss issues related to student success.

The committee has been an invaluable connect to the Maskwacis community, as well as instrumental in supporting professional development opportunities for educators in WCPS.

Purpose

- Provide guidance on strategies to improve programming for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students within Wolf Creek School Division
- Provide guidance on strategies to infuse culture into the schools, such as Elder programs and cultural days
- Identify issues, gaps, and barriers to Aboriginal students receiving equitable access to services across the school district and identify strategies to address these issues
- To bring awareness among teachers and school support staff of the particular learning styles of Aboriginal students and Aboriginal cultures, histories and perspectives
- Provide support for school staff to acquire knowledge of Aboriginal student learning profiles, and to realign programs and teaching styles to support Aboriginal student learning
- Focus on the school culture – it is essential that Aboriginal students are engaged and feel welcome in school and that they see themselves and their culture in the curriculum and the school community
- Provide in-service to schools on the Provincial First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Professional Learning Project

Reference: [Overview of Wisdom and Guidance Committee](#)



Collaboration

Wolf Creek School Division is committed to developing expertise, and gathering “take aways” from other jurisdictions. Being part of the Provincial Professional Learning Project has provided networking opportunities across the province. WCPS was able to collaborate with other divisions to expose effective practices and share pedagogy around infusing First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives and content. The pilot project created solidarity across the province as we address the needs of learners.

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Education is leading the country in the development of a Continuous Improvement and Accountability Framework, Inspiring Success: Building Towards Student Achievement. A visit to Saskatchewan assisted in creating a strategic plan for Wolf Creek School Division.

BCCE Grant Proposal

Montana First Nations – Meskanak Ka Nipa Wit School

Wolf Creek Public Schools (WCPS) and Montana First Nation have entered into a partnership together to ensure successful transitions for students from Montana First Nation. The proposal is twofold outlining strategies to assist with transitioning students from grade nine to high school, as well as transitioning students who have dropped out of school. The overall purpose of this partnership is to close the gap for First Nations students related to achievement, retention, and graduation.

Reference: [BCCE Grant Proposal](#)

WCPS continues to strive to bring First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives and content into educational programming. In order to continue this work, it is essential that professional learning is at the forefront. Educators must develop an understanding of relational spaces. WCPS has benefited greatly from being part of this pilot project. WCPS recommends a provincial structure be in place in order to carry this work forward.

The draft document (March 2, 2016) of the TQS describes competencies and indicators related to applying foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives in order to support reconciliation. If this document is approved, then it is critical that professional development focused on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives and content be a supported practice across the province. The Provincial First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Professional Learning Project provides the necessary framework to empower educators to take action.

We know that in order to successfully meet the needs of our students, we must continue to invest in professional learning.



Holy Spirit Catholic School Division No. 4

Overview Statement

Holy Spirit Catholic Schools has been pleased to participate in the three years of the Provincial First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Professional Learning Project. The work of this project fits in very well with the priority that our Board of Trustees places on making First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Learning a priority in our strategic priority, "Preparing Students for Their Future."

We know that in order to successfully meet the needs of our students, we must continue to invest in professional learning. Our goal is to ensure that our teachers are able to confidently include First Nations, Métis and Inuit content in their teaching for the benefit of all students. We want all educators to have a good sense of how their understanding of historical events and contemporary contextual realities will impact the choices they make about what they teach and how they relate to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students and their families.

Process

Throughout our involvement in this three year project, we have taken a strategic approach when making our decisions of how to approach professional learning. We were inspired to become involved in this project by our desire to look at different ways of addressing the achievement gap that our First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students are experiencing. We are committed to looking at how we can transform our system to ensure success for all of our students.

Our primary goal when we began was to create a relational space where all learners are empowered to achieve success. We felt that this project could assist educators as learners to build their own capacity in understanding First Nations, Metis, and Inuit perspectives and content so that all students will be well served. Further, we knew that the Government of Alberta has committed that the provincial K-12 curriculum will be further enhanced with mandatory content that ensures all students will learn about the history and impact of residential schools, and the history of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples of Canada.

In order to skilfully include this content in our lessons, we know that we must give teachers opportunities to engage in learning in these areas to build their own capacity as educators. We believe that implementing this strategy can help us accomplish that.

In Year 1, we worked primarily with our administrators to introduce the project to them. We had them consider the four questions that form the basis of collaborative inquiry among educators in their own school as they consider the kinds of professional learning their educators need in their school community. We also had a targeted group attend the spring gathering in Calgary to learn more about the project and to consider opportunities to move forward in Holy Spirit. In the first year, we identified that our strength as a school division was in Learning to Be.

Our division has done outstanding work emphasizing that all educators in Holy Spirit are expected to be learners. Our areas of focus moving forward with the project were Learning to Know (moving beyond working with administrators and placing more focus on working with educators at the school level), Learning to Do (connecting teachers to appropriate resources), and Learning to Relate (ensuring First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students see themselves reflected in their learning environments).

Our decision in the second year of this project was to involve one entire staff in the project. The staff invited to participate was based largely on the fact that there is a high percentage of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in the school. The student population of The Children of St. Martha School is about 45% First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. The staff accepted this invitation to be involved with the Professional Learning Project, as they could see how important it is to continue their own learning in the area of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit history, culture, and traditions.

Based on the initial needs assessment that was completed with the staff of The Children of St. Martha School, it was determined that staff needed some time to build relationships with each other as there were a number of new staff members in place for the 2014-2015 school year, including a new principal. They needed time to connect with each other as well as with their First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Support Worker.

The staff determined that in their first year of involvement with the project, they needed time to explore resources and work collaboratively on projects.

There were two Collaboration Day Cycles scheduled of two days each, where teachers came and explored resources, learned from the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Support Worker, and worked on lesson/unit plans where First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content was integrated. Several teachers requested additional release time for collaboration, which they were given. The staff also weaved the work of this project into other professional learning days and school events, including staff retreats, student field trips, student learning projects and assemblies, and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit family gatherings and celebrations.

There was a concerted effort to ensure First Nations, Métis, and Inuit history, culture and traditions were embedded in activities throughout the school year. This was a year of considerable learning for all staff at The Children of St. Martha School. Because of this, our First Nations, Métis, and Inuit families have seen an increase in the effort to focus on culture in the school and we hope that leads to an increased sense of belonging. This will contribute to students feeling connected to their school and we believe will help contribute to student success.

In the third year of the project, the staff of The Children of St. Martha continued to work collaboratively to extend their professional learning in this area. To extend professional capacity in our school division, teachers from The Children of St. Martha School were encouraged to invite a colleague from another school (BYOB – Bring Your Own Buddy) to collaborative learning sessions in 2015-2016 so that the process expands to other schools. We have made some inroads in extending this professional learning to some staff in other schools and look forward to continuing these efforts in the coming years, using a similar approach.

Key Findings

The staff of The Children of St. Martha School reported some significant findings during their two-year involvement in the project:

From the first time they met together in the second year of the project, it became clear that walking and learning together is critical. They also found that there were two types of experiences that they engaged in that they defined to be turning points for them. The first is that they organized family nights to celebrate student successes and to emphasize the importance of family in student success. These nights were open to as many people as the student wanted to bring, including grandparents, aunts, and uncles, etc. This really helped the staff to understand the importance of family in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit culture.

The second significant turning point was the regular engagement of Elders to help educators feel more confident in integrating First Nations knowledge, tradition, and culture into learning. The staff also saw how students and families responded so positively to Elders and this helped to establish how important it is to have them involved in the school community.

- Through their experiences and reflections, the staff gained a greater understanding of the importance of providing ways for our students to learn through First Nations traditions. They worked hard to develop trusting relationships between themselves and the parents of the students. Little things were recognized as being critical to establishing that relationship – a smile in the hallway at parents, ensuring parents are greeted when they come into the school, offering a cup of coffee. These things simply cannot be overlooked and the staff has recognized the impact of small acts of hospitality.
- Staff also made it a priority to engage in authentic learning opportunities through field trips and a focused awareness on First Nations, Métis and Inuit culture. By having conversations with their First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Support Worker who had attended residential school, many educators' eyes were opened to the impact of residential schools and this changed many long-held beliefs.

- The staff especially noted that both First Nations and non-First Nations students have benefited from what they have experienced in their professional learning.

- The Children of St. Martha School staff made note of four major findings:

Champion – To be successful in this type of work, there needs to be a team who is championing this work and supporting it in our schools. The staff recognized the importance of the province providing funding and support, Elders who are liaisons to the school and a linkage to the culture, School Boards for making this work a priority, and District Central Office for supporting the project.

Capacity – Teachers need to feel safe enough to be able to ask questions that are sometimes difficult to ask. The content in curriculum requires educators to identify what they know and what they need/want to know. Learning opportunities need to be authentic.

Collaboration – In our Catholic school division, it is very important that we find ways to link our Catholic traditions with First Nations traditions and this is an area that needs further exploration. As well, The Children of St. Martha Staff found it difficult to collaborate with neighbouring schools as much as they would have liked simply because of time limitations. Staff definitely made an effort to make First Nations, Métis, and Inuit professional learning a priority and scheduled time to learn together on their school-based PD days and also attended workshops in other districts.

Community Engagement – The school made it a priority to plan family nights and community events such as their annual Pow Wow. They worked very hard at engaging parents and reached out to the community to get to know each other and build relationships. Community members have hosted field trips and introduced educators and students to the land, tradition, and culture. This awareness has changed the culture of the school and the entire staff is continuously looking at ways of engaging the community. They are focusing on relating and representing their cultural understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives and content within the community context.

Our Journey Continues

Holy Spirit Catholic Schools is very grateful to the staff of The Children of St. Martha School for their dedicated participation in this project. They have made themselves vulnerable and have generously shared their experiences and their learning.

The following notes the continued goals of The Children of St. Martha staff for 2016-2017:

- Every teacher to include and embed First Nations, Métis, and Inuit culture and knowledge into their work.
- All staff will work to engage families.
- All students can join the Blackfoot class – it is open to anyone and everyone.
- All staff will focus on building security and self-esteem in children by showing them that they are loved and cared for.
- Educators are committed to learning the Lord's Prayer in Blackfoot by September 2016.
- Staff will continue to recognize that the four aspects of our nature, Mental, Physical, Spiritual, and Emotional, are like seeds that grow into powerful gifts and develop equally. Teachers must ensure they are attending to all four.
- Learning must be authentic and sustainable.
- This is no longer a Vision. Our journey is in motion and we are gaining momentum.
- This is "WHO we ARE."
- Moving forward, the staff is committed to sharing their work and will share their thoughts on how they plan to sustain this momentum.

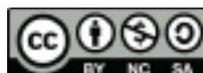
Conclusions

This project has assisted Holy Spirit Catholic Schools in ensuring that professional learning in the area of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit history, culture, traditions, and contemporary issues has a renewed priority in our school division. The approach that we took by fully engaging one school was strategic so that we could focus our resources in one area and ensure "buy-in" as we worked through the process. By having this staff achieve such good success, mostly by increasing both their awareness of issues and their willingness to ask questions and try new things, we will be able to use their experiences to help others continue on their learning journey.

When reviewing the list of goals that the staff developed for 2016-2017, clearly they don't see their involvement in this "project" as being over, which was certainly the intent of this work. They have continued goals in this area that they want to achieve and now recognize the steps they can take to continue their learning journey. We will be using their story and this process to continue our work to support each school as they develop professional learning goals to address First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and perspectives.

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We have challenged our teachers to focus on culturally appropriate projects that promote our students' lived experiences.



Calgary Catholic School District

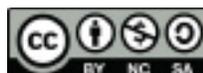
Introduction

When we looked at our “Tell them from me survey data,” we realized students were not engaged due to the limitations of programming we can provide in a small high school. To combat this we created a flexible scheduling model that allows specific students access to courses that encourage independence and high levels of engagement.

Specifically, we have some of our FNMI students accessing our Career Technology Labs on a much more frequent basis. Not only has this increased student confidence, it has improved student attendance for many. Beyond regular projects that exist in a typical CTS curriculum, we have challenged our teachers to focus on culturally appropriate projects that promote our students' lived experiences.

Some of our female students have started to explore creating traditional First Nation dresses with the support of an Elder, as well as beading in a traditional manner. First Nations cooking has also been explored. The impact this has had on other students and teachers is tantamount. It has allowed our school to grow in a culturally relevant/respectful manner.

Guiding Principles	Professional Learning Achievements	
	Process of planning and facilitating the professional learning	Products and templates created that demonstrate achievement
Learner-centered	Implementation of a junior/senior high school reading recovery program	Student reading levels have improved. Student academic results in other classes have improved.
Shared Responsibility and Accountability	Indigenous Students were included in a leadership program (NAPI) at our school. This was an opportunity to explore the contributions First Nations people have made to the larger community. It was also an opportunity to explore leadership and build confidence.	Students were more likely to share information with each other in this group. The facilitators were First Nation university students skilled in group participation strategies. Students reported a greater knowledge and understanding of First Nations contributions to the larger society. Students became more vocal, due to the confidence gained through participation in this program.
Engaged Communities	Flexibility with schedule to access Wood, Metal, and Fashion Labs.	Creation of First Nation artifacts that promote culture and community. A focus on trapping, beading, and traditional cooking.
Inclusive, Equitable Access	First Nations Artifacts within the school promoting the culture of Indigenous people.	Indigenous students worked with staff to create artifacts that were displayed throughout the school. A culminating celebration occurred at the end of the year, promoting and acknowledging First Nations traditions.
Responsive Flexible Approach	Students were provided with flexibility with attendance and the duration of time spent in a particular classroom.	Students contributed academically at a rate that worked for them. As the year went on, specific students reported to be more engaged.
Sustainable and Efficient Use of Resources	Career Technology classes promoting, designing and building culturally relevant artifacts, foods, and dress.	Students leave with a greater ability to create traditional cultural artifacts, i.e. traps, traditional food, and dress development.
Innovation to Promote and Strive for Excellence	Reading recovery program meets students where they are.	Students experience greater success in other academic areas.



Teachers become part of an authentic and experiential way of teaching and learning.

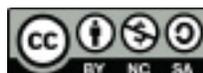


Rocky View School Division No. 41

Professional Learning Achievements

Process of planning and facilitating the professional learning	Products and templates created that demonstrate achievement
<p>Community of Practice</p> <p>The First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Learning Specialist coordinated a Community of Practice (C of P) with a First Nations, Métis and Inuit focus for three professional learning days for the 2015/2016 school year (August 31, January 29, February 22).</p> <p>The C of P was created in the Rocky View Schools online professional learning calendar, open to ALL educators, including senior divisional administrators and school administration.</p> <p>This C of P is one of numerous C of Ps offered throughout RVS, and it is up to the individual educator to choose to participate.</p>	<p>Resources, site visits, experiential learning activities will occur, and the learning journey of the staff will be captured using a Google+ community.</p> <p>Community of Practice Registration Write-up</p> <p>Feedback from one C of P participant</p> <p>Sample video of the drummers (not C of P)</p>

Process of planning and facilitating the professional learning	Products and templates created that demonstrate achievement
<p>The first C of P day is planned is a full day session on Aboriginal Cultural Competency, facilitated by a Blood Tribe Elder. This Elder will continue to work with the C of P for the school year to provide Elder knowledge, wisdom, guidance and to authentically enhance participants' understandings. Ideas and planning for the other two C of P days were left to group consensus in order to move the C of P work forward.</p> <p>Day 2: Trip to Glenbow Museum with our Elder and two Blackfoot educators</p> <p>Day 3: Drumming session with Siksika Drummers, Darcy Turning Robe and Leonard Cutter, and a half-day session on Empowering Educators with Resources with Solange Lalonde.</p> <p>The First Nations, Métis, and Inuit C of P will continue to be offered annually.</p>	
<p>Elder/Parent Meetings</p> <p>RVS has successfully had parent/elder meetings on-reserve. RVS staff was invited by the parent group to come and discuss parent questions and concerns. RVS administrators have also held attendance meetings on-reserve in order to foster meaningful relationships with student families.</p>	<p>The parents and the elders have both verbally expressed appreciation of having school staff come out to the reserve to meet with families, answer their questions, and present specific project work.</p>
<p>First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Connector Position</p> <p>RVS has a United Way funded support staff position called the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Connector. This role is much like a family school liaison and works to support our students and families from the community of Morley. Most of our invitations and strong connections with the on-reserve community have been bridged through the relationships developed through the Connector. Although the Connector is not Stoney Nakoda, she is well-known in the community and has worked with the community in several capacities for many years.</p>	<p>The First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Connector role was funded through the United Way for 3.5 years and obtained through a grant proposal. The funding from the United Way grant covers salary, mileage, and supplies of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Connector, and any additional supports students and families may need (food, clothing, school supplies, professional learning, extra curricular events for students).</p>



Process of planning and facilitating the professional learning	Products and templates created that demonstrate achievement
<p>Collaborative Inquiry Projects</p> <p>A total of four classes of grades 3 and 4, at two different RVS schools, partnered with Stoney Education Authority to create a collaborative inquiry project. An RVS Learning Specialist went to Nakoda Elementary, introduced themselves and the work, and asked the Nakoda Elementary Principal if they were interested in a collaborative project. There were three inquiry project-planning days with a facilitator from RVS (four sub days were required for all classroom teachers).</p> <p>Two site visits were completed with the classes. Student work was captured by the Learning Specialist via video and photos. RVS Learning Specialists helped the teachers learn to set up a Blog, and interviewed all teachers involved. RVS and Nakoda teachers then came together for one day of professional learning to capture their projects at the RVS Learning Stories Workshop held on June 17. Teachers from Nakoda Elementary and RVS schools both learned to work together, engaged local community members, learned about culture, history, learned the process of inquiry design and technological skills. We have created deep and meaningful peer relationships between two school authorities for both staff and students. This inquiry work is proposed to start up again in the 2016/17 school year.</p>	<p>Connecting Communities Learning Story</p> <p>Westbrook-Nakoda Inquiry Project Learning Story</p> <p>Daguskâbin Learning Story</p>
<p>Warrior Paint Story</p> <p>Glenbow Elementary School partnered up with Alberta Parks to showcase their First Nations students' artwork from their Warrior Paint Project. It was crucial to collaborate with Stoney Nakoda Elders to make this display at Peter Lougheed Discovery Centre meaningful. The school staff worked closely with the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Learning Specialist and the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Connector to engage Stoney Elders to be part of this project and lead the work. Two to three meetings were held with the Elders (including a lunch), and a smudge and rock blessing also occurred on two separate occasions.</p>	

Process of planning and facilitating the professional learning	Products and templates created that demonstrate achievement
<p>The Elders then led the grand opening art showcase at the Peter Lougheed Discovery Centre in Kananaskis Provincial Park. The student artwork is on display for all park visitors to enjoy and there are student art cards available for purchase. All proceeds are donated to the Morley food bank.</p>	
<p>Poverty Simulation</p> <p>RVS Learning Specialist attended the Poverty Simulation Facilitator Training in March 2016 in Missouri. A successful poverty simulation was completed in the Town of Cochrane with partners: RVS, Cochrane Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) and Solange Lalonde with ARPDC. This poverty simulation kit will still need to be “Canadianized.” It is anticipated the RVS Learning Specialist will continue to offer professional learning opportunities for all educators and community agency service workers to experience a poverty simulation.</p>	<p>A similar poverty simulation kit can be found at:</p> <p>Calgary United Way Poverty Simulation</p> <p>Cochrane Newspaper Write-Up on Poverty Simulation</p>
<p>Aboriginal Artifact Resource Kit</p> <p>RVS has purchased an authentic Aboriginal Artifact kit that can travel between schools. Each teacher and their Principal need to sign an Agreement form. The kit is hand delivered to each school by the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Learning Specialist.</p>	<p>www.kakwa.ca</p> <p>Aboriginal Resource Kit Agreement Form</p>
<p>Brain Game</p> <p>RVS can offer the Brain Game Workshop (for educators and local service providers), which illustrates (through hands-on learning) the significance of early childhood development for brain architecture and lifelong health.</p>	<p>RVS Psychologist(s) can facilitate the Brain Game workshops.</p>



Process of planning and facilitating the professional learning	Products and templates created that demonstrate achievement
<p>Counselling Psychologist</p> <p>RVS staffed a PhD. intern-counselling psychologist in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 school years. The psychologist focused on three RVS schools in Cochrane and also focused on First Nations students in these schools. The Counselling Psychologist was able to offer individual and group therapy and skill development sessions with students. She was able to build capacity with school staff (Child Development Advisors, Family School Liaisons, Teachers, Stepping Stones Facilitators) so staff can now lead some group sessions to help accommodate social emotional needs of students. The psychologist was also able to connect with some First Nations families and provide assessments and services (as needed). Workshops were offered to staff, parents and community members regarding the social emotional needs of students' today.</p>	<p>The counselling psychologist position was partially funded using First Nations, Métis, and Inuit funds at the divisional level. As noted in the RVS Summary of Mental Health Service Delivery Report (not included), there was a marked decline in mental health referrals in the Cochrane area due to the work of the counselling psychologist in the schools.</p>
<p>Responsive Professional Learning</p> <p>Flexible and responsive professional learning opportunities have been made available to staff that have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Cultural Competency (cancelled due to low enrolment) • Winter Leadership Institute with Solange Lalonde (cancelled due to low enrolment) • Lunch 'n Learns with Solange Lalonde • Self-Directed and School PL full day with Solange Lalonde • Numerous visits to school administrations to create awareness of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit professional learning work, done with and without Solange Lalonde • Numerous school meetings and 1-on-1 discussions with staff on engagement, protocols, and resources available • The Learning Specialist and Solange Lalonde presented and shared the project work at the Early Childhood Education Council (ATA) conference in Nov 2016 	<p>Products from these professional learning opportunities include feedback from administrators on the successful delivery of the sessions, invitations to present at an early childhood conference, feedback from participants, and the notes compiled during the PL discussions.</p> <p><u>Winter Leadership Break Out session</u></p> <p><u>Text from the Professional Learning Registration System</u></p> <p><u>Replay Postings</u></p> <p><u>Posters from Professional Learning Opportunities</u></p>



Process of planning and facilitating the professional learning	Products and templates created that demonstrate achievement
<p>First Nations, Métis, and Inuit School Point Person</p> <p>Starting in the 2015/16 school year, each school within RVS identified a First Nations, Métis, and Inuit advocate to ensure teachings and perspectives are included within the school environment. These point people are notified via email of other external professional learning opportunities that are offered externally and many RVS staff have attended independently.</p>	<p>RVS staff have attending the United Way Connect Event, Tools for Change Symposium, Treaty 7 Teacher's Conference, and CRC workshops.</p>
<p>Elders/Community Access</p> <p>RVS has access to an elder, drummers, dancers, and artists to enhance teaching and classroom learning. These guest educators are flexible and responsive to the requests of teachers and will often ask to work with multiple classes together, visit more than one school in a different community, all in order to optimize resources.</p>	<p>Although we have no formal templates, RVS has used the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Learning Specialist and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Connector to coordinate these activities (although some schools have their own contacts and do not go through head office). Cost for our guest educators vary, but for our Elder, the expectation is \$150 honorarium for half a day, mileage paid from his home to the school @ \$0.50/km, and an offering of tobacco. These costs are usually covered through the individual school budgets.</p>
<p>Equine-Assisted Learning</p> <p>RVS is in the process of having Equine Assisted Learning programs approved in order to provide alternative programming for RVS at-risk youth.</p>	<p>RVS put out a Request for Proposals (RFP) for equine service providers; RVS then carefully reviewed the proposals. Two psychologists, the learning specialist, and the Connector went on site visits to learn more about the programs. The 'request to approve' the equine service providers was then brought to the Associate Superintendent of Business and Operations and contracts were made. Once the contracts are fully signed, the equine service providers will be approved to work with RVS for up to five years.</p> <p>Teachers would become part of another authentic and experiential way of teaching and learning.</p>



First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education unit staff build capacity within school communities throughout the district to support the weaving of culture and curriculum.



Edmonton Public Schools

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education unit staff build capacity within school communities throughout the District to support the weaving of culture and curriculum. This is accomplished through:

- Building and making available culturally responsive and research based literacy and numeracy resources
- Offering professional learning opportunities
- Providing recommendations regarding programming and the use of differential budget allocations
- Responding to emergent requests for student support
- Supporting and mentoring principals, school based liaisons and lead teachers from all schools
- Supporting schools in the development of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit strategic school plans.

The unit consists of:

- One supervisor
- One project coordinator

- Nine consultants
- One research consultant
- One school liaison
- One administrative assistant.

An example of a process to build capacity in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit education and culture is:

To build capacity in schools around education and culture a First Nations, Métis, and Inuit lead teacher has been identified in each school. The lead teachers work towards the elimination of the achievement gap. They receive ongoing professional learning which includes topics such as:

- Integrating culture with curriculum
- Historical and contemporary realities
- Developing a holistic environment in the classroom and community
- Fostering relationships with families and community members.

The First Nations, Métis, and Inuit team are committed to ongoing communication, participation and engagement with:

- Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium (ERLC)
- Edmonton Catholic Schools
- The City of Edmonton
- Elders and community members from across the province

An example of a process of ongoing collaborative efforts is:

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education, Edmonton Public Schools, Aboriginal Learning Services, Edmonton Catholic Schools and Indigenous Relations, City of Edmonton are continuing to collectively demonstrate an ongoing commitment towards reconciliation and healing by acknowledging the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada: Calls to Action. The City of Edmonton declared Monday, May 30 to Friday, June 3, Reconciliation in Education Week. Edmonton Public Schools, Edmonton Catholic Schools, and the City of Edmonton collaborated to host a series of Reconciliation in Education Celebrations on June 3, 2016, the anniversary of the TRC closing ceremony at Rideau Hall. Collaboration with Edmonton Catholic Schools and City of Edmonton continues.

Collaboration with ARPDC has created opportunities for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education learn about the Brain Game and Poverty Simulation for educators. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Education continues to explore how to implement these professional learning opportunities in the District.

The process of planning and facilitating the professional learning has involved

land-based learning with community members, Elders, and relationship building with professionals from other districts.

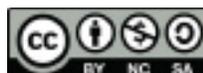


© Solange Lalonde

Edmonton Catholic Schools

Guiding Principles	Professional Learning Achievements	
	Process of planning and facilitating the professional learning	Products and templates created that demonstrate achievement
<p>Learner-centered</p>	<p>Parks Canada – Teacher Pilot: Teachers should know what the programs are about – professional knowledge needs are being met before they bring students</p> <p>Land based learning w/community members, Elders, and relationship building with other professionals (teachers) from other districts</p> <p>Monthly PDs</p> <p>Progression of Lead Teacher</p> <p>Feedback/Journey throughout the year</p> <p>September 2015-June 2016</p>	<p>ALS Jasper Pallisades\Invitation to Collaborate.docx</p> <p>ALS Jasper Pallisades\Info From Me.docx</p> <p>ALS PD 2015\Monthly PD</p> <p>2015-2016\Monthly PD.docx</p> <p>ALS PD 2015\May 24 2016 Finale LT's\May 24 Wrap Up Session.docx</p> <p>ALS PD 2015\Feedback from Sessions\FEEDBACK Literacy & Storytelling PD Jan 19 2016.pdf</p> <p>ALS PD 2015\Feedback from Sessions\ALS April 16 PD Session Feedback Form.doc</p> <p>Email attachments\OCT 21 2015 FEEDBACK.pdf</p>

Guiding Principles	Professional Learning Achievements	
	Process of planning and facilitating the professional learning	Products and templates created that demonstrate achievement
<p>Shared Responsibility and Accountability</p>	<p>Lead Teachers by – suggested by consultants</p> <p>Put a call out request to Principals at the beginning of the year Asking for volunteers at each school site.</p> <p>Division area – dividing the schools</p> <p>Next year we will reconsider division of schools</p> <p>Coaching model for teachers – modeling lessons to build capacity (list examples of lessons)</p> <p>Treaties</p> <p>Residential Schools</p> <p>Creation of Edu-kits – Inuit, Treaty, Blanket Exercise, Literacy Kits, Science, Medicine Wheel Kits</p> <p>ERLC Collaboration – PBL PD incorporating Aboriginal Content in Project based Learning</p> <p>Project of Heart E-Book with Edmonton Public, Elk Island & Fort McMurray</p>	<p>ALS Resources\Consultant Info\2015-2016 Aboriginal Learning Services Consultant school site designation (revised).docx</p> <p>*We had 38 Lead Teachers come out for our first session and 24 for the last one on May 24th .</p> <p>Next year we will have 92 schools in our district – our hope is that the number of Lead Teachers will increase each year.</p> <p>Aboriginal Learning Kits\Treaties\Lesson Plan & Assessment\Lesson Plan.docx</p> <p>ALS Power Points\Reconciliation Activities For Classrooms - June 1st, 2016.pptx</p> <p>ALS Resources\Teaching Resources\ Residential Schools Resouces\Beyond Residential Schools USB Nov 9, 2015\Book list on Residential Schools.docx</p> <p>Inuit Kit Contents Power Point sent out to teachers: Aboriginal Learning Kits\Inuit\ Inuit Artifacts Kits.pptx</p> <p>Grade Table for PBL.docx</p>
<p>Engaged Communities</p>	<p>Council of Elders (How they came to be)</p> <p>How often do they meet</p> <p>Board of Trustees</p> <p>School District Leaders</p> <p>Elk Island Public</p> <p>Edmonton Public</p> <p>The City of Edmonton</p> <p>Charlene Bearhead – Truth & Reconciliation Committee</p>	<p>Aboriginal Learning Services.pdf</p>



Guiding Principles	Professional Learning Achievements	
	Process of planning and facilitating the professional learning	Products and templates created that demonstrate achievement
Engaged Communities	Edmonton Public Taking students to Enoch to celebrate Literacy Family Nights at Schools – Ben Calf St. Francis of Assisi Literacy Summer Camp – Frontier College Enbridge U of A Food Bank St. Albert Musée Heritage Metis Nations of Alberta Former Chief of Enoch – Ron Morin Community Resource List Elk Island School District LSI – Social Studies Consultant	
Inclusive, Equitable Access	Literacy training for Karyn & Rhonda, Adam (Cultural Support Staff) Increasing capacity among our Indigenous instructors Indspire – Mentorship Program Erin & Lisa	Email attachments\Aboriginal Learning Services - Literacy 2015-2016 to submit.docx
Responsive Flexible Approach	The Blanket Exercise - designed specifically for Treaty 6 The Blanket Exercise has been facilitated for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CASS Conference Sept 2015 • Alberta Catholic Board of Trustees by our Oscar Romero High School Leadership students 	Aboriginal Learning Kits\The Blanket Exercise\The official Blanket Exercise Website.docx Aboriginal Learning Kits\The Blanket Exercise\The Blanket Exercise.docx

Guiding Principles	Professional Learning Achievements	
	Process of planning and facilitating the professional learning	Products and templates created that demonstrate achievement
<p>Responsive Flexible Approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many schools throughout our district including staff and students from grades 5-12 • Other districts: For example our leadership students went out to Grande Prairie to facilitate the Blanket Exercise for a school board up there <p>How I made the kits – what’s in it: Towels for reflecting the medicine wheel colors for the Cree Nation (Red, Yellow, Blue and White) were purchased at IKEA; The small pox blanket was purchased at the Hudson Bay Company reflecting blankets that were commonly exchanged.</p> <p>Books included in the kit are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When I was Eight • Not my Girl • Fatty Legs • A Stranger at Home • Shi Shi Etko • Shin Shin’s Canoe • Shannon’s Dream <p>There is a Talking Stick and a rock included in the kits for the sharing circle afterwards</p> <p>How teachers can access – contact consultants</p>	



Guiding Principles	Professional Learning Achievements	
	Process of planning and facilitating the professional learning	Products and templates created that demonstrate achievement
<p>Sustainable and Efficient Use of Resources</p>	<p>Lesson Plan Book scan Edmonton Catholic Schools Wampum Belt Kit Highlighted Program of Studies – identified outcomes for Residential Schools & Treaties</p>	<p>Aboriginal Learning Lessons\Lessons\ALS Lesson Plans 2006-2007.pdf Aboriginal Learning Lessons\wampum lesson\Wampum belt presentation 2013.pptx Aboriginal Learning Lessons\wampum lesson\Wampum Belts.pptx Alberta Program of Studies Social\K-3 Outcomes - Highlighted with opportunities for Aboriginal Implementation.pdf Alberta Program of Studies Social\Grade 4 - highlighted version.pdf Alberta Program of Studies Social\Grade 5 - Highlighted Version.pdf Alberta Program of Studies Social\Grade 6 - Highlighted Version.pdf Alberta Program of Studies Social\Grade 7 - Highlighted Version.pdf Alberta Program of Studies Social\Grade 9 - Highlighted Version.pdf Alberta Program of Studies Social\Grade 10 (10-1 & 10-2) - highlighted Version incomplete.pdf Alberta Program of Studies Social\Grade 11 (20-1 & 20-2) - Highlighted Version.pdf Alberta Program of Studies Social\Grade 12 (30-1 & 30-2)</p>

Guiding Principles	Professional Learning Achievements	
	Process of planning and facilitating the professional learning	Products and templates created that demonstrate achievement
<p>Innovation to Promote and Strive for Excellence</p>	<p>Grad Coach model – how does this affect the staff at those sites</p> <p>High School Graduation rates *See Pam for details: Pam.sparklingeyes@ecsd.net</p> <p>Educating the Educator – Instructional Leadership – ULEAD</p> <p>Promoting the Transformative paradigm shift:</p> <p>“From Crafts to Curriculum”</p> <p>“From Beading to Reading”</p>	<p>Grad Coach Program.pdf</p> <p>ALS Power Points\ulead PreConf Template (Reid, Erin) (Reid, Erin).pptx</p>



What started as a “leap of faith” to pursue a professional development opportunity for teachers has resulted in the fostering of significant structural change in this jurisdiction toward targeted long-term support for FNMI student learning.



High Prairie School Division No. 48

Pre-Project Background

- HPSD embodies a high number of FNMI students from diverse FNMI communities (five First Nations communities, three Metis Settlements, many off reserve FNMI students).
- There has been a lengthy historical record of educational initiatives in HPSD in support of FNMI students.
- In spite of some significant FNMI student initiatives in some schools and in some classrooms, resulting in significant student success stories, the overall achievement gap jurisdictionally between FNMI and non-FNMI students, persisted.
- There was a continuing high level of mistrust and frustration in communities toward HPSD.
- From a HPSD jurisdictional perspective, it was clear that something needed to be done differently. The question was “What?”
- Not knowing much about the specific trajectory for the provincial pilot, HPSD was pleased to accept an offer in 2013 to become involved. This was a “leap of faith” for HPSD.
- The Lead Developer and Facilitator met with HPSD school administrators in HPSD over the course of two years.
- Through the pilot Lead, there was an increasing acceptance in HPSD schools that FNMI students had specific identified learning needs and that teachers’ understandings and appreciation of FNMI culture were key to improving student learning outcomes.
- As many FNMI students have lost their cultural identity, it was realized that schools have an obligation to support student learning of their own cultural.
- The pilot lead was invited to work with one HPSD school staff with promoting teachers’ cultural awareness.
- Staff worked with the pilot lead to implement FNMI student centred projects.

Turning Points, Critical Moments, and Catalyst Events

- Putting the FNMI education gap on “the radar.”
- Artwork labelled in French, English, and Cree featured in the school and community.
- Integrating Aboriginal perspectives through an “Aboriginal Culture Club.”
- FNMI mentors, performers, supporters, Elders brought in.
- FNMI students participated in powwows, art shows, traditional hand games, community events, etc.
- Positive FNMI profile significantly raised in the school and local community.
- The Aboriginal Culture Club is increasing cultural knowledge of entire student body.
- Teachers identified an increase in FNMI students pursuing leadership opportunities in the school and beyond.
- FNMI students are encouraged to challenge advanced senior high courses and advanced post-secondary programs and are succeeding.
- In Spring of 2016, a jurisdictional professional day focused on the impacts of residential schooling, including sharing from a residential school survivor.

Key Findings

- Building connections and collaboration through the arts can lead to far reaching growth in student learning and development.
- Replace shame about being Aboriginal with pride, confidence, and belonging.
- Youth do not want to be labelled as FNMI but as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit - respecting the individual
- Students, for the first time in their lives, are claiming to be First Nations or Métis.
- Role models, like actor Rosanne Supernault, demonstrate that students can be popular and have fun without the use of substances

- FNMI drop out rates and down and attendance is up (30 more days of attendance) in the pilot school.
- Increased cultural awareness among educators and students can result in FNMI student success.

Major Findings

Champion: Students themselves become champions for Aboriginal education

Capacity: Students are teaching the educators about culture

Collaboration: Collaboration is key. Students exposed to:

- Indigenous artists, actors, and poets
- Dreamcatcher conference
- Post-secondary opportunities- e.g. U Alberta, NAIT, and Grand Prairie Regional College, NAPI (Native Ambassador Post-Secondary Initiative), etc.

Community Engagement: Community leaders invited to host events and learnings Students attend pow wows, round dances, and feasts.

Moving Forward/Recommendations

In this school, teachers, administrators, coaches will encourage students to take the challenge of taking harder courses and to strive to be the best they can be.

All staff will work to inspire the individual into the child.

FNMI student success in this school reinforces value for jurisdictional administrative restructuring and creation of a Divisional FNMI Coordinator position and a team of Success Coaches.

HPSD will be ramping up collaborative engagement with all FNMI communities in the coming months and years.

HPSD is developing and implementing a Strategic FNMI Improvement Plan that will target all jurisdiction schools.

Final Comment

What started as a “leap of faith” to pursue a professional development opportunity for teachers has resulted in the fostering of significant structural change in this jurisdiction toward targeted long-term support for FNMI student learning.

Evan Dearden
Assistant Superintendent
HPSD





We have included more opportunity for collaboration between our administrators, teachers, students, parents, community, and Elders as they are all very important in understanding the cultural perspectives of our indigenous population in our schools.



Chinook's Edge School Division No. 73

CESD showed an increase of approximately 100 self-identified First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students in the 2015-2016 school year. The 2015-2016 school year was our second year in the program and we took many steps forward in helping our teachers and students in understanding the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspective.

Key Findings

We would like to highlight two of our key findings while working with this project:

Key Finding 1: Schools becoming more aware of cultural practices and protocols

In a survey conducted using Google forms, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit liaisons in our schools indicated that the schools have included more contact with elders and knowledgeable people in the planning of indigenous content and activities within their schools.

Many of the activities included First Nations, Métis, and Inuit representation at school-wide indigenous days, and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit consultation in planning activities.

It is important to establish a welcoming presence of our FNMI population within our schools. One school (Ecole Deer Meadow) established this presence through having their indigenous students research their roots and discussing what is important in each of their cultures that could be incorporated in an art piece to welcome all in the front entrance of the school.

The Art teacher, Janice Gallant, took these ideas and incorporated them into an art piece in the shape of a medicine wheel. Placement of the cultural representations followed aspects of the medicine wheel that the students had been introduced to. We were fortunate to have Elder Louis Soop bless this piece of artwork for the school. Before the ceremony itself, the school was assembled and the protocol was discussed so that the students and staff had an understanding of what was going to occur.

We have been able to establish connections with several Elders who have been able to provide cultural guidance to schools within the division. Direct contact with the Elders has been made through referrals from the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit community. We have learned a lot about protocol as the Elders are invited to attend functions in our schools.

Teachers and administrators within the division are being encouraged to include Indigenous learning as part of their professional development when possible. Through Instructional Leadership (IL) visits at each school, goals for inclusion of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives are discussed. Due to the importance of understanding these perspectives, several of the teachers have attended CASS, INDSPiRE, and Regional consortia conferences and sessions, taking back the information to their respective schools.

Key Finding 2: Educated instructors and engaged students

Our division has been working with our Learning Commons Staff to improve our Indigenous Education literacy component in our libraries as well as in our Instructional Media Center (IMC). We have established kits for our teachers that offer materials and ideas to engage students in learning how the Seven Grandfather Teachings can be an integral part of our everyday lives.

Ecole Steffie Woima has taken their learning into a Grade 5 classroom and had the students go to other schools in the division to present their learnings to other students. These students have also presented to other grade levels in their own school.

We have worked with our new teacher mentorship groups and our K-8 Professional Learning Community (PLC) groups to make them aware of promising practises and resources available to them to help them gain a deeper understanding of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives, as well as presenting ideas for inclusion in cross curricular activities. We have used resources established through this professional learning project as a base for these discussions. CESD has also developed an Indigenous Education (FNMI) resource based website that is accessible to all teachers, students and parents which contains resource links as well.

Our division works with a response to intervention model and we are striving to know all of our learners academically, socially, and emotionally. In doing so, we are able to engage our learners with more success. We have developed strategies for better tracking of all of our students and to understand the interventions necessary for success.

Our Career High School (Didsbury) worked on an Aboriginal Studies moodle-based course in which students were able to explore the worldviews, symbolism, culture and political organizations of the indigenous people of Canada, both past and present. There is continued development of this moodle-based approach to the 30 level as there was success with this learning approach.

One of our pilot schools (Ecole Deer Meadow) went through a discovery process to move them forward in their understanding and engagement of students. The process involved Solange having one-on-one conversations with each staff member to understand their present understanding of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives. Suggestions were made for resources these teachers could use to move forward with their understanding. Solange then returned to work with grade teams to establish some cross-curricular ties using these resources to enhance units of study to include the FNMI perspective. Teacher feedback was very positive to this learning experience and noted that their students were very engaged in activities planned that included the strategies learned.

To continue moving forward with our student engagement work, our Indigenous Education steering committee has taken on the challenge of planning a division-wide Student Gathering for our FNMI students from Grades 5-12 in October 2016. At this conference we will have speakers who are inspirational in their accomplishments, as well as cultural understanding workshops enabling our students to better understand themselves as indigenous peoples. It is our hope that this will be an annual event for our students encouraging them to be proud of who they are.

Major Findings (Summary)

Champion

As it is important that we share ideas and strategies to create every success possible, we have representation on the CARC FNMI advisory committee. This committee helps us understand what we are doing well, as well as discussions on resources and methods to further student understanding and engagement.

Our FNMI steering committee for CESD is comprised of administration, teachers, school wellness workers, educational assistants and Elders (as deemed necessary). We look at ways to move the understanding of FNMI perspectives forward with our students and staff. As mentioned earlier, the committee is in the process of planning a Gathering the fall of 2016.

Capacity

We are building capacity for our teachers through encouraging attendance at professional learning events, building learning commons resources in support of FNMI in our schools, as well as establishing resources and courses to help meet curricular objectives.

Collaboration

We have worked with administrators through IL visits that include FNMI conversations, as well as providing our teachers with promising practices that they can use in collaboration in developing their curriculum content. We have included more opportunity for collaboration between our administrators, teachers, students, parents, community, and Elders as they are all very important in understanding the cultural perspectives of our indigenous population in our schools.

Community Engagement

We have contacts with Elders who are able to provide the cultural guidance necessary to further our understanding. We also have community members who have been willing to instruct students with jigging, dancing, storytelling and other cultural activities. Many of the presentations and feasts have greater community involvement than in the past.

Moving Forward

Even as this project comes to an end, CESD will continue to move forward to build the capacity in our teachers to gain a better understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives and implementation in the classrooms.

- We will continue to develop updated resource banks correlated to curricular outcomes for teacher use, as this will also allow us to confirm the validity of the FNMI content.
- We will continue with a responsible, flexible approach focused on getting to know all students. The development of division wide gathering processes and screening tools will complement our approach.
- We will continue to build relationships with our FNMI community for better understanding of cultural differences.
- We will continue to have FNMI discussions as part of our IL visits, and encourage professional development for our teachers in this area.
- We will help teachers understand what infusion of FNMI perspectives in an English or French classroom could look like through new teacher mentorship opportunities and PLCs.
- We will establish an FNMI presence in some way in all of our schools.

