

# Promising Practices and Models for Indigenous Education Survey

September 2016

## Louis Riel School Division

- 1) Promising practices or models that your school division has developed or established in order to better serve the needs and promote the best interests of Indigenous students and communities in Manitoba?

Timeline graphic of the evolution of programming, events, and initiatives of Indigenous Education in LRSD:

<https://www.lrsd.net/Leadership-blog/Documents/INFOGRAPHIC.Indigenous%20Education%20in%20LRSD.09.29.2015.pdf>

### **Mentorship Program**

The LRSD Mentorship Program initiative matches high schools with elementary schools for a lunch mentorship program. From September until December, our high school students meet bi-weekly to look at leadership and culture from an Indigenous perspective. The high school students will work with the Indigenous Education team to develop programming for the elementary schools that focuses on the Seven Teachings, the Medicine Wheel, Indigenous crafts and cultural activities (storytelling, drumming, beading, jigging, and games). From January to May, each mentorship group will have seven sessions where students will have lunch together in a sharing circle as mentors and mentees.

### **ECHO Program**

ECHO offers a cultural enrichment classroom, with smaller class sizes and an Indigenous teacher, where students stay together as a group for their four core subjects in Grade 9. ECHO classrooms make the transition from elementary to high school easier by creating an enrichment space of cultural belonging for students of First Nations, Métis or Inuit ancestry, while also welcoming students who choose to be taught through an Indigenous perspective. An initiative of the Indigenous Department, ECHO was created in partnership with Dakota Collegiate, Nelson McIntyre Collegiate and Windsor Park Collegiate to increase student engagement for Grade 9 students, as they make the jump to high school. ECHO is currently starting its fifth year and as programming grows and evolves, it looks slightly different from school to school. The goals of the program however, remain constant—to provide a supportive community to welcome students transitioning to high school, provide core courses enriched through a deeper focus on Indigenous perspectives, increase belonging and community, strengthen family relationships, and enrich student learning and engagement through

traditional teachings, supports, and opportunities. At Glenlawn Collegiate, for example, where the approach does not involve a distinct cohort, the ECHO teacher also nurtures a unique relationship with his students based on cultural similarities and values.

<https://www.lrsd.net/What-We-Offer/Indigenous%20Education/ECHO/Pages/Default.aspx>

### **Curriculum Enrichment Program**

The Interactive classroom is a space used for student and staff learning; there is space for activities, a sharing circle, and hundreds of artifacts for students and teachers to explore and learn from that extend the programming in schools. Each year, we bring over 150 classes of middle years students to RDC for a half-day of activities. The goal of this program is to provide engaging learning opportunities for students and to build greater teacher understanding. The sessions focus on specific curricular clusters. In 2014-2015, we were in year three of a three-year cycle, focusing on Grade 4 and Grade 6 social studies clusters. The program is now in a two year cycle focusing on numeracy and science. Teachers who participate in the program receive a half-day professional learning session focused on incorporating Indigenous perspectives and knowledge systems into classrooms.

### **Indigenous Youth Leadership**

The “Circle of ReconciliACTION” meets monthly. The group consists of 30 Indigenous students representing all LRSD high schools. Our students need to have their voices heard and need to be leaders within our community. Through traditional teachings, group activities, guest presenters, and fellowship students become equipped to speak up and find their voice. In the 2015 – 2016 school year, the focus of the group was to create and present at a youth leadership conference. The group is continuing this year and will continue to explore their culture, leadership, and a deepened sense of belonging together and in the community.

### **Youth Leadership Conference**

On April 28th, 2016, LRSD hosted the “Our Road to ReconciliACTION” conference at the Indian Metis Friendship Centre. The day was planned by 30 Indigenous students representing all high schools in LRSD.

Over 300 Indigenous and non-Indigenous high school students participated in the day’s activities which focused on Indigenous perspectives/ways of knowing, our shared history, and moving forward together to create a better Canada.

The day began its opening ceremonies with words from Elder Mary Courchene, Superintendent Mr. Duane Brothers and Collège Jeanne-Sauvé student Ethan Courchene.

Mary Black and Strife Asaakeezis provided entertainment through slam poetry and music, while Nikki Komaksiutiksak gave students a performance and short lesson on throat singing.

Throughout the day students attended presentations on various different aspects of Indigenous culture. Leg wrestling, drumming, smudging and dancing were just a few of the student-facilitated stations that offered attendees the opportunity to learn and actively engage in traditional Indigenous cultural activities.

<http://www.lrsd.net/news/pages/indigenous-education-student-conference.aspx>

### **Family Centres**

The team works closely with our preschool Family Centres, located in eight schools. Through outreach and programming, we are building relationships between families and schools. Each of the centers run programs specifically for Indigenous students and parents.

### **Move to Marion School**

Beginning in September 2016, the Indigenous education team will be located out of Marion School. In the past the team and programming was centered at the Rene Deleurme Centre. This move brings the team and resources closer to a community with a high number of self-identified students and families. While supporting the school, the team will be working alongside the staff to build capacity in infusing indigenous knowledge perspectives into curriculum and school culture. The goal is that Marion School and other schools within the division will create communities where Indigenous culture and knowledge systems are celebrated and part of the fabric of all aspects of instruction, school culture, and interactions with parents and community.

### **Elder in Residence**

This year we have welcomed Elder Jules Lavallee to the LRSD team in the role of Elder in Residence. Jules will work with students and teachers in all schools sharing traditional Indigenous knowledge while working in schools and classrooms. Jules also works alongside the Indigenous Education Team and divisional leadership in providing guidance and support for programming and planning.

### **Parent Program**

The Indigenous Department offers community programming which is facilitated by two cultural Integration Specialist/Community Support Workers. On every Wednesday afternoon, a weekly parent's group is held at Lavallee School from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Child care is available through a partnership with Lavallee School Family Centre.

The program provides a safe place where parents can meet and discuss issues around parenting and staff members are able to assist parents to support their children's successful journey throughout their schooling.

Throughout the year, parents are able to learn sewing, arts & crafts, beading and making traditional Indigenous clothing (such as moccasins, gauntlets and regalia). Families are also exposed to cultural teachings and have received presentations from various community organizations.

The Parent Program is accessible to families across Louis Riel School Division. Throughout the year, we welcome over 40 families through our doors from a variety of schools.

### **Community Based Steering Committee**

We are in the process of developing a Community Based Steering Committee consisting of LRSD administration and staff, Frank Deer from the University of Manitoba, Elders, parents, students, and community members. This committee will focus on programming and vision for the Indigenous education initiatives in LRSD.

### **Treaty Education**

In 2014 we partnered with the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba for two two-day Treaty Education training sessions. Each of the 40 schools will have been represented by an administrator and up to two teachers. In total, 120 teachers and administrators have been trained in the Treaty Education materials.

Moving forward the LRSD is working to develop a continuum of growth that reflects an emergent to proficient level of understanding for all grade levels. A team member will be devoted to help begin the process of implementing K – 12 Treaty Education in all schools. Our goal is to build capacity within the classroom setting. We will provide the necessary supports to learn about our shared history and how we are connected through the Treaty relationship.

### **Indigenous Languages Programming**

LRSD is committed to introducing Indigenous languages programming. In February we met with parents from the community, school administrators, and teachers to begin exploring what this will become. This year we have welcomed a full-time teacher to focus on Indigenous languages and instruction. The short term goal is to have basic Indigenous languages programming beginning in 4 elementary schools. The long term goal is to have an Indigenous languages bilingual program available to all students in the same way we do for our official languages. We will continue to work with the community, Elders, representatives from the University of Manitoba, and LRSD staff to explore, plan, and evolve this programming.

### **Land Based Learning**

We are beginning to look at deepening our land based learning and providing students spaces and time to connect with their environment. A team consisting of divisional principals and coordinators are focusing our efforts in providing authentic experiences

for students. We have begun this year with medicine harvesting and trips to the Boreal Forest Outdoor Classroom. We will continue to learn from what other programs and schools are doing across Manitoba and internationally.

### **Outdoor Teaching Area**

In cooperation with Elders and Traditional Knowledge Keepers LRSD is planning an outdoor teaching area. This area will include a Sweat Lodge, Tipi, Sharing Circle, and traditional plants and medicines. We are aiming to have this project underway and operational by June 2017. This will be a place that will be accessible for the LRSD and surrounding community.

### **BSSAP**

LRSD has been working with the Building Student Success with Aboriginal Parents (BSSAP) Program. Five schools share in the grant funds to provide programming and opportunities to connect with our Indigenous families. Examples of activities are Powwow Clubs, family feasts, and teaching nights.

### **Graduation Powwow**

On June 13, 2016, the Louis Riel School Division hosted our first Graduation Powwow at Dakota Collegiate.

Over 600 members of the LRSD community were in attendance to celebrate the 33 graduates representing high schools from all over the Division. The celebrations were brought to life by 115 dancers, including LRSD students and Powwow dancers from across the Province, alongside 10 drum groups who shared music and passion in honour of the graduates.

The evening was hosted by emcee Coco Ray Stevenson, prominent Indigenous performer and musician. Wayne Ruby acted as the Arena Director, keeping spirits and dancing direction lively. Walking Wolf Singers led performances as the Host Drum.

Food was provided by the Louis Riel Arts and Technology Centre (ATC) Culinary Arts students, who prepared a meal of stew, bannock and wild blueberry crumble. ATC students in Broadcast Media also provided video streaming, bringing the Powwow live into the homes of community members all around LRSD.

- 2) Promising practices or models where there **has been** significant collaboration and success between the early, middle, and senior years (nursery to Grade 12) and post-secondary sectors (college and/or university) that has better served the needs and promote the best interests of Indigenous students and communities in Manitoba?

### **U of M/Victor Wyatt Enrichment**

From September to December 2015, 12 Grade 7 students from Victor Wyatt took part in afterschool and in-school activities such as sage harvesting, Indigenous games and

hoop dancing, snowshoeing, drum making and a closing feast. They also visited the Youth BIOlab at St. Boniface Hospital Research Centre.

Each visit included the accompaniment of a western science teacher or educator and an Indigenous Elder or expert versed in traditional or spiritual ways. For example, the students examined the ecosystem of the Boreal forest and the classification of plants with a former biology teacher, and learned about the ways those same plants would have been used by Indigenous peoples from an elder.

The program was conceived of by McMillan, along with Corey Kapilik, an Education alumnus who is now the Coordinator of Indigenous Education for the Louis Riel School Division, and Tim MacKay, Principal at Victor H.L. Wyatt School.

<http://news.umanitoba.ca/outreach-program-promotes-indigenous-discovery/>

### **Scholar in Residence**

Frank Deer, U of M Director of Indigenous Initiatives, is the LRSD Scholar in residence. In this role Frank sits on select divisional committees and is a consultant for divisional Indigenous Education initiatives.

### **LRSD/U of M Post-Baccalaureate Program**

In 2013 the PBDE in Indigenous Education cohort between the University of Manitoba and LRSD began. The last class ended in December of 2015. Teachers and administrators from LRSD have participated in this cohort. We are now in conversations with the University of Manitoba to begin an Indigenous Education Master's Degree cohort program.

### **CATEP**

LRSD has partnered with the University of Winnipeg to provide opportunities to enter the teaching profession. We have sponsored 6 LRSD Educational Assistants into the program for this year and will expand to include more next year.

### **U of M/LRSD Indigenous Education Teacher Candidate Cohort**

LRSD has partnered with the University of Manitoba to offer an Indigenous Education Cohort for teacher candidates during their school practicums in LRSD schools. The goal is to support new teachers in infusing Indigenous perspectives and knowledge systems into the practicum work. Each year we have up to 6 students who select this approach. The teacher candidates have access to the LRSD Indigenous Education team, professional development, and resources.

### **U of M Teacher Education Program Advisory Committee**

LRSD Coordinator of Indigenous Education sits on the committee responsible for the development of the U of M Indigenous Teacher Education Program.

- 3) Promising practices or models where there may be significant success in terms of **potential** collaboration between the early, middle, and senior years (nursery to

grade 12) and post-secondary (university and/or college) sectors that might better serve the needs and promote the best interests of Indigenous students and communities in Manitoba?

### **Red River College Aboriginal Languages Program Advisory Committee**

LRSD Coordinator of Indigenous Education sits on the committee responsible for Indigenous language programming and development.

### **Masters Degree in Indigenous Education**

LRSD is currently working with the University of Manitoba to develop a Masters Degree in Indigenous Education. We have a number of teachers and administrators who are committed to this initiative once it becomes available. We will continue to explore this opportunity with the University of Manitoba as well as other Universities.

- 4) If applicable, please describe any formal evaluation(s) your school division has conducted to measure the success of your Indigenous initiatives, policies, programs, practices?

The LRSD School Board has adopted language around Indigenous student success. We have been on a journey looking at data as it relates to Indigenous student success. We are looking to where we are successful and where we need to improve. The goal is to eliminate the gap between Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students.

We welcome the new framework for reporting to the province. We are further examining the data at our three day Leadership Council Retreat in October looking at evidence in the Indigenous demographic cohort.

A study on the ECHO program was done after the first year of programming. This study collected data from teachers, students, and parents. This data informed us of the successes and challenges in the early stages of the program. Another study will begin this year to help inform our practice and planning moving forward as we are now into the 5<sup>th</sup> year of ECHO programming.

- 5) If applicable, what feedback has your school division received from Indigenous partners and/or communities on your Indigenous initiatives, policies, programs, practices?

LRSD has received positive feedback regarding our policies, programs, and practices from Government, Universities, other school divisions, Indigenous organizations, and community. We work to be supportive of the work happening throughout the province. We have been a part of a trusting relationship between partners that has been reciprocal for the benefit of our students and community at large. It is a coordinated effort where we can share successful practices and avoid redundancy.

In the fall 2015 edition of the MASS Journal, we highlighted the work done for Indigenous students, families, and communities in LRSD.

<http://www.lrsd.net/Leadership-blog/Documents/Corey%20Kapilik,%20Steve%20Lawire,%20Christian%20Michalik.pdf>

