



MASS Journal

Spring 2017

The official magazine of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents

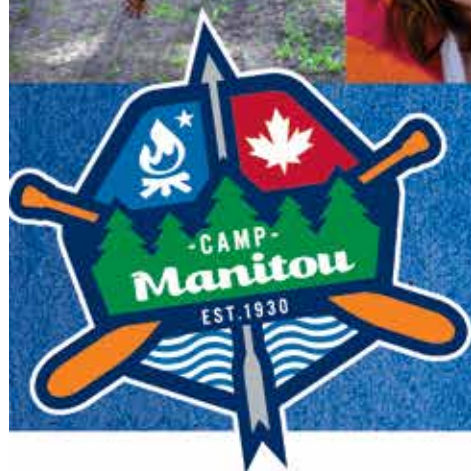
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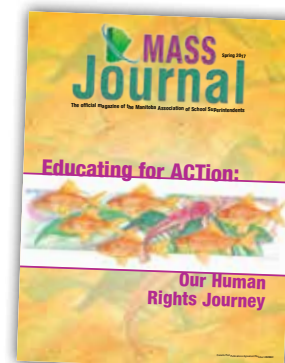
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On the cover: This issue's cover features Leaving School, created by Loral Hildebrand. Learn more about its meaning, and how you can win the original and/or one of five full-sized signed prints, on page 26.



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“This event—which will take place April 20 to 21 at the Victoria Inn in Winnipeg, Manitoba—promises to be an all-encompassing conference highlighted by nationally recognized keynote speakers.”



The Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS) is pleased to present our spring issue of the *MASS Journal* with a special focus on the upcoming *Educating for ACTION: Our Human Rights Journey* conference, co-sponsored by The Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS). This event—which will take place April 20 to 21 at the Victoria Inn in Winnipeg, Manitoba—promises to be an all-encompassing conference highlighted by nationally recognized keynote speakers John Ralston Saul, Raheel Raza, Chief Wilton Littlechild and Cindy Blackstock. This edition of the *MASS Journal* highlights some of the speakers who will be presenting at the conference.

There will be about 1,000 participants in attendance at this highly anticipated event with school divisions sending teams of teachers, trustees, administrators and students. Approximately 200 students will take part in the two-day conference. Many of them are involved in the Youth Cohort Program that has students working with teacher advisors in two lead-up workshops (October 2016, February 2017) that are focused on issues around human rights. The program culminates in their involvement as participants at the conference in addition to student sessions at the Canadian Human Rights Museum during the conference.

An event of this magnitude does not happen without the significant work of many individuals. The Program Planning Group—made up of leaders from agencies that are community advocates for the rights of individuals—has been critical to ensuring the program reflected a wide array of voices in our human rights journey. It also cannot be overstated that the leadership demonstrated by MTS and MASS, both of which worked collaboratively for the benefit of teachers and students, has been instrumental in bringing together a program that supports MASS's focus areas related to our work in equity and human rights for the 2016 to 2017 school year.

Special thanks to Terry Price (MTS), James Bedford (MTS), Brian Gouriluk (MASS) and Ken Klassen (MASS executive director) for their tireless commitment to putting on a world class event that highlights the ongoing work of those involved in public education in Manitoba. I look forward to seeing you all in April at this very special event!

Brett Lough, President
Chief Superintendent
St. James-Assiniboia School Division

La Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS) est ravie de vous présenter son numéro printanier du *the MASS Journal*, qui porte tout particulièrement sur le congrès à venir *Educating for ACTION: Our Human Rights Journey*, coparrainé par The Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS). L'événement, qui se tiendra les 20 et 21 avril prochain au Victoria Inn de Winnipeg, au Manitoba, promet d'être un congrès de très vaste portée mis en valeur par la présence des conférenciers et conférencières d'honneur de réputation nationale John Ralston Saul, Raheel Raza, le chef Wilton Littlechild et Cindy Blackstock. Ce numéro du *the MASS Journal* fait découvrir certains des conférenciers et conférencières invités au congrès.

Cet événement très attendu réunira quelque 1 000 participants; les divisions scolaires y délégueront des équipes d'enseignants, des commissaires, des administrateurs et des élèves. Environ 200 élèves prendront part aux deux journées de congrès. Bon nombre d'entre eux font partie du Youth Cohort Program (programme de cohorte des jeunes), qui les amène à participer aux côtés d'enseignants-guides à des ateliers de préparation (octobre 2016 et mars 2017) axés sur des questions touchant aux droits de la personne. Le programme culmine avec leur participation au congrès ainsi qu'à des séances pour élèves organisées au Musée canadien pour les droits de la personne durant le congrès.

Un événement de cette ampleur ne peut avoir lieu sans le travail appréciable de nombreuses personnes. Le groupe de planification du programme — constitué de chefs de file d'organismes communautaires de défense des droits de la personne — a joué un rôle essentiel pour faire en sorte que le programme donne la parole à un large éventail d'individus cheminant sur la voie des droits de la personne. Par ailleurs, on ne saurait trop insister sur fait que le rôle mobilisateur joué par la MTS et la MASS, qui ont travaillé en collaboration au profit des enseignants et des élèves, a été déterminant pour la mise sur pied d'un programme qui soutient les domaines d'intérêt de la MASS liés à notre travail en matière d'équité et de droits de la personne pour l'année scolaire 2016 à 2017.

Nous remercions tout particulièrement Terry Price (MTS), James Bedford (MTS), Brian Gouriluk (MASS) et Ken Klassen (directeur administratif de la MASS) de leur détermination infaillible à organiser un événement d'envergure internationale qui met en relief les efforts déployés par ceux et celles qui travaillent dans le secteur de l'éducation publique au Manitoba.

J'attends avec impatience de vous voir en avril prochain à l'occasion de cet événement très particulier!

Brett Lough, président
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“Working together, we can ensure a first-rate education system that is inclusive and responsive to the changing needs of students, teachers and parents.”



“En travaillant ensemble, nous pouvons assurer un excellent système d'éducation inclusif qui s'adapte aux besoins en évolution des élèves, des enseignants et des parents.”

As Manitoba's Minister of Education and Training, I am pleased to bring greetings to the members of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS) and commend you for your continued leadership and dedication to our provincial education community. Our government recognizes the value of quality education and training in promoting personal empowerment and paving the way to a brighter economic future for all Manitobans.

Working together, we can ensure a first-rate education system that is inclusive and responsive to the changing needs of students, teachers and parents. We will work to improve numeracy and literacy rates, increase scholarship and bursary opportunities, and empower teachers and parents as partners in the education of our province's children.

Of course, education is not the sole domain of youth. Our province will continue to offer quality, lifelong learning opportunities that help Manitobans of all ages expand their horizons, personally and professionally.

My staff and I look forward to a continued, successful collaboration with MASS members, and all educational stakeholders, to ensure the best possible education system for Manitobans, today and for years to come.

Honourable Ian Wishart

Minister of Manitoba Education and Training

En ma qualité de ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation du Manitoba, je suis heureux de présenter mes salutations aux membres de la Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS) et de les féliciter pour leur leadership et leurs efforts soutenus dans le milieu de l'éducation de notre province. Notre gouvernement reconnaît l'importance d'une éducation et d'une formation de qualité dans l'accès à l'autonomie personnelle et la préparation d'un avenir économique meilleur pour l'ensemble des Manitobains.

En travaillant ensemble, nous pouvons assurer un excellent système d'éducation inclusif qui s'adapte aux besoins en évolution des élèves, des enseignants et des parents. Nous travaillerons à améliorer les taux de numératie et de littératie, à augmenter les possibilités de bourses d'excellence et de bourses d'études, et à renforcer la position des enseignants et des parents en tant que partenaires dans l'éducation des enfants de notre province.

Il est évident que l'éducation n'est pas la chasse gardée de la jeunesse. Notre province continuera d'offrir aux Manitobains de tout âge d'intéressantes possibilités d'apprentissage la vie durant qui les aideront à élargir leurs horizons sur les plans personnel et professionnel.

Mon personnel et moi comptons sur la collaboration continue et fructueuse des membres de la MASS et de tous les intervenants du milieu de l'éducation pour offrir le meilleur système d'éducation possible aux Manitobains, aujourd'hui et pour les années à venir.

Ian Wishart

Ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation du Manitoba

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The Story Behind Educating for ACTION: *Our Human Rights Journey*



Human rights is a universal journey that everyone in every sector of our society is travelling together. It is not an end to be attained someday or something achieved mainly through legislation, but a continual and daily series of acts and intentions that recognize the equality, dignity and human rights we all share by virtue of being human, but which can only be achieved through purposeful Educating for ACTION.

By Ken Klassen, Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, and Terry Price, The Manitoba Teachers' Society, Conference Executive Committee

Educating for ACTION: *Our Human Rights Journey*, being held April 20 to 21, 2017 at the Victoria Inn in Winnipeg, Manitoba, is a large provincial conference co-hosted by The Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS) and the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS). The Executive Planning Committee includes James Bedford, MTS Vice-President; Bobbi Taillefer, MTS General Secretary; Terry Price, MTS Staff; Brett Lough, MASS President; Brian Gouriluk, MASS Professional Learning; and Ken Klassen, MASS Executive Director.

Although hosted by these two educational partners, the planning and facilitation of this event has involved representatives from a broad range of educational and community partners. Planning for the conference officially commenced with a community inter-sectoral forum in November 2015 where representatives from our universities, police forces, health and mental health services, social agencies, volunteer organizations and the interfaith community shared their understanding of human rights and how it impacts each of the groups they represent. This was a very fruitful start and provided a rich list of critical areas of human rights concerns in the broader community, potential themes and topics for presentations, and local and national speakers or presenters we should pursue.

Using this raw material, the program was developed over the course of the last year together with the Program Planning Group, which was made up of representatives from MTS and MASS, as well as the Council of School Leaders (COSL), Manitoba School Boards Association (MSBA), Manitoba Association of Parent Councils (MAPC), Manitoba Association of School Business Officials (MASBO), Student Services Administrator's Association of Manitoba (SSAAM), Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR), National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), UNESCO Schools, and Manitoba Education and Training, including the Healthy Child, School Programs and Bureau de l'éducation française department and the Indigenous Inclusion Directorate.

The Executive Planning Committee quickly agreed that this would be another conference in the *Education for ACTION* series, which over the years has brought educators and the community from across the province together with themes such as the Engaged Learner, Social Justice, Sustainability and Mental Health. It was the desire of both MTS and MASS to bring these and other themes back and address them head on as part of *Our Human Rights Journey*.

This subtitle was chosen after a discussion about our purpose and our understanding of human rights. We all agreed that human rights is a universal journey

that everyone in every sector of our society is travelling together, rather than an end to be attained someday or something achieved mainly through legislation. It is a continual and daily series of acts and intentions that recognize the equality, dignity and human rights we all share by virtue of being human, but which can only be achieved through purposeful educating for ACTION.

Each half day of the conference was then assigned a sub-theme, ensuring that the two-day conference would build towards a meaningful and powerful whole. The first morning anchors the theme with consideration of the purpose and urgency of action and the possibilities we have to make a difference. The afternoon of the first day follows up with exploration of how we can respond and act collectively, and the possibilities created when we work together.

Our second day starts with a focus on life in the learning environment and what it



means to teach and to live out a commitment to human rights in the classroom. Finally, we look outward to how we all can support those who confront these issues on a daily basis in every sector of our society. Together, these sub-themes contribute a rich and comprehensive perspective on *Our Human Rights Journey* and our mandate of *Educating for ACTION*.

Ultimately, we have been able to put together the program in the centrefold of this special issue of the *MASS Journal*, Spring 2017, which serves as our Conference Guide. The conference is anchored by four powerful plenary speakers: John Ralston Saul, Dr. Cindy Blackstock, Raheel Raza and Dr. Wilton Littlechild. Together, they represent the people of Indigenous, settler and newcomer status who make up our celebrated Canadian mosaic.

In addition, we have national, provincial and local expert voices speaking to human rights in the areas of cultural competency; Indigenous culture, language, history and education; sexuality and gender; immigration, newcomers and refugees; poverty and socio-economic inequities; mental health and wellbeing; accessibility and disability; policy and practice; advocacy; and distribution of resources. Throughout, there will be a focus on the teaching and learning required to embed a wide-spread commitment to human rights in our society now and for the future.

Another exciting initiative that has become part of this conference is our partnership with Artbeat Studio and artist Loral Hildebrand. Her painting, "Leaving School" was purchased to be the visual metaphor for our conference and appears on the cover of this journal. Presenters will receive numbered and signed prints of this painting as a thank you and a memento of the conference. Some lucky conference participants will be able to take home the original framed painting or one of the full size prints that will be raffled off at the end of the conference. Look for the ticket table and make sure you don't miss your chance to win and to support the critically important work of Artbeat!

A hallmark of our Educating for ACTION series has been our planning for strong participation from students. In each conference, we have increased the integration of students into the conference, including them in divisional teams and inviting them to share our keynote speakers and some of the workshops. In the 2017 *Our Human Rights Journey* conference, we have taken this a step further with a partnership in a year-long Student Leadership Cohort that feeds into the conference itself. Thirty-six teams of students and advisors from across the province have committed to taking part.

A separate Student Executive Committee planned and facilitated an orientation day in October at the CMHR, where students had the privilege of hearing a keynote presentation by Buffy Ste. Marie, followed by a tour of the museum, and participation in training sessions on *Holding Difficult Conversations about Racism and Diversity*, and *Responding to the Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Report*.

In February, these students met for a two-day forum to further develop their cultural proficiency and enhance their leadership skills, and they started work on developing a group

response to the Calls to Action. Finally, these students will attend the conference in April, taking in all of the plenary sessions and some of the workshops, and hosting a student-led evening with their superintendents and teachers at CMHR.

MASS and MTS have enjoyed a special working relationship with the Indigenous Inclusion Directorate, CMHR and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation in the planning and facilitation of the Student Leadership Cohort and the student portions of the April conference.

On behalf of the Executive Planning Committee for *Educating for ACTION: Our Human Rights Journey*, we wish you all a very powerful and meaningful experience during the two days of the conference. It is our hope that you will take your learning into the organizations, divisions, schools, classrooms, and hearts and minds of all of our children so that together we can make a difference now and in a future full of possibility for all. ■

Ken Klassen and Terry Price are on the Educating for ACTION: Our Human Rights Journey Executive Planning Committee.

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From the artist, Loral Hildebrand

In my Grade 2 report card my teacher described me as a day dreaming doodler. Art has been a constant in my life ever since those early years. As a mixed medium artist, I try to illustrate a spark of the human condition through nature, capturing a sense of wonder in the blink of the eye. Amy Kenny has said, "Art speaks to the viewer without saying a word." My piece, *Leaving School*, was created at a time of transition for me. Since then it has taken on a life of its own, becoming meaningful for others and speaking to them in a variety of ways.

As a mental health advocate, I see the importance of bringing visibility to this largely invisible struggle by sparking dialog and creating awareness through my art. I am proud to be a supporter of Art Beat Studio as a space for people to have a voice, who may never have had this opportunity otherwise. I would like to thank the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents and the Manitoba Teachers' Society for selecting *Leaving School* to be featured at this conference.



A Culture of **Care** and **Compassion** for Refugee Students

“We have to be connected together as human beings. We have to spend time working side-by-side with each other, talking to each other, having connections that link the head to the heart ... Once you have that, then you can reveal a good space to receive the learning.” – Tam Dui

By Jan Stewart, University of Winnipeg

We are living in a time of unprecedented mass displacement due to conflict, persecution and natural disasters. As the United Nations Refugee Agency reports on its website, there are 65.3 million displaced people worldwide—the highest number since World War II—and 21.3 million of them are refugees who are fleeing conflict, violence or persecution. Most alarming, however, is that more than half of the world’s refugees are children.

The experiences of refugees are diverse and complex, and the situations they have left may be riddled with violence, fear, loss and extremely stressful living conditions. The

desperate search for safety can have perilous consequences as families risk everything to flee danger. Children are frequently separated from their families, denied access to education and health care, and targeted with violence and human rights violations. Literature documenting the refugee experience records loss, trauma, violence and an overwhelming sense of uncertainty.

Studies relating to refugees and mental health indicate a prevalence rate of 30 per cent for post-traumatic stress disorder. While not all refugees have a traumatic past, it is generally assumed that there is a degree of adversity simply as a result of forced displacement.

Relocation to a host country such as Canada represents hope for a better future, but the challenges and obstacles persist and the trajectory for

some refugee children and their families is punctuated with feelings of hopelessness and uncertainty about the future. Barriers such as discrimination, limited employment opportunities, poverty, lack of appropriate housing and low educational achievement are just a few of the issues complicating adjustment.

Adjusting to schools in Canada

From 2005 to 2014, Canada settled a total of 233,861 refugees,¹ making it one of the top countries of resettlement. The demographics of Canadian classrooms are changing and becoming increasingly more diverse, but diversity itself is not a guarantee that different cultural groups are included in a system. While some schools and school districts in Canada have implemented exemplary programs to encourage

social inclusion and intercultural understanding, there are others that offer little in the way of practical or pedagogical accommodations for some of Canada's most recent citizens.

While some refugee students excel and thrive in their new host country, others experience great difficulty with adjusting to a new school system. Academic difficulties may be a result of language barriers, disrupted schooling, distress from forced migration or financial difficulties. For example, they may experience food insecurity or having to work long hours while also attending school.

Research has also identified significant gaps in both teacher preparation and school readiness to support successful integration for newcomers, particularly children who have come from conflict-affected countries.² Teachers may even inadvertently contribute to the continuing struggles of students or their re-traumatization simply by not knowing about their pre-migration or trans-migration experiences.

For students who have experienced trauma, something as simple as displaying a poster that triggers past memories may result in distress. Although identifying all of the potential triggers would be difficult, there are certain precautions teachers and school leaders can take to create trauma-sensitive classrooms and schools.

Nhân đạo: Trauma-sensitive schools and safe classrooms

The Vietnamese term “nhân đạo”—used as an overarching phrase to capture the state of being humane in caring for and loving others—is an axiom guiding the practice of inner-city middle school principal Tam Dui. In a three-year research program carried out in Manitoba, Alberta and Newfoundland, we explored best practices for supporting the integration of refugee students. During phase one, our participants frequently told us to go and talk to Tam Dui* and to see what his school, Anthony Graham Middle School* in Winnipeg, was doing to support refugee students.

We decided to take a more in-depth look at how Dui and the staff created a culture where all students feel connected to the school community and where families feel welcome to come into the building to share and collaborate with school staff. The school, and Dui's unique leadership style, provide an exemplar model on which to guide future practice and inform school improvement to better meet the needs of refugee youth.

Dui was himself a Vietnamese refugee who arrived in Winnipeg as a child in 1979. He

knows first-hand the reality of what it means to be relocated to another country. Referring to himself as an old newcomer, Dui says 35 years ago, when he first arrived in Canada, his family stayed at the Memorial Hotel just two blocks down the street from where he now serves as the principal.

He states, “So, the route is really circular. It's the cycle of life, in some way. It's a series of opportunities. Just as I received a lot of service and a lot of opportunities, this is now part of that circle that I give back to the next generation of people.” Guiding his practice is a desire to build a solid connection with students, their families and the community. That is why each morning, staff and students know where to find Dui: at the bus drop-off at the front door of the school where he personally greets each student, staff member and visitor, even in -40°C degree temperatures.

Dui and the Anthony Graham staff have created a culture of care and compassion that informs their day-to-day interactions. They aim to provide a welcoming and safe space where refugee youth and their families come together to learn, interact and engage with each other and their new culture. When Dui learned that many of his newcomer families missed eating certain vegetables from their homeland and that many were in need of activities to keep them busy, Dui's family donated farmland. There is now a robust gardening club where students and parents farm together and learn about growing food from around the world.

Each weekend, a school bus transports parents and students to a farm south of the city to work together looking after the crops. While doing this, newcomers practice speaking English and learn about local farming practices. Through Dui's connections in the city, local organizations and businesses have donated seeds, equipment and start-up funds to help assist the gardeners.

Within the school, staff and students are uniquely divided into four teams: Team Humility, Team Wisdom, Team Courage and Team Truth. Each team has three homeroom teachers and specific core teachers who teach the same students from Grades 7 to 9. Dui believes this organization allows teachers to form more meaningful relationships with students and to monitor more closely students who are dealing with adverse situations or challenges.

With carefully chosen staff and school leaders, Dui stresses the need to have teachers try a term or two at his school before he is convinced

they have what it takes. Dui notes, “When it comes to inviting staff into our community, they have to have compassion. The heart has to be there and there needs to be a trusting relationship that creates a safe place where conversations can occur. And you cannot always see this in an interview.”

Dui believes providing a safe place where students feel respected and honoured is essential for learning to take place. “We know the trauma is there. We recognize that students have had horrific experiences and it is our job to create a space where they can be safe, feel cared for and be open to learning,” he says.

Guiding principles for supporting refugee students

A trauma-sensitive school is not intended to be therapy-focused; rather, it is an environment that acknowledges the potential for traumatic experiences in the lives of students and creates universal supports that are sensitive to the unique needs of each student while being attentive to avoiding the possibility of re-traumatization. When we took a closer look at the activities, support programs and teaching strategies offered at Anthony Graham, and combined these with the literature on supporting refugee students, we uncovered some unique approaches and best practices that we believe are necessary for creating safe, trauma-sensitive schools.

Know your students: Take the time to learn about where your students come from and acknowledge their past. Be open to hearing their personal story, but remember that behind the trauma story is the story of survival. See students with an asset perspective instead of a deficit perspective. Help reorient students to focus on the skills, resources and power they have to get through difficult times. View each student who comes to school as having unique experiences and backgrounds that are worthy of celebrating.

Know and build your community: Teachers, school staff, students and the community need to collaborate with each other, have a willingness to hear different perspectives and a readiness to take risks to try new approaches. Invite community members in to organize after-school clubs or lunch-hour activities. Have a designated community room where staff, students and the community can come together to discuss current issues and plan future events.

Know the signs: Students who are coping with distressing events and experiences might display hyper-arousal, avoidance, withdrawal

or disassociation. They might be easily overstimulated and lack a readiness to learn. Communicating and self-expression may be difficult, and problem-solving and decision-making may be compromised. Students who have experienced trauma may have difficulty regulating emotions. You might see a state of calmness one moment and anxiety or anger the next. Fear and concern for their own safety or the safety of their family members may occupy their thoughts. If a student is feeling threatened in your classroom, there will be little learning.

As a colleague once said, "You can't teach away trauma." A sense of security and trust are the foundation for providing support to students. Once safety has been established, the process of healing can begin. Healing takes time and the process of settling and adjustment can take years. Listen to what students and parents tell you they need, and know that some will talk and others will not.

Know who can help: If you have concerns about the safety of a student or the safety of others, refer to the next level of care. If you have a gut feeling that something is wrong, trust your instincts and get additional support. A counsellor or therapist may need to be involved when you see serious changes in behaviour or

when the student talks or writes about death, dying or suicide. Significant substance abuse and heightened aggression or protectiveness are also signs that the student needs more support. Work with the student's family or caregivers and ensure that you are working together to support the student.

When there are cultural issues you may not fully understand, seek out the help of a cultural broker or support worker. Settlement agencies and community groups can be a tremendous support to school staff. When the various systems work together, a more holistic and supportive environment is created.

Know yourself: Working with refugee students can be rewarding and also extremely difficult. There is a personal impact from hearing about the trauma, torture, violence and persecution inflicted on others. It is common to feel helpless and overwhelmed. It can be extremely distressing to hear about violations to children and the impact this has had on a child's life. For many teachers, it can seem like an overwhelming task to support the increasing numbers of students who are dealing with various forms of trauma. In some cases, you may be the only support in a student's life and this can be a tremendous feeling of responsibility. Know

your personal signs of stress and distress, and know when and how to look after your own mental health. ■

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Three required characteristics

Supporting children from refugee backgrounds can be a challenging journey and it can also be a process of renewed hope and opportunity. According to Tam Dui, you need three things to do this kind of work: "Competence, character and chemistry. Can you do the work? Do you have the character and compassion to do the work? Do you have the chemistry to get along and trust each other to get the work done?"

A new start offers refugee students hope and promise for a better future. If we do the work, schools can provide an environment of care and compassion that fosters acceptance and supports the successful integration of Canada's newest citizens.

*The names of both the principal and the school in this article have been changed, in accordance with the ethical requirements of Dr. Stewart's research.

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The Voice of Youth in Reconciliation

By Charlene Bearhead, Co-chair of the Downie-Wenjack Fund, and member of the Pathways to Education Canada Indigenous Education Advisory Circle

So often we hear the expression “The children are our future.” We know this to be true, but what is our responsibility to that future? I believe as we put that responsibility on to our children and youth, we must remember that, for now, we are their future. So, before we look to the youth for their support and care for us in the future, we have to ask ourselves, what is our action for them right now? What are the youth asking of us? I believe their actions are calling to us and what they are calling for is our eyes and our ears and our hearts. Then we can offer them words. But, what will those words be?

Other than the family, education holds the most significant opportunity to engage and support our children and youth in reconciliation. In fact, in many cases it will be the children and youth that lead their families to this path of understanding, trust and openness in the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in this country. We have the opportunity to offer them an educational experience that neither we, nor their parents, had.

We have the responsibility to share the truths of residential school survivors that

have been gathered by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Survivors and intergenerational survivors courageously sharing their stories paints a clear picture of the misguided and devastating actions of “educators” of Indigenous children right here in Canada in the not so distant past. Their stories show us clearly what happens when youth are disrespected.

The film *We Can't Make the Same Mistake Twice* shows what happens when we take children from their families and communities, and disregard the path given to them by a power much greater than ourselves. So, what will our actions be as we learn from the mistakes of our predecessors in education? How do we reconcile with our past, with our current approach to our interactions with youth in education and with the reality that many of our youth face within the education system?

Relationship is key. We spend so much time redesigning programs in education as though that is going to change the dynamics in our classrooms and lead to student success. Maybe what we need to redesign is our definition of student success. Maybe rather than thinking of the success of a student in terms of grades and information learned, we need to think about the perspectives of young people in our schools regarding their own lives and future.

Maybe we need to ask ourselves why so many young people don't see school as a place for them to thrive and flourish as a human being. Rather, they see it as a place where they are expected to achieve certain pre-determined goals that may not even have any relevance in their own lives and their own journeys. Maybe we need to ask ourselves why we push issues of aggression, disagreement and sometimes even violence between students over to the office or right out of the school so we can do our jobs.

Maybe that is our job? Maybe the best thing we can do for our youth is help them learn to navigate the world that awaits them outside the walls of the school. Maybe if we took those teachable



moments for dialogue and reconciliation, students would feel safe in the classroom—not only physically, but emotionally—to be who they are, share what they feel and think, and know they will be respected and are expected to respect others. They don't always have to agree with others, but must respect everyone's right to be who they are and to express that in a way that doesn't run over others, rather walking beside one another, much like the Two Row Wampum Treaty.

The larger question in all of this is how do we find the answers to these questions if we never ask the youth for their guidance? How often do we ask youth what they want to see in their schools and classrooms? How often do we ask students what is leading to their absence from school, their struggles with other students or staff, their interest or disinterest in certain classes or programs? And when we do ask, do we actually hear the voice of youth? Do we act on what we hear? If this is only an academic exercise in an English Language Arts class but never goes anywhere, what use is it? How do youth know we actually hear them? How do they know we take their words seriously? That we respect them? That we value them and trust that they know what is best for them?

We can't do any worse than we have been doing with regard to ensuring a bright future as we learn from the past. We lose young people from schools at a rate that is much too high. Too often, we lose young people from our families and communities and we are left asking why. Maybe we need to start asking the questions before the only person who can answer is lost to us, often never to be able to answer another question. The youth do have something to say. They are reaching out to us, crying out to us, often in ways that are beyond words because their words have fallen on deaf ears for so long that their voices have gone silent.

So, what will our actions be? How will you hear the voices of youth in your classroom and your school? How will you honour what you hear from them? How will you support the young people in your school to travel the path of life given to each of them? How will you support each of them to seek and to have

the confidence to follow their own path? How will you support and guide the young people in your classroom and in your school to build relationships with one another, and to respect themselves and others? How will you honour the young people in your classroom and in your school?

The answer is clear: **Honour them as individual and precious human beings, each unique and valuable to all of us.**

We must remember that every child was given gifts at the time of their arrival into this world. We only need to see those gifts and honour them. It is for us to help each young person appreciate what it is they bring to this world and to share their stories with us. We need to hear their stories of hope for their own future, of challenges and struggles they are experiencing now so we can help guide them in seeking solutions. We can help them build relationships that will nurture and support them when we are not there to do so and ask them how they want us to relate to each of them. The education we provide students is really giving them tools they can use to support their own success in living a life well-lived by their own assessment.

So, what is our part in all of this? How can we support our students in reconciling with themselves, their family and community, with one another and their own education and where it is leading them or not leading them? Perhaps that starts with us reconciling with our own role as educators.

Our young people have stories worth telling. They have stories worth hearing. Let's be sure we hear them. Our young people have lives worth living. We must be sure they see the evidence of that in our eyes as we listen to their voices and in our actions as we respond to them, both in the best of times for them and in the darkest times for them. The path is there for us. The youth hold the key to our success in supporting them as they reach for their own personal success. The choice is ours. The actions are up to us. What will your actions be? ■

Charlene Bearhead is Co-chair of the Downie-Wenjack Fund, and is a member of the Pathways to Education Canada Indigenous Education Advisory Circle. She is also the former Education Lead for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

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Complex Poverty and Urban School Systems

By Duane Brothers, Ph.D., Louis Riel School Division

Complex Indigenous and racialized poverty exists in Canada. Silver (2014, 2016) states that beyond a lack of income, complex poverty is characterized by a host of additional challenges that trap individuals and communities in cycles of often multigenerational poverty. These additional challenges often include poor health, joblessness, lack of educational achievement, gang activity and high incarceration rates. As Silver (2014, 2016) and others have demonstrated, poverty can lead to poor educational outcomes. In inordinate ways, these realities impact Indigenous communities around the world, and racialized, by which I mean

communities that have been seen historically as inferior due to their *color and race*.

During the summer of 2016, I completed a study that examined the understandings and actions related to complex Indigenous and racialized poverty of four superintendents who each had at least five years' experience in their positions. The superintendency is incredibly complex and extremely political, and there cannot be a recipe book from which superintendents can help advance the cause of greater equity for all our students. That said, we can learn from the stories of those who have made a difference, no matter how small or contextualized. We can advance our knowledge to inform how superintendents can contribute

to the creation of educational environments in which people challenge, develop and, in the words of Foster (1986), liberate human souls (p. 18).

The genesis of this study was born of the influences of 500 years of experiences with oppressive colonialism by my family. During my lifetime, the influences of my parents and their family history, my experiences growing up in Canada, and my journey as an African Canadian educator have led to my questions, doubts and hopes concerning issues of equity.

The study was informed by critical theory, which is distinguished from positivist theories that are used to observe social interactions. Analysis from a critical theoretical perspective must pursue human emancipation "to liberate

human beings from the circumstances that enslave them” (Horkheimer, 1982, p. 244). Giroux develops this idea in his distinction between a language of critique and a language of possibility (1983, 1988, 1997).

My purpose was not to profile or in some manner evaluate the individual participants in this study. Rather, my intention was to draw on their personal and professional experiences and insights, and to explore some of the dimensions of understanding and action that might be associated with a superintendent’s ability to influence in a positive manner the school experiences of children living in poverty.

Foundations

I wanted to understand how the participating superintendents articulated their understanding of poverty and its impact on students’ school experiences, and how early life experiences, initial teaching positions, and academic background and professional learning informed these understandings. This question was informed by Silver’s (2013) discussion of complex and racialized poverty, its impact on school experiences and success (Gaskell & Levin, 2012), and critical perspectives on schooling and the superintendency in light of the notion of dominant narratives of poverty and of schooling (Foster, 2004; Larson and Murthada, 2002; Grogan, 2000).

It assumes that knowledge is socially constructed on an ongoing basis. Finally, it also draws upon the work of Leithwood (2005, 2013)—which suggests that educational leadership consists of the development of organizational vision—and of Grogan (2000), who suggests that both a well-developed understanding of poverty by the superintendent and an activist commitment to engage with the dominant narratives of poverty and of schooling is a necessary aspect of divisional leadership.

Secondly, I wanted to explore how these superintendents described the socio-political and organizational environments that inform and influence their work as senior administrators as well as how the participants described their roles as senior administrators within these environments in relation to being able to influence systems. The analysis attempted to develop two main arguments: What superintendents can do to differing degrees—depending upon their abilities and the context within which they operate—is be influential and inform vision, policy and practices within an organization (Grogan, 2000; Leithwood, 2013; Rottman, 2007). Further, the work of critical

educators in general, and critical educational leadership in particular, within the context of specific organizational environments should be “to raise ambitions, desires, and real hope for those who wish to take seriously the issue of educational struggle and social justice” (Giroux, 1988, p. 177).

Finally, I wanted to understand what actions they have undertaken to address issues of racialized poverty. I developed three main arguments, as follows:

1. Critically informed people in positions of organizational leadership or influence must have a heart for people who are oppressed (Gaskell & Levin, 2012; Silver, 2013);
2. Care and concern for the disadvantaged is not enough. It must be followed by thoughtful and purposeful action; and
3. **Influential superintendents can contribute to critically informed work and they can make a difference.**

If superintendents are to be critical in their practice, they must have a vision that includes a significant understanding of poverty and its interactions with schooling, and they must see addressing the effects of poverty as a significant component of their work.

Poverty is complex

In contrast to a dominant narrative that suggests complex poverty is rooted in the personal and pathological failings of those who are impoverished, Silver (2014) suggests that complex poverty is a result of structural, agency and political realities that impact Indigenous and racialized populations in a post-colonial world. The participants saw its effects in their schools and in the greater community.

Like so many others in our society, each of the participants played to some of the personal and pathological failings as reasons for poverty in ways that minimize the role of race or colonialism in the perpetuation of poverty. Indeed, Brian O’Leary (Seven Oaks School Division) reflected that even while working with disadvantaged Indigenous students in an alternative program earlier in his career and wanting the very best for his students, it took time and learning for him to realize that keeping marginalized students in alternative classrooms did not help them become successful. Rather, it reinforced the message that the problem resides with the students and their families.

He came to recognize an alternative narrative in which the residue of colonialism and contemporary neo-liberalism reinforce

structural barriers to improved opportunities for disadvantaged students. Each of the participants gave signs that they are on their own journeys to questioning traditional understandings of race.

Schools as sites of struggle

Several of the participants lamented that while individual schools are doing a good job to address the daily impacts of poverty on their students, school systems in general and themselves as influential superintendents could be doing much more to alleviate the impact of complex poverty. While schools cannot be responsible for eliminating poverty, “influentials” need to address what they could be doing more of, as well as what they should be doing less of. School systems can either continue to reinforce the cycle of complex poverty or they can be locations in which individuals and communities can interrogate contemporary thinking and develop more critically informed practices.

Developing understanding

A deep and sophisticated understanding of complex Indigenous and racialized poverty cannot be assumed of current superintendents, nor is it easily attainable. Where the participants did indicate not only an interest but also demonstrated a commitment to action to address the impact of complex poverty, it was largely due to purposeful and sustained personal interest, and study through dialogue with knowledgeable people, reading and other forms of professional learning. A conscious effort has to be put into challenging the dominant narrative about poverty and to develop a deeper, critically informed counter-narrative.

Upbringings: The early life experiences of the participants—each of them currently in their 50s or 60s—were situated in contexts that were much less diverse, did not present many opportunities to be aware of people living in complex poverty, and provided a stereotypical narrative of society and so-called minority communities. Participants spoke of learning in school the progressiveness of the British Empire and sanitized perspectives of “Native Indian” life in Western Canada. They also spoke of being raised to believe in the paramount importance of hard work and individual responsibility; the narrative of the meritocracy writ large.

Early teaching experiences: Having close contact with young people and communities

experiencing poverty can lead to increased empathy for those living in hardship. However, the experiences do not necessarily result in deeper understandings of complex poverty. This is because living in a larger society informed by a meritocratic narrative can result in a perspective that poverty is about personal, family or community failings and inadequacies, and is not necessarily connected to historic colonization and inter-generational racism. It can lead to the opinion that educators simply need to work harder to address the individual needs of poor kids. Experiences and exposure to people living in poverty can reinforce the belief that the roots of poverty are within the failings of individuals and communities living in poverty.

Academic and professional learning: Each of the participants has been university educated, credentialed to teach in Manitoba and has taken advantage of further professional learning opportunities. They suggested that university programs did not prepare them to have any sophisticated insights into complex poverty. Where participants did develop growing knowledge about complex Indigenous and racialized poverty, it was due largely to working directly with specific communities, followed with a personal choice to learn more through personal relationships and learning with those who experienced or were knowledgeable of complex poverty; deep and extensive reading in the area; and significant professional development, including participation in programs such as the multi-year Ethical Leadership Professional Learning Project (Bryant, 2015) provided by the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS).

How participants described the socio-political terrain

Grogan (2000) argues that superintendents operate within environments that contain a mélange of enabling and inhibiting factors. Participants reported to elected school boards, took direction from the Department of Education and Advanced Learning, were informed by their professional association (MASS), managed operations in at least 20 different schools, and were subject to the influence of labour unions and other societal influences beyond their direct control.

The participants concurred that they cannot be command and control leaders as so many other people and organizations exert influence and leverage upon them. The term influential more accurately describes the roles superintendents play in bringing about any changes that might occur within their environments.

How can superintendents be influential?

While participants were clear that they personally could not lead by command, there was evidence that they could influence the development of policy and practice related to complex poverty by:

1. Choosing to be critical and influential;
2. Purposefully building relationships with trustees, government officials and other influentials within and beyond their organizations;
3. Gaining and maintaining the trust of these other influentials;
4. Using language skillfully to frame arguments and directions; and

5. Extending their influence beyond their school divisions by creating partnerships and coalitions.

Critically informed superintendents need to focus on social justice

The participants were not directed to pay special attention to poverty. The range of other areas of potential focus—such as student engagement, organizational efficiency and effective management—are dizzying. If a superintendent is to address issues of poverty, they need to choose to become educated about what it is, its causes and potential remedies. Such an education is not a requirement that is placed upon them so, at least at this present moment, gaining this awareness needs to be a personal initiative.

A growing literature indicates that influentials need to develop the attitudes and aptitudes to forge new advocacy skills and develop new social and political networks with community groups and players in other branches of government to become critical organic catalysts (West, 1993, p. 22). Critically informed influentials are people who can negotiate the interactions and culture of the organizational and cultural mainstream while being grounded in the foundations of critique and hopefulness.

What can be done: Critical perspectives

Superintendents can mitigate the impact of complex poverty upon students and communities by acting upon the ethics of care, critique and justice (Starratt, 1997), and, in so doing, attending to an educational and political agenda committed to addressing issues of poverty and schooling.

Care: Kelly Barkman (River East Transcona School Division) stated, “My ethics and values are based on compassion, fairness, honesty, responsibility and respect.” He also said this level of care is not enough and articulated that there is so much more he can do in his capacity as superintendent to make meaningful change for students and communities that are disadvantaged.

Care is usually complicated as superintendents and school systems need to juggle between multiple goods. These issues become dilemmas as influentials try to support multiple agendas that often conflict with one another. O’Leary talked about his experiences with many impoverished kids who were violent and disrespectful of authority within systems that needed to maintain order and safety in schools.

An easy solution is to suspend students from school, who do not conform. When this



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happens, the young person often spends time not being supervised or cared for, certainly not learning, and the antecedents to the behaviour are not being addressed. Caring solutions are to find ways for that student to not be suspended, to address the reasons for the behaviour that have systemic origins and to help the student make better decisions.

Ron Weston (retired from St. James Assiniboia School Division) shared his frustration with trying to help the relocation of members of the Lake St. Martin First Nations community, whose school burned down in 2013. While expressing care for their condition, Weston's honest perspective also reminds me that very different perspectives exist with dilemmas related to historic and racialized challenges. These are real dilemmas with which education system influentials need to grapple regularly. Simple expressions of care are not enough.

Learning: Pauline Clarke (Winnipeg School Division) talked about being well aware of the socio-political privilege that she had both as a superintendent and as a member of the majority culture while engaged in conversations with Indigenous people about racism in Winnipeg's inner city. This was an astute awareness that many others in leadership positions can be oblivious to. She also talked about how much she came to learn from Indigenous colleagues about the realities of complex poverty.

O'Leary talked about the deep learning he has done in the last few years about Indigenous history, racism, neoliberalism and poverty. Barkman and Weston shared how much the sessions of dialogue through the development of this thesis helped to push their thinking about complex poverty. Superintendents as influentials are not

compelled to be critically informed about poverty and racism. They have to choose to be critically informed. For that to happen, they need to read, engage with people who are knowledgeable and engage with the disadvantaged communities that they serve.

Making a difference: The participants provided a range of examples of work of how they influenced other influentials, including trustees and senior administrators, and helped them to bring into effect critically informed changes at a systems level. A conclusion that can be made, however, is that superintendents are limited in what they can achieve because of the complex organizational structures within which they work and because of the dominant values and beliefs of the broader community. They can, however, be influential.

Weston and Barkman talked about placing onto the agenda of board meetings data about demographic changes in their communities that shed light on the fact many students living in poverty have not been doing as well as more affluent young people. Clarke talked about meeting with individual trustees to educate them about important issues, while O'Leary talked about setting aside time with the Seven Oaks School Division board to learn about Indigenous people, colonialism and poverty. He also provided a number of examples of the importance of framing issues and the ensuing discussions so that together people could become aware of the existence of alternative narratives to the psychological and cultural arguments about why some communities are not doing so well.

A number of other programs and initiatives were described by the participants that may help

to address the effects of poverty and go beyond the funding provided, such as initiating specific strategies to develop, hire, and support Indigenous and newcomer educators, including those educated in other countries.

As O'Leary said, however, "Feeding them breakfast is not enough." More substantive work that has been done included helping influentials access counter narratives through professional learning and working with the community—often through challenging conversations. In the case of the Winnipeg School Division, this meant creating Indigenous-focused environments that better assist students in learning about their heritage and gain a better respect for themselves and their culture. Another example is the Wayfinders Program (Seven Oaks School Division), which provides strong mentoring and tutoring support and additional challenging intellectual engagement using data to track and then reinforce growth, and to then support students financially for a post-secondary education.

The journey continues, and members of MASS have significant roles to play as critical organic catalysts fulfilling our responsibilities to balance, in Giroux's words, a language of critique and a language of possibility (1983, 1988, 1997). ■

*Duane Brothers, Ph.D., currently serves as the Superintendent of the Louis Riel School Division in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The full dissertation, **Complex poverty and urban school systems: critically informed perspectives on the superintendency**, can be found at <https://mspace.lib.umanitoba.ca/handle/1993/32006>.*

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Thursday April 20, 2017

Morning Sessions

8:30 - 8:45		Fort Richmond Collegiate Drama class presents: Inside Minds
8:45 - 9:15		Opening
9:15 - 10:15		Keynote - John Ralston Saul
10:15 - 10:45		Break
10:45 - 12:00		Workshops
Centennial 1/2	A1	Stand Up To Stigma - Big Daddy Tazz
Embassy A	A2	Understanding LGBT2SQ+ Youth Mental Health: Risk and Resilience - Jared Star, Sexuality Education Resource Centre
Embassy C	A3	Community Mobilization and Youth Leadership - Michael Champagne
Regency	A4	Bridging Two Worlds: Trauma Sensitive Schools and Supportive Classrooms - Dr. Jan Stewart
Embassy D	A5	Violence and Health: Do Children Have the Same Human Rights as Adults? - Dr. Tracy Affi
Centennial 3	A6	Making the Connection: Human Rights and Positive Mental Health for Youth, Schools and Communities - Sylvia Massinon, Vycki Attala
Room 167	A7	Why Didn't You Tell Us Back Then? - Shandi Strong
Wellington A	A8	Building Resilient Youth - Kevin Chief
Embassy F	A9	Building Your Intersectional Feminist Classroom - Catherine Hart
Embassy E	A10	How Educators Can Help End Human Trafficking - Diane Redsky
Kensington	A11	Breaking The Cage(s) - Jim Derksen, Judy Redmond and Rick Zimmer
Victoria Boardroom	A12	On The Inside: A Look at Illiteracy and Colonization as Factors in Incarceration - Quinn Saretsky (Elizabeth Fry Society) & Sharon Perrault (John Howard Society)
Centennial 4	A13	Course Correction for a Nation: Our Journey from Truth to Reconciliation through Education - Charlene Bearhead & Tricia Logan
Wellington B	A14	Is There a Hierarchy Between Human Rights? - Julie Couture
Carlton	A15	Indigenous Student Achievement - Three School Divisions
Executive Boardroom	A16	Education sans stigmatisation - Dalila Awada français

Afternoon Sessions

12:00 - 1:15		Lunch
13:15 - 14:15		Keynote - Dr. Cindy Blackstock
14:15 - 14:30		Break
14:30 - 15:45		Workshops
Wellington A	B1	Engaging, Equipping, and Empowering Youth in and from Care - Marie Christian, Jainna Cabral
Embassy B	B2	Speak Truth to Power Canada - Terry Price (MTS), Mirelle Lamontagne (CMHR)
Centennial 4	B3	Perception: Art and Activism - K.C. Adams
Embassy E	B4	It's All About a Lack of Choice - Rita Chahal, MIIC
Carlton	B5	Project II - Suzi Friesen, Winnipeg Jets True North Foundation
Wellington B	B6	Where We Stand and What We Hope For: Teaching about, through and for Children's Rights - Dr. Jerome Cranston, Dr. Melanie Janzen
Embassy D	B7	Beyond Rainbows: Educational challenges Facing Sexual and Gender Minorities in the 21st Century - Dr. Robert Mizzi
Centennial 1/2	B8	Relationality, Reconciliation and Anti-Oppressive Education - Dr. Alex Wilson
Embassy C	B9	How Educators Can Help End Human Trafficking - Diane Redsky
Embassy F	B10	Supporting Gender Diverse Students: Beyond the Myths - Jackie Swirsky
Centennial 3	B11	Digging Deeper with Dr. Cindy Blackstock
Kensington	B12	Vivre à la hauteur de ses paroles et joindre la danse : l'expérience de deux éducateurs non autochtones facilitant l'intégration des Perspectives autochtones en éducation - Dr. Laura Sims, Raymond Sokalski français
	B13	Afternoon at the Museum - Student Track only

Friday April 21, 2017

Morning Sessions

8:30 - 8:45	Maples Collegiate Teenage Bears Drum Group	
8:45 - 9:15	Opening	
9:15 - 10:15	Keynote - Raheel Raza	
10:15 - 10:45	Break	
10:45 - 12:00	Workshops	
Carlton	C1	Drumming at the Heart of Indigenous Cultures - Bernadette Smith and Maples Collegiate Teenage Bears
Centennial 3	C2	Walking the Talk and Joining the Dance: Two Non-Indigenous Educators' Experiences Facilitating the Integration of Indigenous Perspectives into Education - Dr. Laura Sims and Raymond Sokalski
Embassy B	C3	GSAs in Manitoba Schools: History, Highlights, Hurdles and Helpful Hints - Robbie Scott & Lynda Brethauer Venton, Mika Schellenberg
Embassy F	C4	Red Rising Magazing: Indigenizing Media - Kevin Settee, Leonard Monkman, Sadie-Phoenix Lavoie
Centennial 1/2	C5	Newcomers to our Province: Needs, Aspirations and Services - Muuxi Adams, Abdikheir Ahmed
Embassy E	C6	Journey to Justice - Rosemary Sadlier
Wellington B	C7	Creating Mental Health Awareness in our High Schools; student and teacher led initiatives at College Garden City Collegiate - Jacqueline McDonald & Kelly Stokoteln
Embassy A	C8	Art Beat Studio: Mental Illness and the Journey of Finding Voice Through Art - Nigel Bart, Lucille Bart, Renee El-Gabalawy
Embassy D	C9	Freedom Road: The Birth of an Activist - Steve Bell
Regency	C10	Conceptualizations of Complex Indigenous and Racialized Poverty and Education Systems - Duane Brothers
Wellington A	C11	The Autism Umbrella: It's Getting Pretty Crowded Under Here! - Kim Zeglinski
Centennial 4	C12	Exploring Indigenous Rights Together: Connecting Human Rights to Action! - Chelsea Burke
Embassy C	C13	Religious and Cultural Diversity in School and Community - Lived Experiences of Educators
Kensington	C14	Down Syndrome 101: Classroom, Behaviour and Inclusion Strategies - Lori Lester
Victoria Boardroom	C15	Y a-t-il une hiérarchie parmi les droits de la personne? - Julie Couture français
Executive Boardroom	C16	Les étudiants affectés par l'ETCAF : un désordre invisible - Simon LaPlante français

Afternoon Sessions

12:00 - 1:15	Lunch	
13:15 - 14:15	Workshops	
Embassy C	D1	LGBTQ-Inclusive Teachers and the Law - Dr. Catherine Taylor & Dr. Donn Short
Embassy E	D2	Queering our Classrooms and Communities - Dr. Alex Wilson
Wellington B	D3	Educating for the TRC's Calls to Action - Kevin Lamoureux
Wellington A	D4	Mental Health: Yours, Mine and Ours - Deb Radi, Taylor Demetrio
Embassy F	D5	Here and Now: Working Together to End Youth Homelessness - Christina Maes Nino, Kelly Schettler, Jason Romanysyn
Regency	D6	Building Global Citizenship in the Social Studies Classroom and the School Community - Linda Connor
Carlton	D7	The Influence of Social Factors on Children's Health and Development - Dr. Marni Brownell, Dr. Nathan Nickel, Dr. Mariette Chartier
Embassy B	D8	The 60s Scoop: A Hidden Legacy of Colonization - Coleen Rajotte
Centennial 3/4	D9	Decolonizing Education: Nourishing their Learning Spirits - Dr. Marie Battiste
Kensington	D10	Learning and Action within an Intercultural Community School - Vinh Huyhn, Ainslie Loria, Gerald Villegas
Embassy D	D11	Inclusion of Newcomer Children and Their Families in Schools and Communities - Dr. Régine King
Victoria Boardroom	D12	Dire la vérité au pouvoir - Brahim Ould Baba/ Mireille Lamontagne (CMHR) français
Centennial 1/2	D13	Designing a Proclamation for a Reconciled Canada - Student Track only
14:30 - 14:45	Break	
14:45 - 15:45	Keynote - Chief Wilton Littlechild	



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Walking the Walk and Joining the Dance



**By Laura Sims, Université de Saint-Boniface, and
Raymond Sokalski, École secondaire Kelvin High School**

Integrating Indigenous perspectives into education is important when addressing long-standing inequalities and injustices due to negative stereotypes and racism. As non-Indigenous educators and allies, we have a role to play in reconciliation. At a forum discussing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) recommendations in March of 2016, Justice Sinclair asked educators to teach in a way that engenders respect towards Indigenous people.

Genuinely supporting this process with dignity and respect is not always obvious. What does this actually mean? What should we be doing in our pedagogy? This is an exploration of how we are attempting to do this when teaching Manitoba social studies curricula, grade 9 through 12, and the B.Ed. Aboriginal Perspectives in Education course.

Raymond Sokalski: Experiences teaching Manitoba high school social studies

As a first-generation Canadian and educator in a public school where a growing proportion of students self-identify as having Indigenous backgrounds, I see my role as fellow learner and as facilitator of experiences that widen students' perspectives on who we are as Canadians and as up-standers in society.

I seek to awaken in students an appreciation of diverse perspectives and the responsibility to become aware of events and noteworthy

figures associated with our history, including their emotional impact on those affected by their actions. My colleagues and I invite people active in the community into our classrooms, including authors, activists, survivors and scholars. Their stories and insights personalize the facts that are taught.

Topics have included the residential school experience, murdered and stolen Indigenous women, urban poverty and crime, and Treaty negotiations. Collaborators have included Nahani Fontaine, Michael Champagne, Robert Falcon-Ouellette and Wab Kinew, among others. Visits are preceded by reading articles and viewing documentaries in class. These are followed by group discussions and opportunities to take further actions, such as participating in petitions and awareness-raising campaigns, and writing letters to elected representatives.

The Grade 9 Democracy and Governance in Canada unit allows us to study consensus building as a decision-making method. Students debate Dr. Lafontaine's proposition of an Aboriginal Parliament working in collaboration with our current bicameral system. Empathy for the minority experience is developed through one-on-one interviews with immigrants to this country.

Grade 11 students demonstrate their knowledge of First Nations' beliefs, traditions, economies and relationships in oral interviews, based on a chosen theme or First Nations' regional grouping. A highlight for history

students occurs when studying the numbered treaties. Each student plays a historical figure present at the Treaty No. 5 negotiations in Norway House,¹ Manitoba in 1875. Whether Inninu, Métis or white settler, participants learn to see through the lens of their particular situation as trapper, Hudson Bay employee, fisherman or determined spouse. Each is tasked with eliciting the most beneficial agreement from the Lieutenant Governor and Minister of Agriculture, who each bring their own pressures.

More importantly, they become aware of forces that seek to divide the community—physically, economically and emotionally—and take actions to enhance or thwart this. Their interactions (one-on-one, sharing circle, formal meetings) are spontaneous, passionate, revelatory and reflective. It has been encouraging to observe students learning about the Treaty relationship and experiencing feelings associated with uprooting, division and determination. The days following the role-play are used to show how promises made and withheld were forecast by previous cross-cultural collaborations and conflicts. They reflected subsequent practices of (ethnocentric) colonialism whose contemporary repercussions evoke greater empathy from students. This is reflected in students' research-topic choices for studying 20th and 21st century Canada, such as the '60s Scoop, Oka, Clayoquot Sound and Idle No More.

Laura Sims: Experiences teaching B.Ed. course

As a descendent of settler Canadians and an educator, I see my role in the reconciliation process as creating spaces for Indigenous stories to be shared respectfully, helping students make sense of what they're learning, supporting them as emotional beings and relating what they're learning to their future classroom practice.

Building honest relationships with students to enable tough conversations is essential to support the learning process. I model the pedagogy I am teaching on one that is experiential, non-linear and participatory, and that meaningfully integrates community and focuses on strengths and shared decision-making.

Key historical events are explored to understand contemporary realities and how these events have contributed to the current

relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. My goals are to: inspire students; open students up to learning about and celebrating Indigenous culture; build relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities; outrage students in the face of injustice; and inspire students to build a more just society through education.

Assignments support course goals by being critically reflective, with community and linked to pedagogy. I rely on Indigenous collaborators—exceptional role models who have been overwhelmingly generous with their time and knowledge—sharing their stories and on other resources, such as films, articles, cultural activities and community events.

The course begins with Niigaan Sinclair eloquently explaining our need to learn to live as family in a respectful and honouring way. Reading the article on Winnipeg's challenges with racism in *Maclean's* magazine (2015) helps elucidate what the relationship has become. The process of colonization and the impacts of residential schools are explored to understand our contemporary reality.

These events are investigated by doing the blanket exercise, which is an historic simulation game. The National Film Board of Canada's film *When We Were Children* and the TRC's Calls to Action are excellent starting points for understanding the residential school experience. Regarding the impact of colonization, students choose which issues they want to explore in more depth. To date, these have included gang violence and human trafficking, particularly focusing on Indigenous women.

Once a more honest understanding of our colonial history and its impacts is established, we focus on celebrating, learning from and building relationships with our Indigenous community. To this end, students participate in cultural events and/or visit Indigenous organizations. Experiences have included attending a sweat lodge and participating in literary circles, community rallies and artistic workshops. These experiences are then shared through a sharing circle. My role is to help students make sense of this new knowledge and relate it to their lives and teaching.

Finally, we explore what integrating Indigenous perspectives into educational practice (approach and content) might look like from Kindergarten through Grade 12 and its role in enabling us to move forward in a good way. Education can help break down prejudice and enable a realm of life possibilities for all children. Kevin Chief has shared the importance of education in his life and Rob Riel shared his experiences working with Indigenous youth.

To understand what an indigenized pedagogy might look like, we reflect upon key messages we've learned, such as the importance of relationships, focusing on strengths, experiential learning and articulating ideas in different ways, and what these mean in practice. This reflection is enriched by visits to the Manitoba Indigenous Cultural Education Centre, reading *Our Words, Our Ways: Teaching First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learners*, and visits by the Ministry of Education, Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba (resources), and Direction des ressources éducatives françaises (French-language resources).

Concluding comments

Challenges remain, however. We recognize that educational activities that use role play or open discussion can surface unforeseen tangents and thorny topics. Another challenge within a secular educational context is figuring out how to integrate sacred and/or spiritual knowledge, such as smudging and protocols around using teepees, while being mindful of facilitating understanding about that sacred teaching. Finally, conscious of our need to become more knowledgeable, we must overcome our fear of asking potentially uncomfortable questions.

In conclusion, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to those who have accompanied us in this journey. We feel greatly enriched by the experiences, relationships and knowledge that we've gained through teaching these courses. Our understanding of being citizens of this place called Canada is much more deeply rooted. ■

Raymond Sokalski is a social studies teacher at École secondaire Kelvin High School in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Laura Sims, Ph.D., is associate professor in the faculty of education at Université de Saint-Boniface in Winnipeg, Manitoba. She specializes in education for sustainability and community-based assessment processes.

Note

1. The original format of this activity was developed by Frontier School Division educators.



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Sex Trafficking is Happening in our Schools!



**By Diane Redsky,
Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre**

The National Task Force on Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls in Canada consulted with more than 260 organizations and 160 survivors of sex trafficking in 2013 and 2014. We asked survivors which systems they interacted with the most while they were being trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation as a child under the age of 18. We wanted to know where all the adults were while this was happening and where the priority for prevention needed to be. Schools were the number one system with which survivors interacted. Child welfare was in second place and organizations serving youth third.

The Public Safety Canada definition of human trafficking reads, “Human trafficking involves the recruitment, transportation, harbouring and/or exercising control, direction or influence over the movements of a person in order to exploit that person, typically through sexual exploitation or forced labour.” It is often described as a modern form of slavery.

There are currently two forms of human trafficking in Canada: labour trafficking

and trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, also known as sex trafficking. The RCMP defines labour trafficking as a person being forced to provide labour or service under exploitive circumstances, such as working long hours for little or no pay, being promised a certain type of work but being forced/coerced to do something else, and working in dangerous environments with little or no safety equipment. Their living arrangements might also be controlled by their trafficker, including where they live, what they eat and who they can talk to.

Sex trafficking may also mean a person is exploited for a sexual purpose in a variety of ways, such as by being forced to provide sexual services through prostitution, or to work in massage parlours, escort agencies or in the adult entertainment industry, including strip clubs. The victims have little say in what they are required to do, and where or when they work. Most or all of the money is controlled by their trafficker.

The majority of human trafficking in Canada occurs for the purposes of sexual exploitation and sex trafficking, which is targeted at women and girls who are marginalized, including women who are Indigenous, migrant or abuse survivors. The RCMP report that as of January 2016, there had been 330 cases of human trafficking with 94

convictions since human trafficking became an indictable offence in 2005. The majority of these are sex trafficking cases.

Human trafficking is a growing problem in Canada. The National Task Force on Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls in Canada conducted an online survey where 266 front line service providers replied that they served 22,047 sexually exploited and/or trafficked women and girls in 2012. It is not uncommon for law enforcement and frontline service providers to report such extremely different number of incidences considering that sex trafficking is a significantly under-reported and hidden crime.

Sex trafficking is not only a human rights violation, it is also the most extreme form of violence against women and girls. It is rooted in gender inequality and presents itself in racism, sexism and classism at its very worst. We all share the responsibility for the existence and flourishing of sex trafficking, just as we all have a role to play in ending sex trafficking in Canada. In fact, the National Task Force of Women and Girls in Canada launched a report in 2014 with 34 achievable recommendations on how to end this horrific crime and keep our most vulnerable women and girls safe, including the important role men and boys play in this. This report is titled in the words of survivors: *We need to find our voices and say “No*

More? Copies of these reports and this research can be downloaded through the links in the accompanying sidebar, which will direct you to important organizations working to end sex trafficking in Canada.

Girls are being sexually exploited, sexually abused and victimized while they are living at home, going to our schools and attending youth programs. How is this so prevalent in our schools and communities? Traffickers count on our lack of education and awareness, and lack of co-ordination and communication with each other to make these safe places perfect recruitment grounds for sex trafficking.

Sex trafficking is driven by greed, violence and the demand created—primarily by men—to sexually abuse girls. I have found society minimizes the victimization of sexually exploited girls when we use words such as child prostitute, as if to say she is at fault for her “lifestyle” or “situation.” This cannot be further from the truth. We have to call it what it is: Child abuse.

The chart below illustrates how the power of words can be harmful to a 13- to 17-year-old girl who needs us to see she requires protection and not view her as a nuisance.

Child prostitute	Child abuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An older person; • They choose that lifestyle and are not victims; • They put themselves at risk/ask for it; • John/pimp present; and • No sense of urgency. Someone else will help/I don't know how to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A young person; • Someone is hurting them and they are being victimized; • They didn't do anything to put themselves at risk; • Perpetrator present; and • There's a sense of urgency to save them. Someone call the authorities to stop it!

The National Task Force on Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls in Canada concluded that things are not getting any better in Canada. In fact, they are getting worse, particularly for girls. The demand for paid sex is increasing for younger and younger

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girls, and traffickers will meet this demand by creating the supply of girls. The number one risk factor of sex trafficking is being a girl. The average recruitment age is currently 13 and getting younger.

This is further complicated by traffickers becoming more subtle. Rather than presenting as pimps or promoting the pimp culture, they are manipulating girls by posing as their friends or boyfriends, making it harder to detect their real intentions. Sex trafficking is also moving more online where anonymity can provide the perfect opportunity for traffickers to enter

our children's bedrooms through a computer, iPad or cellphone.

This is a 100 per cent preventable crime. There are several organizations that have been working in this area in Manitoba and affecting important and meaningful change across Canada, including The Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, which is a member of the Sexually Exploited Youth Community Coalition in Winnipeg along with 50 other organizations. It is part of the first and longest standing provincial strategy in Canada named after Tracia Owen, Tracia's Trust.

Following the release of the National Task Force on Sex Trafficking of Women and Girls in Canada report, The Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking was developed as a backbone organization to lead co-ordination in Canada. This is a strong resource for information, education and awareness, engagement and co-ordination. The Joy Smith Foundation is leading the work in curriculum development for schools and in education, awareness raising and mobilizing of local, regional and national groups.

What can be done? We cannot underestimate the power of knowledge to combat sex trafficking and prevent it from happening in the first place. Educators, teachers and many others are at the front lines and play a very important role in raising awareness, running programs to build protective factors, leading co-ordination and communication, and helping develop programs that create opportunities for confident girls and respectful boys.

Educators, we need your action now! I make presentations across Manitoba and Canada, and each time I present in high schools, there is at least one person who approaches me afterwards to disclose that they know this has or is happening to someone and asking what they can do to help. Please join the circle of helpers and help end sex trafficking in Canada. ■

Diane Redsky is the Executive Director of the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre.



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You can begin to help end sex trafficking by going to these important organizations' links to learn more about human trafficking in Manitoba and Canada:

www.mamawi.com/sex-trafficking
www.canadiancentretoendhumantrafficking.ca
www.joysmithfoundation.com
www.gov.mb.ca/fs/traciastrust
www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/ht-tp/index-eng.htm
www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/ntnl-ctn-pln-cmbt/index-en.aspx

You can also attend my presentation, *How Educators Can Help End Human Trafficking*, at *Educating for ACTION: Our Human Rights Journey* conference on April 20 and 21, 2017 in Winnipeg. Hope to see you there!



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After 23 years as a teacher, Joy Smith entered politics in 2004. During her 11 years as a Member of Parliament, Joy Smith made Canadian history as the first MP to amend the Criminal Code

twice, both times to protect victims of human trafficking. Joy Smith has become a leading advocate in the fight against human trafficking, having worked with countless survivors who have been trafficked by their abusers. In 2011, Joy Smith founded the Joy Smith Foundation. She now educates parents, teachers and future generations so that they can recognize the signs of predators, and report this crime.

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Project 11 Brings Mental Health Strategies to Students in Manitoba

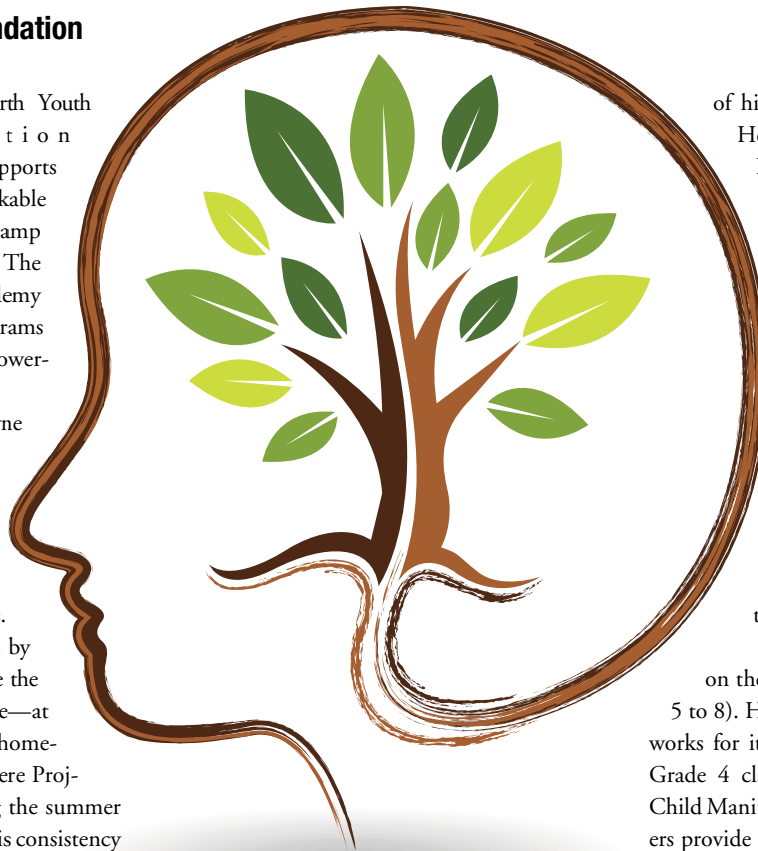
By Suzi Friesen,
True North Youth Foundation

The True North Youth Foundation (TNYF) supports three remarkable programs: Camp Manitou, The Winnipeg Jets Hockey Academy and Project 11. All three programs focus on supporting and empowering youth.

Executive Director Dwayne Green has a committed team who understands the needs of underserved youth in Manitoba and who are passionate about making a positive impact in children's lives. Students trust the team created by the foundation. Some youth see the staff weekly—on and off the ice—at Hockey Academy, in their home-room class during a period where Project 11 is the focus and during the summer months at Camp Manitou. This consistency has really helped students reach their goals year-round, helping them learn vital skills such as goal-setting, resiliency and the benefits of teamwork.

This 2016 to 2017 school year, Project 11 had an overwhelmingly positive response when it came to registration. This mental wellness program developed by teachers, for teachers, was created in honour of Rick Rypien. Rypien was a former Manitoba Moose player who wore the number 11 and was planning to wear the same number for the National Hockey League's Winnipeg Jets. Rypien was clinically diagnosed with depression and, after years of fighting, lost his battle with the mental illness in August 2011. After his passing, with the blessing of his family, the discussion around the development of a mental wellness program in Rypien's honour began.

"I think the logical step to honouring Rick was Project 11, mostly because



“Knowing that students aren’t alone, is exactly what Project 11 is trying to achieve.”

of his devotion to kids,” said Craig Heisinger, also known as Zinger. Heisinger is the Senior Vice-president and Director of Hockey Operations, the Assistant General Manager of the Winnipeg Jets, as well as the General Manager of the Manitoba Moose. The man with the longest title in the organization always made time to be a friend to Rypien. He was Rypien's confidante, someone who Rypien really felt comfortable opening up to about his emotional struggles.

Currently, Project 11 focuses on the middle years' curricula (Grade 5 to 8). However, plans are already in the works for it to expand to Kindergarten to Grade 4 classes. Partnering with Healthy Child Manitoba has helped Project 11 teachers provide feedback and see the benefits of the program through the data collection. Last year, the Grade 5 and 6 curriculum was piloted in 86 classrooms across Manitoba. According to students' data collection, the program significantly increased their prosocial skills (helping others); self-awareness of social, emotional and physical wellness; and knowledge about what's involved in maintaining a holistic healthy lifestyle. In addition to students' feedback, teachers stated that there was a significant decrease in the level of peer pressure, students' hyperactivity and the number of students being bullied by other youth.

Last year's records from the Grade 5 and 6 pilot confirmed there is a need for mental wellness education in schools. Both teachers and students expressed their admiration for the program and appreciated the stage of empathy the program naturally created within their classroom community. One prominent statistic in our findings was that



the odds of being bullied by others in the Project 11 classrooms decreased by 54 per cent from pre-test to post-test of the program.

This school year, we trained more than 400 Grade 5 to 8 teachers across Manitoba. Two training days were offered in Winnipeg

and one in Thompson, Manitoba. This year, Project 11 is present in 29 school divisions across Manitoba, plus eight independent and private schools.

"We've spread to more schools in northern Manitoba, along with some First

Nation communities and Winnipeg private schools," says Green.

This year, the focus was to pilot the new Grade 7 and 8 programs. During the summer of 2017, we will not only have all of our data collection complete for the Grade 5 and 6 curricula, but for the Grade 7 and 8 program as well. The results will help us see how the program is empowering students and teachers, and show where the program could use any modifications or enhancements.

Currently, the program's resources are all online, easy to access and easy to incorporate into the classroom. There are 15 mental wellness lessons per grade. All the lessons target Manitoba's English Language Arts and Physical Education/Health Education learning outcomes. Each lesson is divided into three parts: the Warm-Up, Game-On and Post-Game. In each Post-Game, students are asked to reflect in their journals, or Score Keepers. They also have a chance to watch and learn from the Winnipeg Jets' defenceman Mark Stuart, who is found in every Post-Game video.

Stuart shares his connection to the lesson by answering students' questions related to the particular theme of the week, such as stress, friendship, body image and empathy.



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By having Stuart answer questions related to each lesson, students quickly see him as a role model and find him easy to relate to. Recently, we filmed Stuart and some of his teammates sharing who their supports are and what they do to care for their own mental wellness. He had mentioned to our Project 11 student, Herlinda Dalayoan, that his family and friends are definitely part of his support system. He added, “My wife is really easy to talk to and helps me out a lot, but the thing that I try and remember most is that everybody at some point in their lives goes through stress or experiences anxiety, so know that you’re not alone.”

Knowing that students aren’t alone, is exactly what Project 11 is trying to achieve.

Not only does Project 11 provide each grade with 15 mental wellness lessons, but it also shares 70 intermission videos, including Fun with Fitness videos with Ace Burpee and Sara Orlesky, with Winnipeg gym owners; Fun with Food videos with local dieticians; and Art Energy videos that promote art as an outlet to relax and unwind. Aboriginal Dance, yoga videos, Music & Rhythm and Mindful Moment breathing exercise videos are also included in the intermission section of the website.

These short intermission videos are additional tools teachers can use daily throughout the entire 10 months of their school year. The intention is to promote additional coping strategies for students to reach out to when they are feeling overwhelmed or stressed. Instead of reacting or holding onto tension, students might use one of the strategies learned in the mental wellness lessons or intermissions. A Grade 8 student who was in the program since Grade 6 said Project 11 helped her learn coping strategies to deal with her anxiety disorder. Listening to one of the Mindful Moment breathing exercises, making a healthy snack, dancing, working out, practicing yoga or simply reaching out to someone to talk has helped reduce her anxiety over the past three years.

You often hear the statistic that one in five Canadians will experience a mental health problem or illness in their lifetime. This indirectly affects many more Canadians through a family member, friend or peer. Therefore, it shouldn’t be something anyone should need to hide from or think that suffering in silence is their only option.

“What we’re trying to do is remove the stigma of mental illness. You’re trying to look at it just like any other injury, whether it’s a schoolyard sprained ankle or a broken arm. There is just no cast, just no band-aid,” says Heisinger.

Having been a middle years’ teacher, I know it’s challenging for students to succeed academically if they are struggling in silence. Whether they are worried about an obstacle that has surfaced in their lives or are having trouble seeking out emotional support, every student has their own story. I know this on a

personal level from having a mother who lives with depression, just like Rypien did. When I was growing up, I didn’t have the understanding of what she was going through nor did I know who to ask for support. I thought avoidance was a healthy coping strategy.

The first person I talked to about my mom’s illness was Stacey Natrass, (my choir teacher at the time). I was already 18 and it wasn’t until she told me that everyone has their own story and challenge that I really believed for the first time that I wasn’t alone. This is exactly what Project

The advertisement for Florists Supply Ltd. is set against a background of vibrant pink roses. At the top, the company logo features a stylized maple leaf with the text 'SCHOOL CANYON' above it. Below the logo, the company name 'Florists Supply Ltd.' is displayed, followed by the website 'www.floristssupply.com'.

The central theme is 'Fairtrade and ethically sourced flowers for:', which is supported by five circular icons: a heart with a dollar sign for 'FUNDRAISERS', a megaphone for 'SCHOOL SPIRIT', two hearts for 'VALENTINE'S DAY', a group of people for 'WOMEN'S DAY', and a graduation cap for 'GRADUATION'.

Below these icons, the text reads: 'Fundraising Returns of 50% Plus', 'We offer Student Tours & DIY Flower Classes in our Floral Distribution Centre'. The Fairtrade logo is prominently displayed, with the website 'www.fairtrade.ca' underneath.

At the bottom, it states 'Florists Supply is a Distributor of Fairtrade Certified Flowers' and lists locations: 'WINNIPEG | SASKATOON | EDMONTON | CALGARY | VANCOUVER'. A 'FAIR TRADE WORKPLACE' seal is also visible in the bottom right corner.



11 has done for today's youth. Grade 8 student Amber says, "Before, if I thought things, I wouldn't tell my friends. Now, through learning in Project 11 how everyone has a story, I feel like it's okay to be open with my friends and talk to them about things that are bugging me. It lets me learn about myself, my feelings and emotions, which are things that are usually never taught in schools."

TNYF's belief in the importance of mental health awareness and having the right people—including a team of passionate teachers, a supportive TNYF board, education committee, Craig Heisinger, Mark Stuart and our newest member of the Project 11 team, Eric Comrie who's joined us this year from the Manitoba Moose—have really helped make a sustainable difference in over 8000 students' lives.

"I find Project 11 beneficial in that it gives students strategies to use to cope with everyday difficulties: how to deal with stress at home, frustration with school work or conflicts with friends. I have seen quite a few students benefit in their ability to stay calm instead of lashing out in anger at others or to use one of the conflict resolution strategies when they are arguing with a friend over recess games. One of my most guarded students who never shares any really personal information, opened up about some of the difficulties he has at home on a worksheet and since then he has been talking to me a lot more about things that are going on in his life," says Brandi Meilleur, a Grade 5/6 teacher.

Providing students with the opportunity to reflect, become more self-aware and feel comfortable talking about the subject of mental health has intrinsically motivated so many students to embrace positive coping skills into their lives.

I believe Craig Heisinger said it best: "We're the ones who are executing the program, but it's Rick who made the difference. He'd be smiling down on this and he deserves a great legacy." ■

Suzi Friesen is the Director of Educational Programs for the True North Youth Foundation.

For more information about Project 11, visit projecteleven.ca.

A Community of Well-Trodden Paths

By Vinh Huynh, Hugh John Macdonald School

Scholar Raimon Panikkar's words paint the vision of community we are endeavouring to live out at Hugh John Macdonald School in central Winnipeg.

"Our country—with its stated beliefs in civil, democratic and diverse society—rests on an assumption that everyone is at the table (in the circle)," says Elder Dr. Myra Laramée. "Yet the reality is that not all residents on Turtle Island are able to access the learning and livelihood to lead lives of dignity, peace and prosperity."

Those of us who are at the table, in a place of privilege and well-being, are responsible to look around to see who is not in the circle. Once we see our fellow citizens who are absent or excluded, we need to make a sustained and conscious effort to go to where they are and walk with them to their places.

To live in a society where all can flourish together, we need to walk those paths between houses until they become well-trodden, familiar and ingrained in our sense of place. This is what the essential work of reconciliation and relationship building must look like in our country as we work toward the North Star of inclusion where we accept each other as fellow citizens, as sisters and brothers.

Guided by the philosophy of being an intercultural community school of Grades 7 to 9, Hugh John Macdonald School aims to be not only a second place (where we study or earn our livelihood), but what Ray Oldenburg calls a third place, an anchor of community life that fosters broader, more creative interaction for the building of civil society, democracy, civic engagement and establishment of a sense of belonging.

Like many schools in the Winnipeg School Division that were built in the early



"Our hope in the future is ... well-trodden paths from house to house."

— Raimon Panikkar

20th century on Treaty 1 land, Hugh John Macdonald School has become a meeting place where Indigenous people, settlers and newcomers gather together as learners in a community that is constantly evolving. The school's philosophy shapes a network of living and learning relationships responsive to the neighbourhood's intercultural identity. In this dynamic context, diversity is not a static description but a flexible interplay between the spectrum of differences and the mutual transformation that occurs through genuine interaction.

This process of learning and teaching is reflected by Martha Nussbaum in John Hattie's *Visible Learning for Teachers*: "The purpose of education consists of more than

academic achievement ... Among the most important purposes is the development of critical evaluation skills, such that we develop citizens with challenging minds and dispositions, who become active, competent and thoughtfully critical in our complex world. This includes critical evaluation of the political issues that affect the person's community, country and world; the ability to examine, reflect and argue, with reference to history and tradition, while respecting self and others; having concern for one's own and others' life and well-being; and the ability to imagine and think about what is 'good' for self and others." (Nussbaum, 2010)

This spirit of seeking what is good for self and others enables the school as a

community hub to advance this work of the commons to deliver the interdisciplinary services, learning and teaching, and activities that students, their families and communities require before, during and after school and during extended school breaks. Bill 12, which was enacted in the Manitoba Legislature in 2012, describes the community school philosophy under which many schools in the province, and Winnipeg School Division (including Hugh John Macdonald School), operate:

- Schools are an integral part of the community;
- The whole of the community in which the school is located—including its agencies, organizations, businesses and trades—is a resource for the school;
- Parents are partners in their children's education and are encouraged and offered opportunities to have meaningful involvement in their children's education and the planning process for the school;
- The culture of the students and the culture of their community is reflected in the school; and
- School facilities are community resources and are shared in accordance with the school board's community use policy.

By recognizing and affirming the current and potential transformational impact of community schools, Bill 12 encourages schools to consider these principles for community learning to advance students' learning, health and well-being. Critical to these principles is the strength-based perspective that focuses on the particular abilities and gifts already existing in each community.

Accompanying this perspective is a spirit of cooperation that weaves the personal and collective strengths to create a matrix of relationships between individuals, groups and organizations to amplify this shared work of

cultivating health in both students and their surroundings. Our work in building relationships encompasses four essential elements that deepen our understanding of the effort to nurture health in community.

The first element, best called the core, is central to the identity of both the individuals and their communities in terms of the beliefs and values that underpin their world views.

The second element, self, is reflected in questions such as: Who am I? Do I matter? Do I have a voice? Do I know how to sound my voice?

Most obvious when we think of relationships is the third element, each other, about which we ask: How do I relate to people with whom I share this place, including family, friends, colleagues and community members?

The fourth element draws attention to place, such as the land and water from which we draw life. Where do I come from, Where am I going, Why am I here? are questions that populate this sphere.

These questions guide our work in reconciliation with Indigenous people and the work of hospitality to newcomers. They give substance to the recognition that "We are all Treaty People" with a shared humanity. This way of being is reflected in the worldview of interconnectedness that all are related and, regardless of our places of origin or current circumstances, we are all in kinship with each other and are responsible for each other.

Working within this balance of indigeneity and intercultural identity, students, staff and caregivers at Hugh John Macdonald School cultivate a milieu that affirms individual selves while offering opportunities to relate with each other from the strengths of respective identities. Through daily and sustained time working toward a shared purpose of learning and teaching, we are mutually influenced and transformed as we look, listen,

learn and live in community with each other. This framework of relationships acknowledges that diversity enriches experience and is a source of resiliency and growth.

The work of relationship and reconciliation holds both promises and challenges due to our community's quickly evolving demographics, changed by overlapping migrations of people groups. How do we, as school and community, become safe and vibrant places of learning and transformational growth? How do we extend and sustain the Circle of Courage—a sense of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity—which Dr. Martin Brokenleg outlines as universal growth needs for all children? A key capacity to influence this work rests in a committed, knowledgeable and diverse staff whose selection, retention and growth are based on three criteria:

1. Character and compassion (Do you have passion and interest in the work?);
2. Competence (Can you do the work?); and
3. Chemistry (Can we work together harmoniously?).

As we hold to a high standard in implementing these three criteria, we observe the emergence of a pattern of staff demographics: remainers, returners, relocators. Remainers are from the neighbourhood and have chosen to stay and work within the school community. Returners have left for learning and experiences, then opted to return to work in their home community. Relocators are from other places and have chosen to contribute to the common good in their new adopted place. Woven from these three threads, our staff's breath of perspectives and depth of experiences allow them to serve our students and families well by offering measured and timely responses to the host of complex learning issues that require our thoughts and attention.

This service is not done in isolation but in partnership with all members and organizations in the community who are committed to safe and vibrant places. We make deliberate efforts to cultivate partnerships to offer community learning alongside organizations such as the Manitoba School Improvement Program; The Peaceful Village Program; Boys and Girls Club of Canada; Rossbrook House; Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM); and many others. We work in unison to offer both an extended school day and extended learning through the course of the year. Drawing on community partners to resource student learning ultimately lightens



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b) Thursday, Feb 1, 2018 at CanadInn Club Regent Casino Hotel
Drs. Judy Halbert and Linda Kaser, presenting "*Spirals of Professional Inquiry for Equity and Quality*".

c) Thursday, May 10, 2018 at the Viscount Gort Hotel
Dr. Jim Knight, President of the Instructional Coaching Group, presenting "*Instructional Coaching: A Partnership Approach to Improving Instruction*".

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the load by mitigating learning gaps while enhancing learning opportunities. Together with all our partners, our community is able to offer students a strong matrix of academic learning and extensive range of interest-based co-curricular learning supported by dedicated community staff.

From our students' perspective, these principles and ideas are lived out in their learning. It begins with dignified simplicity at the start of a school day with breakfast supervised by educational assistants and funded through a grant with the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba, and a subsidized lunch that offers healthy nutrition. Students thus are prepared for academic learning supported by a number of partnerships such as The Bridge: Music Learning for Life (Desautels Faculty of Music at the University of Manitoba offers jazz instruction to students); The WRENCH (bike repair workshops), Faculty of Medicine (numeracy and science tutoring); and conflict mediators from Menno Simons College (develop restorative practices).

At the same time that students are engaged in their learning, newcomer parents are able to access English classes up to Canadian Language Benchmark 4 for adults through The

Newcomer Literacy Initiative, which is now in its ninth year at Hugh John in partnership with IRCOM. With these classes situated in the school, parents are able to receive English as an Additional Language (EAL) learning within walking distance, side-by-side with their children, and supported with childcare for younger siblings so they can focus on learning.

When the instructional day is finished, students can access extended academic learning through The Peaceful Village Program, Boys & Girls' Raising the Grades, Rossbrook House and IRCOM. When the school year draws to a close in June, these same partner organizations support students with a range of learning activities through the summer months.

Our learning also includes the essential relationship element of place. Land-based learning opportunities recognize that being on the land and water is essential for a deeper understanding of our responsibilities in the work of reconciliation. Since 2009, we have worked through such mediums as gardening, and bike building and repair, to advance our learning on the land. Ongoing learning exchange with Oscar Lathlin High School, Opaskwayak First Nation (six-year partnership) and Juniper Elementary (two

years) in Thompson, Manitoba enriches this work. We have travelled to each other's community and learned about unique strengths and opportunities relating to land and livelihood in our respective places. The students from the north learn about bike building and repair, and get to enjoy a historic learning tour through Winnipeg on bicycles. In return, Hugh John Macdonald School students receive teaching from elders on the land, sample post-secondary learning streams at University College of the North, and experience livelihood opportunities through visits with local industries.

These are some of the many ways we walk well-trodden paths between each other to cultivate hope for reconciliation. In the course of our journey, as we listen to each other, we can learn about our common humanity and live out the ideal that we are all related. It is this kinship that gives reason for the work of building a Canadian society that is truly compassionate, just and respectful for all who call Turtle Island home. ■

Vinh Huynh is Principal of Hugh John Macdonald School, which is located in the Winnipeg School Division.



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the biases and discrimination taking place on our playgrounds during recess, and in our lunchrooms, classrooms and schools.

Take a moment to ponder the following:

- How often are students with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, learning disabilities and other disabilities meaningfully included on student councils, invited to attend student leadership events, and encouraged to speak about their experiences, hopes and dreams?
- How well do typically developing children and youth really know their same age peers living with learning and functional challenges?
- Where are students with disabilities found within our schools? Are they in inclusive classrooms or taking part in segregated life skill training, especially as they progress through their high school years?

Our schools and the society our children are growing into must accommodate a wider diversity of humanity than ever before and our education system must prepare all of us to accept, embrace and expect this diversity.

Just as we must thoughtfully teach our children about the history of colonialism and our obligations to support our Indigenous neighbours and friends, and how to welcome newcomers from other cultures and countries, we must also teach them about the inherent gifts presented to us in the diversity of abilities in our classrooms, schools and province.

This means we must address our own fundamental understanding and biases related to people with disabilities. Taking the time to think through and challenge these biases is an important part of our own life-long learning and evolution as leaders in our education system.

In Manitoba, we have both an overarching philosophy of inclusion⁴ and an amendment to the *Public Education Act* that outlines how students with special needs must be accommodated in our schools. The individual education plan (IEP) can and does serve as a jumping off point for specific adaptations and modifications to school curricula, but even when it is not present, all school divisions and schools have an obligation to provide “appropriate educational programming that fosters student participation in both the academic and social life of the school.”⁵

Thoughtfully planning for and supporting a truly inclusive culture within our schools is not an easy task, but it is also not an impossible one. Lessons learned from accommodating one group of students often provide building blocks

for strategies needed to accommodate others. For example, the visual cue cards used to teach a child with autism the sequence involved in entering a classroom and preparing for circle time also helps his classmate who is a newcomer to Canada without the English language skills to understand verbal instructions.

Consider the Inclusion Process (Figure 3) outlined in the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission’s guidelines on *Accommodating Students with a Disability*⁶ as an illustration of how Manitoba’s education system ideally can and frequently does approach inclusive education.

At the centre of the process is the expectation that all students must be accommodated within the regular classroom. This occurs as the result of support to ensure access to the school (taking into account physical accessibility, the medical needs of the student, environmental and other factors), support to the teacher (instructional strategies, practices and support with problem-solving), and support to the student in the regular classroom (use of teacher assistant time, and assistive technology). Provisions are in place for times when, even with supports in the regular classroom, a student may need to spend time out of the regular classroom. These include two scenarios:

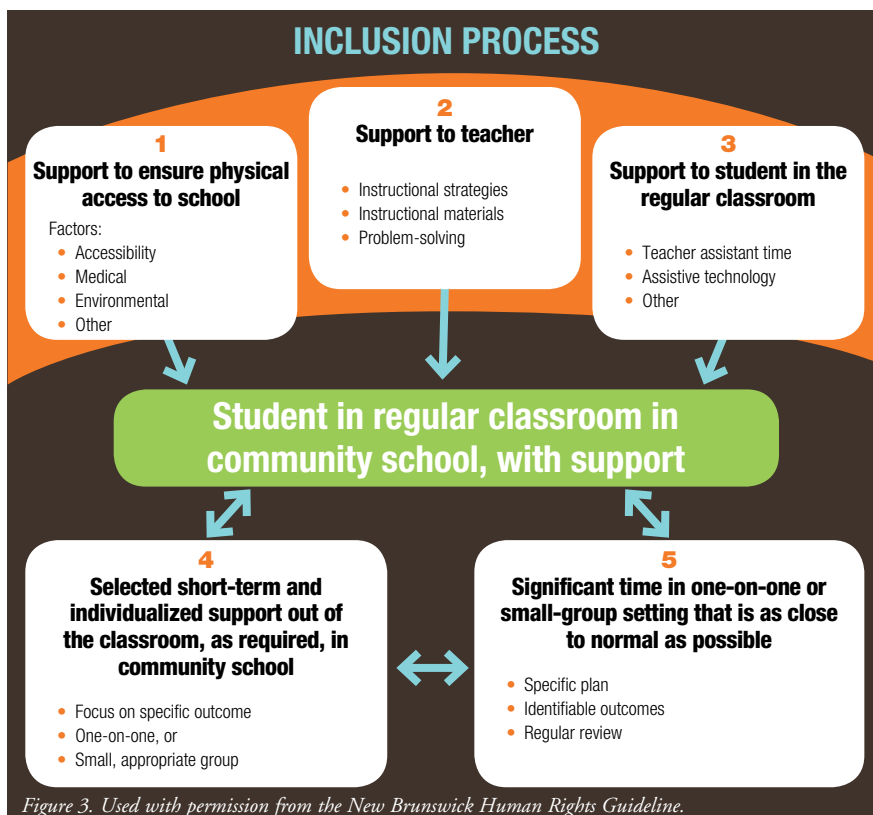
Short-term and individualized support out of the classroom that may be one-on-one or in

a small group, and that is focused on specific outcomes; and

Longer-term in a one-on-one or small group setting that is focused on individualized outcomes with specific outcomes and plans in place that are regularly reviewed.

Arrows within the diagram show how any pull-out scenario is not intended to be irreversible, but with an eye to returning the student to the regular classroom with typical peers as much as possible.

In Manitoba, a unique tool has been developed to help schools work through the process of assessing where they are at in terms of their school culture and plan for the future. Planning Inclusive Cultures in Schools (PICS) explores the practice of inclusion in any school from many different perspectives (www.pics-esm.ca). Representative members of the school community (administration, teachers, parents, support staff) develop a profile of the current school culture and gather the quantitative and qualitative data to support the school planning process. With Creating Student Success, PICS helps participants work through a series of domains and indicator statements addressing both the more macro-level school processes as well as more specific classroom and instruction practices. It has been extensively used in River East Transcona School Division, as well as within elementary, middle and high schools across the province.



Some important considerations as teachers, school administrators and school division leaders grow in their understanding and practices of inclusion include the following methodology-related objectives, as outlined by UNESCO (2013):

- Taking a systematic approach to welcoming diversity and identifying barriers to inclusive education;
- Promoting and facilitating learner-centred teaching;
- Employing interactive and varied teaching and learning approaches, and avoiding the overuse of methods

which are inappropriate for some learners;

- Using approaches to teaching which encourage teachers to innovate and adapt curricula and materials to local contexts;
- Engaging in formative and authentic forms of assessment;
- Developing personalized learning approaches for students;
- Ensuring good quality supervision and support for student teachers;
- Ensuring extensive teaching practice (practicum); and

- Engaging in reactive and reflexive teaching practice to enhance inclusive teaching competencies.⁷

There are emerging schools of thought and action helping teachers build their competencies as classroom mentors and leaders in learning. Supporting our teachers so they have a sense of their own capacity to teach their students, not just what to learn but more importantly, how to learn, can be facilitated through learning about concepts like the three-block model of universal design in learning⁸ and teaching students versus curriculum in ways that respect their learning styles, developing competencies that will serve as they grow and develop.

As parents and community members, it is our duty to appreciate our education system and support our teachers, especially as they strive to create innovative and inclusive environments for all of our children. Working together to appreciate the challenges and rewards of inclusive education can only help us as we move forward with enacting the *Accessibility for Manitobans Act*, reduce complaints of discrimination and move towards a society where everyone has a place, a valued role and are appreciated for their contributions. ■

Anne Kresta is a disability advocate, inclusive education consultant and partner in Education Solutions Manitoba.



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Notes

1. The Manitoba Human Rights Commission and Human Rights Adjudication Panel ANNUAL REPORT 2015.
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Teaching an Indigenous Language



ABOVE: Celina Dumas and Lily Moose with the school's welcome sign in the front lobby of the school.

LEFT: Mrs. Cooper's Grade 2 Cree bulletin board celebrating I Love to Read month.

By Celina Dumas, Wapanohk Community School

Wapanohk Community School has been a leader in teaching an Indigenous language. The School District of Mystery Lake designated Wapanohk Community School as a Cree bilingual school in 2001 to ensure the preservation and revitalization of the language. Cree is the dominant language in northern Manitoba and is the main language spoken in surrounding communities. The dialects differ, but this does not hinder the ability for individuals to communicate with one another.

Today's society values the teaching of an Indigenous language, and the importance of language revitalization is at the forefront of many educational systems. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) has recommended that Indigenous languages be included in school curriculum. The teaching of Indigenous language is a difficult process than other types of learning, and the ability to speak an Indigenous language is somewhat dependent on exposure at home. A child's first teacher is their parent. If the language is not taught at home, it will

be difficult to teach at school, although it is possible.

Children are excited to learn the Cree language and teachers are excited to share their knowledge. Teaching an Indigenous language takes determination and effort by all to ensure students are successful.

Indigenous language teaching at Wapanohk Community School has been a difficult process, but the successes are rewarding for students, parents and educators. The language educators take great pride in educating students in the proper use of language. The English alphabet sounds dominate the learners' language use and the work begins in introducing the Indigenous sounds. A learner must change the English speaking brain to an Indigenous speaking brain as Indigenous languages do not have the same sounds as the English phonological system.

The Indigenous language teaching requires many hours of preparation because the language teachers create their own resources for use in the classroom. The School District of Mystery Lake is fortunate to have a Cree language co-ordinator who assists teachers in creating and producing resources to make teaching the language an easier process. The resources assist in reaching the diverse learning

styles of all students, which include those with no prior knowledge of Cree. Daily exposure to the Cree language is rewarding for all individuals who are part of the learning community.

The Cree educators work together to ensure language learning is successful not only in their classrooms but in the whole school. Students at Wapanohk Community School are exposed to Cree on a daily basis using various strategies, including morning announcements, greeting students and giving directions in Cree. Students are encouraged to learn the language by listening and speaking it throughout the day. They are encouraged to be proud of their efforts in language learning, but it is also important that these efforts are recognized throughout the school.

Wapanohk Community School is a diverse community of Cree speakers. The school has one Cree class designated from Kindergarten to Grade 8, and two Cree-as-a-second-language teachers.

The tremendous support among this group of people is apparent in the building, of which the language is heard and seen throughout. Children are no longer hesitant to speak their language and many take great pride in sharing their language knowledge. Caregivers are

often quite pleased to walk into the building and hear their children speak Cree. Many have commented that it is wonderful to teach the Cree language in today's educational system as they did not have that luxury.

The goal of Wapanohk Community School is to revitalize and preserve the language, not only to the students, but also to the school staff and the community members of Thompson. The Cree co-ordinator offers Cree classes to adults and is well received by various community members. It is difficult to reach out to parents to join the classes as language learning was not permitted when they attended school. Various evening programs are made available to community members to entice them into the school and to make them feel welcomed. The evening programs never disappoint as the Cree language is being used, throughout the evening in the conversations. The simple directions or stories are shared in both languages, but the use of Cree has a larger impact.

The impact of the language allows for bonding between individuals in the Cree culture. Many people will begin to experiment with the Cree language and learn how to say certain terms. This is success because the questions

around language are being asked. The best form of language learning is through daily oral conversations with daily repetition. History proves many Indigenous cultural beliefs and traditions have been passed down through oral communication. Language is the base of culture; without language, you have no culture.

Today, we have the opportunity to revitalize Indigenous languages through the children of various Indigenous groups. It is important to realize that Indigenous language educators are also learning to teach language. In recent history, educational institutions did not offer courses in teaching Indigenous languages. The teaching of Indigenous language is new in today's schools and is now gaining much more interest in school divisions. Generations before have always learned their language with hands-on teaching.

Indigenous language teaching is an opportunity for today's youth to reconnect with their cultural identities using language. The school offers a unique group of educators who all have the same goal: preserving language through education. Cree language is a concept that can be picked up quickly. All individuals interested in learning must have daily exposure. Students are exposed to the language through personal

experiences using techniques to meet various learning styles. A language learner will succeed with encouragement, praise and continuous opportunities.

Ininimowin po kăkinaw kwăyask kapacîta. Kêkac kiwănitānaw ininimowin mana kăkinaw ē-atoskatama. Awăsisak poko kăkisinomăkîcik ka âsi ininimowicik îka kawănîta. Wî-nawaw awî motâtăcik ininimowin. Kwănipō tătō kîsikaw ininimowin awăsisak ka pîtakwa êkosi poko ka-isi ayămîcik.

Here is the English translation of this Cree paragraph: All of us must continue to use the Cree language. It was almost lost to us, but we are all working to revitalize the language. We must teach our children the language to ensure it is not lost. Our children are our future and it will be these children who will carry the language in years to come. Our children must hear Cree daily to ensure they are learning and using the language. ■

Celina Dumas is a Vice-Principal at Wapanohk Community School in Thompson, Manitoba. Wapanohk Community School is part of the School District of Mystery Lake.



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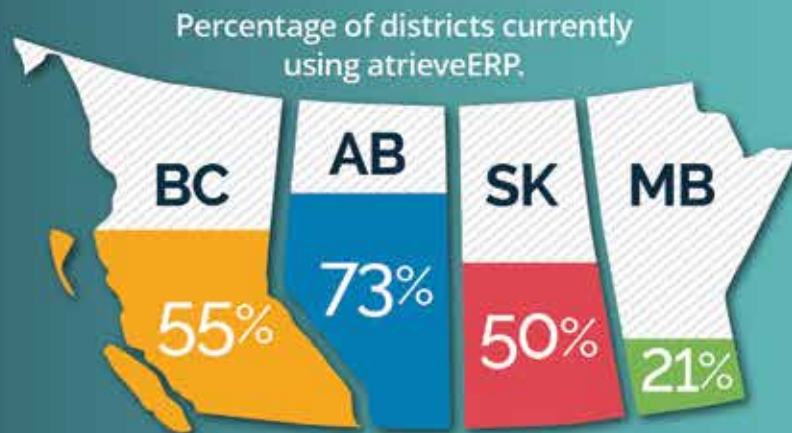
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