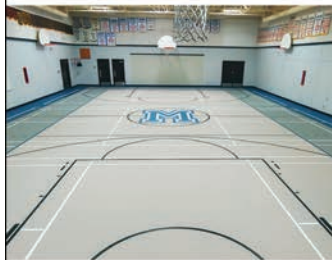


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The official magazine of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents



**PART 2**



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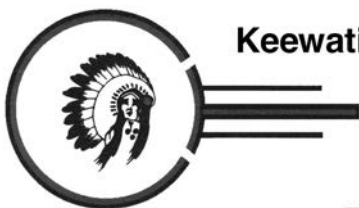


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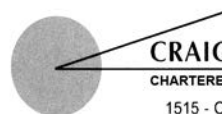
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**On the cover:** The Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 editions of the *MASS Journal* will provide an opportunity for the province's 37 school divisions to share their stories and successes. What a wonderful way to celebrate public education, our staff, our students, and our communities!



**A**s you sit down to read the Spring edition of the *MASS Journal*, our system is in this weird space they call “endemic.” A view into schools shows us changes in place that indicate the pandemic is in its final stages and yet we are still sorting cases of COVID-19 in our school communities. What is evidenced when reading the *Journal* is that the level of commitment to our students and communities has grown and has been strengthened throughout the pandemic and there are positive learning experiences to celebrate.

Literacy, numeracy, and relationships are foundational to the work we do and the *Journal* continues to provide evidence of this. Land-based math, improving teacher numeracy fluency, and the efforts that school division trustees and senior leadership have made to engage with stakeholders to grow reconciliation, improve educational outcomes for students, and to stay focused on the positive when things get tough are all highlights.

Support is also a key term we hear in education. One division will share their journey in developing and implementing a “wrap around” protocol to support families who face complicated life situations. Support for school leaders and staff in professional learning and collective efficacy also leads to greater outcomes for students. Roving campuses and providing technology are two other ways to support learners that are highlighted as local divisional initiatives.

Out of necessity in the pandemic, some school divisions embraced the outdoors but now, based on the positive impact the outdoor learning spaces had on both the students and staff, learning outdoors continues. Stories will also be shared of the connections between career and technical education and the classroom.

Each time a *MASS Journal* is released, it affirms the innovation that occurs in school divisions across Manitoba. Thank you for your daily work in leveling the playing field for our students. Your commitment to the students of Manitoba is evidenced every day and by sharing your stories with us we get an even closer look at the initiatives. Congratulations to Winnipeg School Division on your historic milestone of educating youth for 150 years! To all of you, the system, and more importantly the educational leaders of MASS, thank you.

**Krista Curry**  
Co-President



**A**lors que vous vous apprêtez à lire le numéro du printemps du *MASS Journal*, notre système scolaire entre dans un espace étrange appelé « endémie ». Un aperçu de la situation des écoles nous permet de constater des changements qui indiquent que la pandémie en est à ses dernières phases et pourtant, nos communautés scolaires rapportent toujours des cas de COVID-19. Ce qui ressort de la lecture du *Journal*, c’est que le niveau d’engagement à l’égard de nos élèves et des communautés a augmenté et s’est renforcé tout au long de la pandémie, et que les expériences d’apprentissage positives méritent d’être soulignées.

Le *Journal* continue de fournir la preuve que la littératie, la numératie et les relations sont essentielles au travail que nous accomplissons. Parmi les sujets mis en valeur figurent l’enseignement des mathématiques selon le savoir traditionnel autochtone, l’amélioration des compétences en mathématiques des enseignants et les efforts qu’ont déployés les commissaires et la haute direction des divisions scolaires pour mobiliser les intervenants et les amener à faire progresser la réconciliation, à améliorer les résultats scolaires des élèves et à rester concentrés sur les aspects positifs quand les choses deviennent difficiles.

Nous entendons également le terme clé « soutien » dans le secteur de l’éducation. Une division raconte son expérience de l’élaboration et de la mise en œuvre d’un protocole de « services globaux » visant à soutenir les familles qui vivent des situations complexes. Le soutien apporté à la direction et au personnel d’établissements d’apprentissage professionnel ainsi qu’à l’efficacité collective a aussi mené à de meilleurs résultats pour les élèves. Les campus itinérants et l’offre de services technologiques sont deux autres façons de soutenir les apprenants qui sont présentées comme des initiatives locales des divisions.

Par la force des choses dans le contexte de la pandémie, des divisions scolaires ont adopté l’enseignement à l’extérieur qui se poursuit désormais en raison de l’effet positif qu’ont eu les lieux d’apprentissage en plein air sur les élèves et le personnel. Des anecdotes sur les liens qui existent entre carrière, enseignement technique et salle de classe sont également rapportées.

Chaque publication du *MASS Journal* confirme l’innovation dont font preuve les divisions scolaires dans l’ensemble du Manitoba. Merci pour votre travail quotidien pour établir des règles de jeu équitables pour nos élèves. Votre engagement envers les élèves du Manitoba est constaté chaque jour et le fait de partager vos histoires avec nous permet d’examiner ces initiatives d’encore plus près. Félicitations à la division scolaire de Winnipeg qui franchit une étape historique : 150 années consacrées à l’éducation des jeunes! Merci à tous et à toutes, au système scolaire, et surtout à la direction de la MASS.

**Krista Curry**  
Coprésidente



**T**he Spring 2022 edition of the *MASS Journal* continues with the theme of *Celebrating Public Education* through the eyes of school divisions/districts in the province. While there have been many challenges throughout the year, the unwavering commitment of supporting students in their education has been a priority for members of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS). Both the Fall 2021 *Journal* and this Spring 2022 edition provide a vivid example of the many leadership roles that MASS members provide in the province of Manitoba.

The year in review conjures up many images in one's mind, including the ongoing impact of COVID-19, complete with variants. The opportunity to engage the majority of students in classrooms rather than remotely was positive. The gradual return to comprehensive programming in all subject areas and many more opportunities to celebrate together have been energizing. An increased acknowledgement and understanding about the role that schools play in the mental health and wellbeing of young people have provided opportunities to support students and staff in new ways.

The MASS Statement of Beliefs in Public Education reminds us that one of the purposes of public education is "to empower each child with the knowledge and skills to live a positive fulfilling life in a manner consistent with acceptance of others and respect for democratic values in a diverse society." There is no time in recent history where leading with integrity, teaching, and learning about ways in which to support each other have been as important. We all have a role to play.

As we move toward the end of the school year the opportunity to reflect and celebrate our collective learning journeys is important. Thank you to each of you for your dedication, leadership, and ongoing commitment to education in Manitoba.

**Barb Isaak**  
Executive Director

**L**e numéro du printemps 2022 du *MASS Journal* poursuit sur le thème *Célébrons l'éducation publique* du point de vue des divisions et des districts scolaires de la province. Bien que nous ayons été confrontés à de nombreux défis tout au long de l'année, l'engagement inébranlable à soutenir les élèves dans leur éducation est demeuré une priorité pour les membres de la Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS). Tant l'édition d'automne 2021 du *Journal* que celle du printemps 2022 fournissent des exemples éloquentes des nombreux rôles de leadership que remplissent les membres de la MASS au Manitoba.

Le bilan de l'année fait surgir à l'esprit de nombreuses images, notamment les répercussions continues de la pandémie de COVID-19, sans oublier les variants. La possibilité d'enseigner à la majorité des élèves dans les salles de classe plutôt qu'à distance a été une bonne chose. Le retour progressif à un programme complet dans toutes les matières et beaucoup d'autres occasions de célébrer ensemble ont eu un effet stimulant. Une reconnaissance et une compréhension accrues du rôle que jouent les écoles dans la santé mentale et le bien-être des jeunes ont donné l'occasion de soutenir autrement les élèves et le personnel.

Le « Statement of Beliefs in Public Education » de la MASS nous rappelle que l'un des objectifs que poursuit l'éducation publique est « de donner à chaque enfant les connaissances et les compétences nécessaires pour vivre une vie positive et enrichissante d'une manière compatible avec l'acceptation des autres et le respect des valeurs démocratiques dans une société diversifiée ». Jamais dans l'histoire récente il n'a été aussi important de diriger avec intégrité, d'enseigner et de découvrir des façons de se soutenir mutuellement. Nous avons tous un rôle à jouer.

À l'approche de la fin de l'année scolaire, il importe de prendre le temps de réfléchir à notre parcours d'apprentissage collectif et de le souligner. Je tiens à vous remercier tous et toutes pour votre dévouement, votre leadership et votre engagement continu envers l'éducation au Manitoba.

**Barb Isaak**  
Directrice générale

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**Karen Wohlgenuth**  
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## Mission:

MASS provides leadership for public education by advocating in the best interests of learners, and supports its members through professional services.

**MASS believes that our mandate is to be *leaders of learning*, in our local school systems and in the broader domains of provincial, national, and global public education. MASS believes a quality education empowers the whole child to constructively participate in global society.**

We model learning that is:

- Active and visible;
- Based on robust research;
- Tested through purposeful application in the field; and
- Evaluated using a wide range of meaningful data.

We take responsibility for our own continuous learning and the learning of everyone we lead:

- Creating and fostering safe, supportive, inclusive, and challenging environments;
- Ensuring essential learning for each and every child; and
- Preparing others to go beyond our own learning.

We are guided by our learning in shaping policy and practice to achieve what is best for the children in our care.

**MASS believes that *improved achievement and well-being for all of our students requires a shared commitment to raising both equity and quality.***

- A conscious and persistent commitment to equity, system-wide and across sectors, leads to poverty reduction, greater inclusion, and an appreciation for the riches that diversity brings.
- A purposeful and sustained commitment to quality education for every student increases the capacity for teaching, learning, and leading throughout the system.
- A strong grounding in literacy and numeracy and a rich learning experience involving inquiry, curiosity, creativity, and artistic expression enables all students to achieve success and to flourish in life, academics, and career.
- A respect for and openness to authentic youth voices and support for meaningful student action are critical for building capacity and self-efficacy in our students.

**MASS actively works towards *equity and quality throughout the public education system, with a special focus on three action areas:***

- 
1. Early Learning
  2. Indigenous Education
  3. Mental Health and Well-Being



The **Early Learning Committee** will take leadership to ensure that MASS:

- Advocates for full implementation of the Calls to Action in the MASS position paper on Early Childhood Education.

The **Indigenous Education Committee** will take leadership to ensure that MASS:

- Builds capacity in MASS and school divisions to address the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action.
- Promotes ever increasing academic achievement, graduation, school completion, and positive life outcomes for Indigenous students, informed by collective inquiry into evidence.
- Actively supports the teaching of Indigenous perspectives, corrective history and culture, and the use of Indigenous languages.

The **Mental Health and Well-Being Committee** will take leadership to ensure that MASS:

- Advocates for an implementation of a comprehensive provincial Children and Youth Mental Health Strategy.
- Collaborates with The Education for Sustainable Well-Being Research Group at the University of Manitoba and Manitoba Education and Training to develop tools and indicators for assessing the well-being and well-becoming of students in schools.
- Pursues inter-sectoral liaisons with public and mental health organizations and agencies.
- Contributes to a national voice on mental health through CASSA and through input into the Canadian Mental Health Strategy.
- Promotes Mental Health Literacy in mental health for all educators and pre-service educators.
- Sharing of Mental Health & Well-being paper with community and provincial partners. ■

# Democracy At Work

By Jason Young and Krista Reynolds, Beautiful Plains School Division

**W**hen school divisions write in the *MASS Journal*, we take pride that our work is grounded in what matters most for our students. Every decision made is focused on helping our students get the best education possible. Behind every decision, there are thousands of people potentially impacted. These decisions require thoughtful dialogue, listening to seek understanding, and supportive leadership across the system. This is democracy at work. Everyone needs someone to lean on. In other words, for a system to be effective, it requires a high level of interdependence.

School boards play a critical role in creating this interdependence. Our goal for this article is to highlight what we appreciate about our school board in Beautiful Plains School Division. We know we will miss some qualities of what other school leaders do, however our hope is that it will help capture a glimpse of what we value and deeply appreciate. We will share their responsibilities to our students and staff, but first you should know about their character.

The Beautiful Plains School Board is a diverse and incredible group of people who care deeply for our students, staff, and communities. They work extremely hard to make the best decision for our students (not the easy decisions), which is not always the most popular. Of our six trustees, all have had children go through the school division, however only two have children currently in school. Someone might ask “why is this valuable?” We appreciate the

perspective of current, past, and future parents because of the ever-changing place education has in their lives.

We believe that every member of our community has something to offer our system (parents or not) and the diversity of our trustees help us continue to improve and grow. Their deep commitment ensures that they do what they feel is best for all our students. This is most evident when they discuss and debate decisions of our system and there is no indicator of what community they reside in, just a focus on betterment for all. Their decision-making process always starts with the question, “How will this help our kids?”

When needs are identified in our system, the school board responds thoughtfully, putting our students first. For example, when a group of students brought forward the need for increased computer programming, our board supported them by shifting funds to resources that create coding in classrooms. When our teachers flagged a concern for early intervention speech and language needs for our youngest children, our trustees allocated supports for an additional clinician.

Our school board approves courses of study as recommended by Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning and have added other programs and resources when we see a need in our local communities. The Beautiful Plains School Division apprenticeship program, extra itinerant staff for our colony schools, and a divisional psychologist are just some of the resources our board has set into

motion. They have the final say in planning, expansion, improvement, financing, construction, maintenance, use, and disposition of the schools in the division. They bring more voices to the table to ensure that decisions are made based on the best information brought forward, and are responsible for evaluating educational programs to determine the effectiveness with which the schools are achieving their educational purposes.

The board is the main support to the senior administration. They expect accountability across the system and help develop policies to ensure effectiveness. They are the people who our public elect to do what is in the best interest of all students and the communities they serve. They understand that everyone cares deeply about their children and with that often comes heightened emotions. We know that democracy is messy work, but our board understands how to deliver even when times are tough. They are critical in helping ensure that our teachers can focus on teaching while the board focuses on challenging decisions.

Our board does not get or ever ask for any public recognition. They simply work behind the scenes on behalf of every student for our school division, so we wish to thank them for all that they do. We hope that they recognize how important they are to our system and public education. ■

---

*Jason Young is the Superintendent, and Krista Reynolds is the Assistant Superintendent for Beautiful Plains School Division.*



# Doing What Works:

## Using Wraparound to Support Students and Families

By Shauna Hamm and Jonathan Toews, Border Land School Division



**T**o experience resilience, children and families with complex problems need complex solutions. In Border Land School Division (BLSD), High Fidelity Wraparound supports children and families who are experiencing multiple, persistent, complex problems so that they can have better lives and be active participants in their community.

One participant supported by High Fidelity Wraparound in BLSD commented that her team meetings made her think more and kept her strong and on track. She said her meetings helped her learn about her strengths, which has had a positive impact on her entire family. "Since I started to use Wraparound, I notice I'm getting close to my kids. I used to not pay much attention to them, like when I was growing up."

By connecting regularly with formal and informal supports, this participant has achieved her goal of staying strong and healthy so she can be the main caregiver for her grandson, who is thriving. Despite experiencing many life challenges during the Wraparound process, she regularly observed "Did I really do all that? I don't see myself as doing all that, but when I see it on paper, then I realize I do!"

Ongoing communication with her supporters continues; she has learned to self-advocate and problem solve. This has improved the quality of her day-to-day life and has resulted in a significant reduction in reactive and non-voluntary services. The participant's family and natural supporters have become her safety net!

In BLSD, High Fidelity Wraparound work is supported by a collaborative, strength-based culture and strong partnerships between service systems. A local Community Mobilization Team was established in 2015. Through this

team, community partners collaborate to understand and meet the needs of community members, and to support front-line workers in working together. BLSD is committed to providing High Fidelity Wraparound training for facilitators, with the capacity to provide coaching within the division. High Fidelity Wraparound Core Values and Practice Principles are evident within the school division and communities, including application of person-centered, resilience, and strength-based approaches in support for students and their families.

Social workers in BLSD provide direct support to families. They use a person-centered, strength-based approach to provide parental support, liaise between home and school, and provide advocacy. Social Workers collaborate with community partners to strengthen the network of support for students and their families. When families have experienced multiple, persistent challenges that have not been resolved despite support from three or more social service systems, they are presented with the opportunity to try something different, which is Wraparound.

Wraparound is always a voluntary service where participants can choose who is part of their team. Team members focus on hearing and understanding the participant's perspective, including hopes and dreams for the future, goals, and what they need help with. Team members are invited to contribute ideas to help the participant meet their needs and work toward their goals. Participants choose the ideas they like best and, with the help of their team, plan for next steps. Moving forward, every team meeting revisits the participant's hopes, dreams, and strengths, and includes brainstorming and action planning to keep working toward their goals.



*Little Laughing Buffalo is the reason this grandma gets up every day. He is her North Star in her healing journey.*

High Fidelity Wraparound makes life better for participants and transforms perspectives of service providers and helpers. One team member said, "Wraparound facilitated a shift away from a service delivery model focused on transactional service... the participant's skills and strengths were frequently celebrated during the process, which contributed to their positive self-image and confidence in their abilities to overcome future challenges. I learned how powerful these actions could be for participants who have been supported for years through a 'needs' lens, doing reactive work." ■

***Shauna Hamm is the Border Land School Division Student Services Manager. Jonathan Toews is Assistant Superintendent for Border Land School Division.***



# A Model of Continuous Improvement

By Mathew Gustafson, Brandon School Division

Over the years, I have watched my children participate in different activities in sports and music. A common method that is employed by coaches and instructors is using observational evidence to inform their practices or sessions. The coach or instructor adjusts and focuses their planning and action through their direct observation of the participants in the practices, games, and performances. A coach may be judged by wins and losses, but the true impact of their work is seen in how they build the capacity of their players. Subsequently, when the coach is able to build the capacity of their players, they will see improved results in the wins and losses.

In school systems, there can be the temptation to judge the success of the system through broad measures, such as graduation rates. However, if one accepts that the best way to impact student achievement is through the capacity of the adults who work with the students, our focus and planning should allow us to examine our actions and the observable impact of those actions on student achievement. To accomplish this, Brandon School Division wanted a model of Continuous Improvement that:

- Promotes an organizational growth mindset;
- Recognizes that staff have varied levels of experience;
- Utilizes purposeful learning experiences for teachers;
- Builds collective efficacy;
- Creates coherence across the system;
- Dedicates time within the school day; and
- Recognizes that the impact of our actions needs to be observable.

The Continuous Improvement Model in Brandon School Division

We use the Observable Impact Model to build the collective efficacy of our educators by connecting the actions we take in our work to the impact that we can actually observe in the classroom.

builds coherence across the division through the development of an observable vision of a learner through the lens of the divisional priorities, specifically:

- Improved literacy achievement;
- Improved numeracy achievement;
- Decreased Indigenous achievement gap; and
- Decreased English as an Additional Language (EAL) achievement gap.

School teams determine areas of strength and areas for growth around the observable vision of a learner and design a school-level continuous Impact Plan. Schools utilize same grade/grade band collaborative teacher teams (CTTs) that meet once every cycle during the instructional day. The CTTs develop team-level Impact Plans and professional growth plans that are aligned to school and divisional plans. Presentations of Impact are created at the school level and division level using their learning artifacts to proliferate patterns of impact through the lens of the division-wide vision of a learner. Observable and useable sources of evidence and data are determined at the classroom, divisional, and provincial level to support the observation, assessment, progress monitoring, impact, and reflection in each of the vision areas.

In preparation for this work, Brandon School Division built capacity in the areas of foundational

outcomes and collaborative teacher teams. Schools utilized the Observable Impact Framework to address identified instructional challenges over the 2021/2022 school year. Currently, the vision of an Early Years Literate Learner is being developed. A cohort of early years literacy teachers will create an Impact Plan for early years literacy, which can provide insights for remaining schools as they develop their Impact Plans in the fall. The observable vision of a learner for all divisional priorities in early years, middle years, and senior years will also be co-created in the fall.

The Observable Impact Model is not a new initiative. It allows us to examine the work that we are currently doing, determines its observable impact, and helps us to identify the changes in practice that lead to improved outcomes for all learners. We don't work on observable impact, but instead we work on literacy, numeracy, and decreasing our achievement gaps for our Indigenous and EAL learners. We use the Observable Impact Model to build the collective efficacy of our educators by connecting the actions we take in our work to the impact that we can actually observe in the classroom. ■

*Mathew Gustafson is the Superintendent and Chief Executive Officer for Brandon School Division.*



# L'école publique : sa raison d'être et ses succès

Par Alain Laberge, directeur général, Division scolaire franco-manitobaine

**P**our débiter, une courte question que nous devons tous nous poser : pourquoi l'éducation publique?

Voilà une question fort simple, mais très pertinente afin de comprendre tous les enjeux et préceptes qui ont mené à la création des réseaux d'écoles publiques au Canada. Un peu d'histoire : plusieurs aiment croire que Charlemagne est le père fondateur de l'école. En réalité, la transmission des savoirs date d'aussi loin que l'humanité existe, et même si aux balbutiements de notre planète, l'apprentissage se faisait grandement en observant et en imitant, les premiers humains étaient en fait les premiers écoliers.

À travers les siècles, l'éducation, tout comme l'être humain, a évolué et s'est transformée, et surtout de façon naturelle. Et c'est une excellente chose, car qu'il soit question :

- des poèmes d'Homère ou du fameux triangle de Pythagore,
- de la moralité de Socrate, ou bien des corps et du vide d'Épicure (qui, désolé pour les amateurs de grandes tables, était végétarien et frugal),
- du *cogito ergo sum* de Descartes ou du contrat social de Rousseau,
- et du clergé ou des écoles de rang.

L'éducation fut trop longtemps réservée ou limitée à une minorité d'individus que l'on pourrait qualifier de privilégiés : les bourgeois, les religieux, les hommes, les Blancs... en fait l'éducation était tout, sauf un droit pour le commun des mortels.

Sans la démocratisation de l'éducation, nous serions toujours dans la grande noirceur et les stéréotypes. L'éducation est un grand facteur de changement. Elle a un impact sur notre santé, notre développement social et économique, voire notre



subsistance. L'éducation joue aussi un rôle crucial pour contrer les iniquités et l'intolérance.

Pardonnez-moi ce petit préambule qui fait état de choses que nous connaissons tous j'en conviens, mais qu'il demeure important de rappeler, car l'accès à une éducation de qualité pour tout enfant au Canada ne date pas de si longtemps. Rappelons-nous aussi que dans plusieurs pays de cette planète, l'accès à l'éducation n'est toujours pas possible pour certaines franges de la société.

Mais comme la fleur résiliente qui pousse à travers le ciment et le béton, l'éducation publique au Canada et au Manitoba a su affronter tous les obstacles et défis qui se posaient devant elle, et malgré tout, elle s'est imposée comme gardienne de l'équité et de l'inclusion.

Je crois que la majorité des éducateurs sera d'accord avec moi : rien n'est parfait dans ce bas monde, et c'est pareil en éducation. Mais au lieu de céder trop facilement au réflexe de taper sur l'éducation publique, faisons partie de la solution. Redonnons-lui ses lettres de

noblesse. Soyons fiers de tous les progrès et avancées des 50 dernières années. Soyons fiers que peu importe votre genre, votre couleur de peau, votre religion, votre statut social, vos besoins physiques, psychologiques ou socioémotionnels : chaque enfant a le privilège de recevoir l'éducation auquel il a droit.

Oui, célébrons l'école publique, non pas seulement parce que c'est un droit fondamental, mais surtout parce que c'est le seul outil pour offrir une égalité des chances à nos enfants. C'est le seul outil pour combattre les préjugés et les injustices.

Car la vie de demain, c'est aujourd'hui qu'elle commence. ■

*Après avoir travaillé pendant 15 ans dans le système d'éducation de la Colombie-Britannique, Alain Laberge a pris les rênes de la Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM) en 2013. Son commentaire préféré : qui dit que l'anglais est facile à apprendre?*

*To read this article in English, please contact Barb Isaak from the MASS office [barb.isaak@mass.mb.ca](mailto:barb.isaak@mass.mb.ca).*



# The Heart of the Northern Wilderness

*Outdoor education is an exciting way to develop deeper understandings of the world around us through fun and exciting activities.*



## By Tammy Ballantyne, Flin Flon School Division

**F**lin Flon School Division is located in the heart of the northern wilderness. We are surrounded by hundreds of pristine lakes and waterways, and the ease of access to such natural amenities allows us to embrace it and share teachings of and on the land. Flin Flon School Division involves all four schools (McIsaac, Ruth Betts, Many Faces, and Hapnot) in an extensive divisional Outdoor Education Program. The program starts officially in Grade 6 and continues all the way to Grade 12.

Starting in Grade 7, our students have the honour of going on overnight canoe trips that leave from Phantom Lake, which is walking distance from their school. They paddle three kilometers to their destination and set up camp for the night on Canoe Island. Students learn important skills such as gathering

natural fuel, building a fire, and cooking (they are responsible to cook whatever they bring), and students also get to enjoy swimming (they brave the cold May and June water), fishing, and honing their orienteering skills. They also do an evening paddle to Igor Swamp, complete with legendary tales of a lost man/Sasquatch, which has morphed over the years while they paddle.

In Grades 9, 11, and 12, students leave from Whitefish Lake and spend two nights at Mikanagan Falls. This paddle is approximately five kilometers to their camp spot and includes setting up near the falls. There are two portages of 100 meters and 300 meters, and then another two kilometers to One Foot Falls, which includes day learning sessions on first aid, fire and shelter building, outdoor cooking, and group activities.

Our Grades 6 and 8 students attend Camp Whitney, which is a secluded camp located on Lake Athapapuskow. This outdoor adventure requires a boat ride of eight kilometers across a beautiful part of the lake. Grade 12 students participate in a significant hike following train tracks to Camp Whitney. Camp Whitney is a former Boy Scout camp that was built in the 1940s; it is now operated and maintained through a partnership between the Flin Flon Recreation Commission, The Flin Flon School Division, and the Flin Flon Rotary Club.

The camp has 10 rustic cabins, cooking and dining facilities, a log pavilion with a fire pit, and access to canoeing, kayaking, boating, swimming, and of course fishing. Campers get to enjoy a variety of activities, with tales shared for years to come. Every year, students look forward to their chance to play predator prey, sports night games, cabin inspections, lumberjack competitions, and earn awards throughout the camp for biggest fish, being the first in the water during a cold evening swim, and hiker/adventurer, to name a few.

The hiking trail is a legacy of Camp Whitney... and an experience! The trail, called the Brian King Nature Trail, winds through Limestone Narrows all the way to Camp Whitney through forest and Precambrian Shield – complete with interpretive plaques along the way that teach about the particular ecosystem students are in.

The Flin Flon School Division has been awarded the Stu Siem Award three times. This Award recognizes outstanding School Division Outdoor Education Programs in the province of Manitoba. We are incredibly excited at the prospect of getting our students back out on the land after this last two-year hiatus! ■

*Tammy Ballantyne is the Superintendent and CEO of the Flin Flon School Division.*





# Explore, Learn, Live: Creating Community Connections

By Garth Doerksen, Garden Valley School Division

Okay, we've likely all been there (albeit not so much in the past two years), bidding our time in some big box discount store, flipping through semi-inspirational imitative barnboard signs, unsure of what we're looking for. Then we see it, stenciled in faux-distressed lettering, the words *Explore, Learn, Live* – but they just don't jump off the particle board and into your heart like expected.

If you truly want those words to do that, you'll want to investigate what the teachers and students experience through the career development and internship courses at the high schools in Garden Valley School Division. Teachers Warren Kuhl at Garden Valley Collegiate, and Sarah Waldner at Northlands Parkway Collegiate, offer courses in life-work building, life-work transitioning, and career development internship.

Through Life-Work Building 30S, students focus on personal management and employability skills. They find employment in and around the City of Winkler, making valuable connections in the community that can lead to future career opportunities. The 80-hours of work placement experience is bolstered by theory work consisting of resume/portfolio writing, practice interviews, and goal setting.

In the Life-Work Transitioning 40S course, students may pursue options within customer service, financial management, workplace safety, or a course tailored specifically to their field of interest. Here, practical theory work supports the learners as they complete 80-hours of unpaid work placement experience. Once the course credit is earned, there is an option to earn up to two additional credits for paid work hours.

The Career Development Internship 30G and 40G courses require at least 100-hours of work placement experience. Like the other courses in this program,

students are covered under the provincial workers compensation program.

These courses have been designed to connect school learning with workplace and labour market realities. This connection contributes to increasing the number of students graduating from high school and the courses provide for a smoother transition between high school and appropriate post-secondary educational programming. Students are assisted in acquiring and applying knowledge and skills to make decisions for life, work, and the essential post-secondary education and training that is required in today's economy.

The experiential learning components provide students with opportunities to explore potential occupations and to demonstrate employability skills and specific occupational skills. The broad range of experiences can vary from community visitor presentations or volunteerism to community placements through which students have opportunities to gain knowledge and learn skills that are sometimes not available to them in their school setting.

Businesses in the City of Winkler and surrounding area have been generous, eager partners in this program. Just imagine being a student in search of unique, credited learning opportunities when you read through this list of local work experiences:

- Education
- The trades
- Health care
- Childcare
- Working with animals
- Farming
- Beauty and cosmetology
- Sports
- Journalism
- Retail
- Foods
- Banking/accounting
- Entertainment
- Fundraising
- Businesses

- Computer science and technology
- City of Winkler

Flexibility is key. Students can often complete the required hours during the school day during spares or after school and even on weekends. Each student's schedule is different from the next since the program is designed to fulfill the needs of the students, the community, and the employer. This makes for an interesting schedule for the teachers, but they are quick to say that it's worth it.

Students take these courses to find positions where they can show off their skills, work ethic, and reliability in low-pressure settings. They can use these jobs as stepping-stones to figure out their futures by either eliminating options or opening new interests for their careers. Many of the students acquire paid positions shortly after course completion or in the future if the job requires post-secondary schooling.

The community and employers greatly benefit from these programs. Employers are actively looking to interact with the youth of the community since they like to hire people they know. Employers can help to ensure that the students' education is engaging and relevant. Students in these programs become potential employees, having a step-up due to the training they've received. By employing local youth, the city and community benefits by keeping young people in the area.

Pre-COVID-19, the programs saw upwards of 100 placements in the community. With restrictions lifting, hopes are high that students will again have these diverse opportunities available to them.

So, is "Explore, Learn, Live" something for real? It sure is in Garden Valley School Division! Students, community, and educators agree that this partnership is a win-win-win for all involved. ■

*Garth Doerksen is the Interim Assistant Superintendent of Programs and Curriculum for the Garden Valley School Division.*



# Connecting Classroom and Career

By Leanne M. Peters, Ed.D., Hanover School Division

**H**ow are classrooms and careers connected in Hanover School Division? The opportunities are limitless. One aspect of public education involves linking students and teachers to the world beyond the parameters of school and helping students make connections to possible careers and vocations following their years of formal schooling. According to Twigg (2021), “Careers are one of the most beautiful things you can build in your life. A career is not a job, or even a series of jobs; a career is the accumulation of your life experiences and skills. You can judge its success by how you feel in it. It’s something you get to build, and, if you ignore it, it gets built for you,” (p. 1).<sup>1</sup>

This connection begins at a young age when Kindergarten students engage with “community helpers” as they meet firefighters, police officers, nurses, doctors, and even an Assistant Superintendent! In Hanover School Division, Kirby Krause, the Career Development and Life Exploration Program Coordinator, fosters these connections between teachers, students, and the communities that we serve.

As students continue their education they become increasingly involved in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) activities in the classroom. Teachers work collaboratively with Kirby to find interesting ways to integrate STEAM activities into regular lessons. In Bothwell School, they are busy setting up a STEAM lab. This exciting and creative space is being co-constructed with input from students and teachers. Each classroom is responsible for sharing ideas of what supplies they would like included and how they would like to utilize the space. To celebrate this

The students demonstrated a variety of real-world skills, including preparedness, poise in asking questions, the art of introducing and thanking a guest, and navigating a more formal conversation with an adult.

shared ownership, each class of students is responsible for creating one letter in the name of the room.

Journeying through middle years brings opportunities to explore, learn, and consider the possibilities for life beyond Kindergarten to Grade 12 education. Teachers engage in creative ways of linking career opportunities with specific learning outcomes for the students that they teach. They find opportunities to build partnerships with people working in a variety of careers. The world of Zoom has allowed students to engage with professionals living within their communities and in other areas of the province and beyond. Grade 7 students at Mitchell Middle School engaged with seven different professionals in breakout rooms. Students were able to choose from the available professionals and they prepared a series of questions to ask as they sought information on different careers. The students demonstrated a variety of real-world skills, including preparedness, poise in asking questions, the art of introducing and thanking a guest, and navigating a more formal conversation with an adult.

In high school, students choose courses based on the pathways they may wish to explore following graduation. Students begin to seek out specific information about what courses they need for post-secondary programs or what courses might give them the skills

for the vocation they intend to pursue. Working with the Superintendents’ Student Advisory Council, Kirby provided high school students with an overview of career information that is accessible and available. Resume writing emerged as a topic of interest and several workshops were developed for students from schools across Hanover School Division.

Achor (2010) describes the difference between “a Job, a Career, or a Calling... Unsurprisingly, people with a calling orientation not only find their work more rewarding, but work harder and longer because of it. And as a result, these are the people who are generally more likely to get ahead” (p. 78).<sup>2</sup> This is the guiding purpose of connecting classrooms to careers: to support students, through education, to find their calling. ■

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**Leanne M. Peters, Ed.D., is an Assistant Superintendent with Hanover School Division.**

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1. Twigg, K. (2021). *The career stories method: 11 steps to find your ideal career – and discover your awesome self in the process*. Page Two Books.
2. Achor, S. (2010). *The happiness advantage*. Crown Business.

# Kelsey School Division: A Brief History

By Vaughn Wadelius and Selena Mell, Kelsey School Division



**P**ublic education began in Le Pas, North West Territories (NWT) in 1909 when a group of parents were determined to start a school for their children. A local pool room had to be used until a one room school could be built in 1910. When the province of Manitoba expanded northward in 1912, The Pas School District #1635 was formed and the first school board was elected. Two more one room schools were constructed until an eight-room red brick The Pas School replaced them in 1915.

During the 1930s and 1940s student growth resulted in severe overcrowding. Wooden classroom annexes were constructed alongside the school to handle the overflow. Difficulty in hiring teachers, providing school supplies, and negotiations with the municipality and parents for school funding kept the school board engaged.

In 1930, the first Grade 12 class in northern Manitoba was established in The Pas School, and two years later a Collegiate Institute was developed. In 1933, two nearby school districts, Carrot Valley #2283 and Wanless #2301, were formed. During the 1940s the need for adequate school space continued. Provincial government funding to support school construction was advocated.

In 1954, a new The Pas Collegiate Institute opened, and the first teacher collective agreement signed. In 1958, two elementary schools were built. By 1959, provincial amalgamation of school districts into school divisions resulted in the combination of the Carrot Valley, Wanless, and The Pas School Districts into the Kelsey School Division (KSD) #45. A new school board was elected with three wards accommodating trustees from each of the former districts. Provincial financial support for education made this decision attractive and transportation of students from KSD's outlying areas feasible.



*An ice sculpture built by a Grade 5 class during the Trapper's Festival.*

Student growth continued. In 1963, two larger elementary schools were constructed next to the earlier ones to meet these needs. The Pas Indian Day School was amalgamated in 1964 into the KSD as an additional ward with a trustee. This resulted in a significant cultural awareness necessity for teachers and KSD made various attempts to accommodate this. The construction of a pulp and paper complex at The Pas in the late 1960s brought in operational worker families from Finland and hundreds of other students as the mill began operating.

A community college opened and brought in more families. A new Margaret Barbour Collegiate Institute opened in 1967, major additions to the elementary schools created gymnasiums as well as specialty rooms for art, science, music, Kindergarten, and office space. Swimming lessons were incorporated into the elementary curriculum when the first indoor pool in northern Manitoba was added to the high school. Technical vocational courses finally became available to high school students in cooperation with the local community college.

In 1973, a junior high school with shared option specialty rooms opened. A third elementary school replaced one



*A teepee at Margaret Barbour Collegiate Institute.*

destroyed by fire. Finally, there was adequate classroom space, which was much needed due to the addition of students when the local parochial school closed.

The 1965-1980 period of education learning growth and pedagogical understanding was led by superintendents and other consultants who brought the local education out of the 1940s model into a focus on student needs and variabilities. Basic French and French Immersion were started. Teacher turnover remained high, from 20 to 45 per cent a year. In 1972, a local office for the delivery of provincial Child Development Services was established. Special education support services were modernized, various instructional methods (open area, continuous progress, team teaching, etc.) and curricular innovations were allowed to flourish. KSD soon developed a good reputation for student support and home placements from various First Nations increased. An adult education component was added in 1996, and two middle schools were organized in 2002. Two schools were later designated for community school funding.

A drop in the student population began when the Opaskwayak Cree Nation's own school system was created. A gradual decline in community residents and an aging local population also contributed to the decline. While this may be the case, Kelsey School Division continues to work towards achieving its motto: *We strive to be a respectful and enthusiastic school community, dedicated to the quality education for all.* ■

*Vaughn Wadelius is a Kelsey School Division Board Chair and a local historian. Selena Mell is Superintendent of Kelsey School Division.*





# Moving Forward & Celebrating Lessons Learned



*Photo to the left: Iyosayi, a Kindergarten student, labelling her picture to tell a story. Photo above: Joshua, a Grade 1 student, recording in his math journal to show his mathematical thinking. Both images were taken by Shauna Enns.*

## By Lisa Minaker, Lord Selkirk School Division

It comes as no surprise that the pandemic has resulted in numerous changes to education that have made us reconsider the way we do business in our schools. Since its onset, the pandemic has posed a plethora of challenges that necessitated immediate deviations to instructional delivery. Restrictions that were continuously changing made communication among all stakeholders challenging. Now as our division moves forward, we must consider: What lessons have we learned from COVID-19? What needs to change? What will we take away from this experience?

In the last two years, we have learned that there are a variety of ways in

which we can connect with our families even when face-to-face interactions are not a possibility. Virtual Public Budget Forums, online parent surveys, parent teacher Teams™ conferences, and drive-thru graduation ceremonies are all examples of ways in which our division strived to remain connected with our families. We also learned that we could facilitate virtual professional development sessions that are not as costly and involve more participants, when in-person sessions are not an option. During remote learning periods, we were reminded that while students can learn from home, there is no substitute for in-class learning where students can interact in meaningful, authentic ways with their teacher and peers. Regardless of the format, relationships are always key.

The pandemic has reinforced the vital importance of ongoing, open communication with parents, and

the valuable role that they play in their child's education. It became very clear early on in the pandemic that regular communication with our school community was critical to ensure accurate and up to date information was being provided to families and staff. For this reason, our senior administration team produced a divisional weekly report titled *Week in Review*. This correspondence provided pertinent information and updates on provincial notifications, divisional priorities, new initiatives, and challenges transpiring within our division.

This weekly communication served as a springboard for further questions and conversations with our parent community. The feedback received proved to be extremely valuable in helping to maintain and strengthen trusting relationships with families. While the *Week in Review* was initiated because of the pandemic, it's

importance was quickly recognized and we will continue to use as a means to stay connected.

Another priority was to establish a divisional strategic plan that would serve to create an alignment of divisional priorities and to help maintain the focus on student learning. In creating this plan, it was important to reflect on the previous work which has been adopted in the Lord Selkirk School Division (LSSD) on Universal Design for Learning, specifically meeting the needs of ALL learners. This focus could not be lost and for this reason, at the heart of our new plan is the concept, "Know the Learner."

It has been a longstanding belief in our division that focusing on social emotional learning and viewing each child as a unique individual with special skills and talents must be at the forefront of all that we do in our schools. This was true before COVID-19, and one could argue that it is even more important now. The need to create classroom environments that are inclusive and safe for our students is essential, and evidence has shown that doing so has as much impact on academic achievement as many instructional practices do.

To further enhance and support our planning, our school leadership teams collected information through focused conversations with school administrators. Survey information collected from parents in our division was also utilized in our planning.

In reviewing our previous plan and examining the data provided by our school teams, we felt that it was important to simplify and determine a smaller number of high impact, research-based

teaching strategies. It was then determined that the strategies selected for our plan would include feedback, collaboration, direct instruction, metacognition, differentiated instruction, and teacher clarity. The three main target areas which our division will continue to focus on while incorporating these strategies are: literacy, numeracy, and mental health and well-being.

The pandemic was an opportune time to rediscover LSSD's core values. Our division is still in the early implementation phase of our strategic plan

and we recognize that we still have a great deal of work ahead of us. As we forge ahead, we are excited to be able to utilize lessons learned, as we reorganize and reemphasize our divisional vision of educational care and excellence, and continue to make a commitment to relationships, enhanced communication, and improved student learning in LSSD. ■

*Lisa Minaker is Assistant Superintendent in the Lord Selkirk School Division.*



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# Winnipeg

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*Check out what awaits in the centre of North America, where world-class attractions, natural beauty and all the latest safety protocols ensure a captivating time for students.*

## Learn

An architectural marvel of astonishing scale, the **Canadian Museum for Human Rights** will see your class journey from darkness to light through its 11 ever-climbing galleries. During the experience, they'll encounter stories from across the globe that will leave an impression, while interactive galleries, expert guides and fascinating artifacts will implore them to make a difference. Subject matter and thematic tours can be tailored to K-12 school groups, with emphasis ranging from Indigenous concepts of rights, to exploring themes of equality, family and love.

At the **Manitoba Museum**, your class will cover the very ground below you—from giant aquatic lizards of *Jurassic*-film fame who once swam where Winnipeg now sits, to a life-sized bison hunt, to every species you could imagine on the surrounding prairies and in its skies. Its Planetarium can take you to the stars, while hopping aboard *The Nonsuch*—a life-sized 17th century replica ship—is always sure to please. Guided experiences can cover a range of themes for K-12 groups, including Black History in Canada, climate change, Inuit ingenuity and history, and astronomy.

The **Royal Canadian Mint** provides the gold standard in school experiences, combining edutainment in geography, currency and engineering at this state-of-the-art facility. Millions of coins for more than 70 countries around the world are produced here at an incredible rate, as well-versed tour guides provide the sort of storytelling, history and interactive experiences that your class will find right on the money.

## Stay

Downtown's largest four-star hotel is always ready to welcome students with spacious rooms, free Wi-Fi and a location that puts the city at your feet. Winnipeg Art Gallery-Qaumajuq, Canadian Museum for Human Rights and The Forks are all just steps away from **Delta Hotels by Marriot Winnipeg**, where amenities also include a rooftop and indoor pool, fitness centre and multiple onsite dining options.

**Holiday Inn Winnipeg South** is your gateway to the south of the city. Its location is just minutes from the natural beauty of Assiniboine Park Zoo and FortWhyte Alive, along with shopping at Outlet Collection Winnipeg and St. Vital Centre. Onsite amenities include indoor pool and fitness centre, the EnoBAR restaurant, breakfast packages, motor coach parking, free Wi-Fi and a 24-hour market.

## Play

Who doesn't love an afternoon at the ball game—particularly when it's the best little downtown ballpark in baseball? Shaw Park is located between The Forks and Portage and Main, with group pricing and student experiences that will see you swinging for the fences. From fireworks and local food to multiple performance options for musical groups, **Winnipeg Goldeyes Baseball** is a sure win for students.

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# Building Fluent Thinkers

By Stephen Jaddock, Suzanne Cottyn, and Denise Smith,  
Mountain View School Division

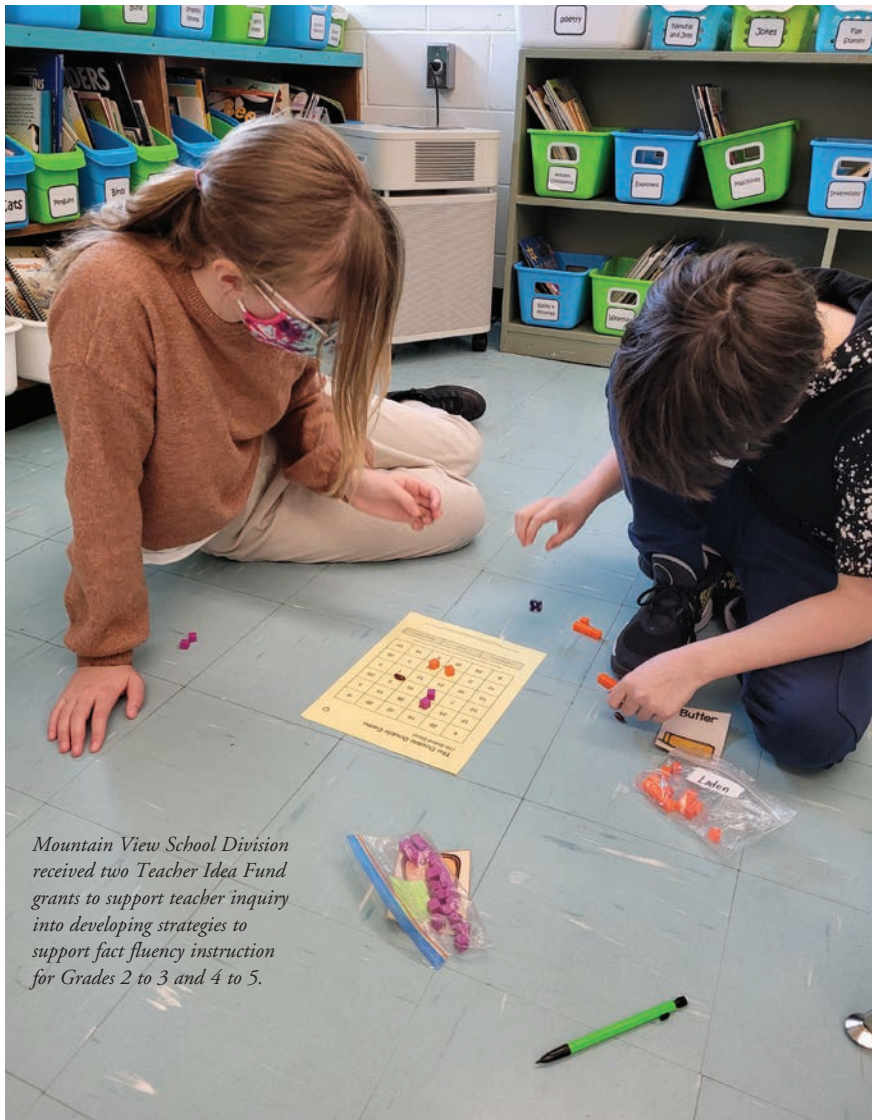


**F**act fluency, as part of developing procedural fluency in mathematics, includes flexibility, efficiency, accuracy, and appropriate strategy selection. Research suggests that instruction should focus on student thinking/reasoning and building number relationships.

This past fall, Mountain View School Division (MVSD) received two Teacher Idea Fund grants to support teacher inquiry into developing strategies and pedagogy to support fact fluency instruction for Grades 2 to 3 and 4 to 5. Teachers were invited to join a professional learning community (PLC) group either for addition/subtraction at the Grade 2 to 3 level, or for multiplication/division at the Grade 4 to 5 level, facilitated by MVSD's divisional Numeracy Coach, Denise Smith.

Each participating teacher received a *Building Fact Fluency Toolkit*<sup>1</sup> (BFF) by Graham Fletcher and Tracy Zager. The toolkits are a comprehensive, research-based resource that delivers purposeful learning experiences that provide context and varied practice for developing number relationships. Learning experiences include Three Act Tasks, image talks, number talks, contextualized practice problems, and games. In addition to the toolkits, Ann Elise Record, an independent math consultant, was engaged to provide teachers with training on Math Running Records (MRR), a formative interview assessment tool that supports teachers with identifying where students are in their journey to developing fact fluency.<sup>2</sup>

Originally, the PLC groups were to begin meeting in the fall and to conduct a lesson study using the BFF toolkits; however, due to a delay in receiving the kits and ongoing



Mountain View School Division received two Teacher Idea Fund grants to support teacher inquiry into developing strategies to support fact fluency instruction for Grades 2 to 3 and 4 to 5.



COVID-19 restrictions, the PLC groups did not begin meeting until December and transitioned to meeting online using the Microsoft Teams platform.

During each PLC session teachers engage in reading and learning about some of the research that is supported in the design of the kits. This includes the five practices for orchestrating mathematics discussions and cognitively guided instruction (CGI). After a brief introduction to CGI, Grade 2 teachers reflected that, “students will learn the strategies when they are developing if they are in the right environment (which means providing them with harder, more deeper thinking questions)” and “I need to provide an environment that is meaningful to my students and give them time to figure things out and demonstrate what they know.”

A Grade 5 teacher reflected on her learning about different problem types saying, “students will naturally generate a strategy for different problems, and this does not mean that they are solving the problem incorrectly. This made me think back to my own students and the strategies they use/are still stuck in (for example, skip counting and adding vs. seeing groups).”

In smaller working groups, teachers examine the routines and activities in the BFF kits to unpack the mathematics and plan their questioning and implementation. Looking forward, teachers will implement their planned lessons in the classroom and at further sessions reflect on what they learn about their students and their instruction.

One key learning to date is that while the BFF kits are a high-quality resource that have purposefully applied all the current research on fact fluency, high quality resources – on their own – are not enough to ensure their implementation in classrooms with students. Teachers need time in small groups, with a coach and on their own, to unpack and digest the resource so that it can be implemented successfully in the classroom with students.

Despite the challenges of a late start and the impacts of COVID-19,

our teachers in the PLC groups are “excited to keep trying” and are currently developing their skills with implementing the learning activities. They have already noted that their students are “willing to share their thinking,” are “more easily able to connect to a story problem and build into further addition strategies,” and are “thinking more about multiplication than addition.” Way to go! ■

*Stephen Jaddock is the Assistant Superintendent, Suzanne Cottyn is*

*the Coordinator of Curriculum and Assessment, and Denise Smith is the Numeracy Coach, for the Mountain View School Division.*

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**50 YEARS**





# *akihtaso* Camp: Learning Math on the Land

By Starlett Beardy, Donna Drebit, Loretta Dykun, Lorie Henderson,  
Lyle Massan, Amy Portey, Kelley Taite, and Caelin Webber,  
School District of Mystery Lake



Upon arrival to the camp, students were assigned to smaller groups, oriented to the camp, and rotated through various learning sessions like this station, where students learned about traditional fur pelts.

“*tansi!* Welcome to *akihtaso* Camp! We are located on Treaty Five Territory, homeland of the Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation and our home called Thompson.” This is how we greet the visitors to our land-based learning space. *akihtaso* is a Cree verb meaning “count.” The intention of *akihtaso* Camp was to embody the spirit and integrity of the seven teachings and traditional knowledge from Elders and knowledge-keepers of this territory, while integrating curriculum outcomes.

## Why did we do this?

The curriculum services team has been providing land-based learning camps throughout the district for many years. Faced with COVID-19 restrictions, we had to brainstorm ways to continue to offer these authentic learning opportunities. We knew these camps were invaluable experiences for our students, that addressed their mental wellness, social, spiritual and academic needs.

Opportunities to develop and strengthen relationships have been limited during COVID-19; these camps offered a chance to build community for students and adults alike. This year, to address these challenges, our team added Kindergarten and Grade 1 classes to camp programming, which now reaches through to Grade 8 within the district.

*akihtaso* Camps began in November and ran through to April, covering the three most challenging, but not impossible, seasons to deliver land-based education. The first two camps arose from specific classroom-based initiatives, including a moose camp and a schoolyard camp. Subsequent camps were designed to encourage and promote the integration of land-based learning, truth and reconciliation, and positive self-identity into everyday classroom practices, all of which are district priorities.

## How did we do this?

Through established community partnerships and positive working relationships with local organizations, we secured a location close to town for easy access and safety, affordable transportation, and the support of local Elders and knowledge keepers. Planning and pre-teaching were critical to meet curricular outcomes and address offsite teacher apprehensions. Opportunities for participant reflection and feedback were made available through post-camp classroom activities.

## What did it look like?

Camp set-up and location, quality equipment, a supportive budget, and adequate human resources were critical to delivering successful *akihtaso* camps. This included an enclosed trailer to house equipment and supplies, such as prospector tents, wood stoves, outdoor fire pits, session learning kits, and tables and chairs.

Prior to camp, classes received safety pre-teachings and camp expectations.

Upon arrival, students were welcomed and acknowledged by Elders, knowledge keepers, and the curriculum services team. Students were assigned to smaller groups, oriented to the camp, and rotated through various learning sessions. Some favourites included “Measuring Furs with *kohkom*,” “Puppy Math,” “Look at Those Antlers,” and “Ice Fishing with *kiseyiniw*.” Over the course of the camps, over 30 sessions were created that integrated outcomes from across the curriculum, and were adapted to meet diverse learner needs. Each session ensured that students were warm and dry (temperatures often dipped below  $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$ ), cared for (lots of snacks), and made to feel important (engaging and fun activities). Camps concluded with a student debrief, group photo, and a walk-out game to the bus.

## What did we learn?

The literal translation of *akihtaso* is “to count.” However, the Cree term invites everyone to join in the act of learning together in an open and honest manner. In this way, the language encourages participants to engage in active, hands-on learning where everyone can be successful. An example that stood out during camp was one child’s desire and determination to count by 10s. As he walked together with a teacher to return puppies to a sled dog kennel, he achieved his goal and was so proud. Other unexpected impacts of this camp were powerful and extended beyond students to their parents and the greater community. By embracing Indigenous culture and language, *akihtaso* camp allows for place, space, and value for all. ■

*The School District of Mystery Lake Curriculum Services Team consists of Starlett Beardy, Donna Drebit, Loretta Dykun, Lyle Massan, Amy Portey, Kelley Taite, and Caelin Webber.*

# What's in a Name?

By Lisa Boles, Julie Cordova, and Shannon Shields,  
Pembina Trails School Division



**T**he renaming of Ryerson School was in response to a student-led initiative and is an act of reconciliation responding to the calls from the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Staff in Pembina Trails School Division are deeply committed to Indigenous education and together are learning the *truth* which continues to guide a collective path forward in reconciliation.

Ongoing divisional efforts and actions are in support and response to the 94 Calls to Action, specifically, #43, #57, #62, and #63. When we act on these Calls to Action, we can make sure that all children, including First Nations, Metis, and Inuit children grow up happy, healthy, safe, and proud to be who they are. Together, with students, we continue to work to develop shared understandings and align efforts in moving along a path of reconciliation in schools, classrooms, and communities.

Student names and the names of schools are one of our greatest connections to our identity. The recent renaming of Ryerson School to Prairie Sunrise School was an act of reconciliation that allowed students, staff, and community to explore identity and the deep significance of “*What’s in a Name?*”

The discovery of the 215 children at the Residential School in Kamloops, British Columbia, created an overwhelming sense of sadness within the entire school community and required a thoughtful coordinated response. Some of the Pembina Trails staff understood the connection between Ryerson’s namesake to the residential school system, and many did not.

The commitment from Ryerson School was to create opportunities for the children to learn about, act, and have a voice in telling their story. The Grade 5 and 6 students were extremely saddened to learn about the story of Egerton Ryerson and his role in the planning of the residential school system. With strength, confidence, and agency the students took it upon themselves to voice their thoughts and feelings through writing letters of concern to the Board of Trustees. These courageous students shared their thoughts and concerns about their school’s name and requested the opportunity for a change to the name as an act towards Truth and Reconciliation.

During the week of Truth and Reconciliation, the school organized a Walk-a-Thon through the community in an effort to create space for the children to be seen and heard. Each of the Kindergarten to Grade 6 students were gifted an orange shirt that was personalized with a heartfelt message of their choosing.

The staff and students at the newly named Prairie Sunrise School have meaningful connections and relationships with Knowledge Keepers Jordan and Bruce Schacht. The Knowledge Keepers provide encouragement, knowledge, and the gift of teachings in support of reconciliation. The school staff was fortunate to engage in a full day of learning outdoors, on the land, visiting the Sweat Lodge and the Sundance grounds. The gifts of the Knowledge Keepers created space for healing, rejuvenation, better understandings of Indigenous culture, and the process for renaming the school. Together, the staff began to reconcile the desire and need for a new identity.

The work of this journey has created many opportunities for rich conversations with all staff and students. The students of Prairie Sunrise have embraced the opportunity to realize the meaning of Dr. Maya Angelou’s well-known saying, which states, “Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.” Angelou encourages us to live heart aware, which means that one assumes complete emotional responsibility for our thoughts, words, and actions. Through this experience, the staff and students are aware, proud, and ready to embrace a new beginning.

In Pembina Trails, we continue to be guided by community Knowledge Keepers, the gifts of Elders, and are committed to our Treaty responsibilities to education and our desire to be in a good relationship with all our relations. There is no word for reconciliation in the Cree language, however we say *MiyowiciwitoWIN*, which means “Walking together in a good way.” ■

*Lisa Boles is the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Learning Services; Julie Cordova is the Division Principal of Curriculum; and Shannon Shields is the Vice Principal for Prairie Sunrise School.*



# Roving Campus:

## Building Success through Student Engagement

By R. Todd Cuddington and James Kostuchuk, Portage la Prairie School Division

**T**he City of Portage la Prairie has the unfortunate distinction of being ranked fifth in reported serious violent crime in a Canadian city with a population higher than 10,000, according to the Canadian crime severity index. Year over year, the ranking fluctuates, but the reality remains: crime rates are high and 27 per cent of the community live in poverty with children suffering disproportionately as a result.

Sadly, classrooms are often touched by trauma and tragedy. Incidents of accidental death, suicide, homelessness, addiction, and food insecurity are all too common in the Portage la Prairie School Division (PLPSD). Poverty has an adverse effect on student performance and studies have shown that students in poverty are below grade level at much higher rates, and they generally have poor or average grades. These educational deficits provide a serious handicap for students in poverty.<sup>1</sup>

According to provincial data, the PLPSD has seen four-year “on-time,” five and six-year graduation rates improve significantly since 2009, in spite of the many barriers that exist in the community. While graduation rates have improved, PLPSD recognizes that an unfortunate number of youths, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, are still not engaging and graduating from high school at acceptable rates despite the recent gains. It is against this backdrop that the PLPSD launched its Roving Campus.<sup>2</sup>

### The Roving Campus

The Roving Campus is open to Grade 12 students who are not attending school, some of whom haven’t been in school for years. The Roving Campus is making a difference. Last year, 95 per cent of students had an average improvement in

attendance of nearly 38 per cent; all the students in the program graduated or were set to graduate as mature students; 80 per cent found summer jobs; and 100 per cent of student families said they would recommend the Roving Campus to other families.

The success of the Roving Campus is due to teacher empowerment, building strong relationships, community ties, and innovative teaching. The Roving Campus is an attempt to build a better school without concern for how things were done before.

### What is Roving Campus?

Portage la Prairie’s Roving Campus is a new innovative initiative created by three local teachers with the support from the PLPSD. Launched in 2020, the Roving Campus operates five days a week with the mission to make learning engaging and relevant to students. To close the gaps that are experienced by many, each student accepted into the program is given access to transportation, lunch, a laptop, and Internet access as part of the program.

School leaders know their students and communities. It should come as no surprise that when the Roving Campus teacher team and senior administration of the PLPSD met, their goals were identical. Everyone wanted a measurable local initiative to improve student attendance, prepare students to be good community members, and help them earn credits to graduate. The teachers also created their own three-person team, which has experiences ranging from the management of group homes to working with individuals with cognitive challenges.

When the campus travels, the sites dictate the subject matter. Students have listened to survivor stories at a residential school, the subject of war was examined by experiencing trench life at Camp Hughes, and at Portage la Prairie’s city hall, students studied municipal government by

preparing delegations for the mayor. In the classroom, teachers used a lot of game-based lessons. Students experienced immigration by listening to a guest speaker, Seidu Mohammed, who lost all his fingers to frostbite crossing the Manitoba border. Lessons are meaningful and curriculum centered. The teachers have created a guaranteed viable curriculum of essential standards for each course they teach.

Students who enter the campus are interviewed in their homes starting in June and carrying over into August. Families sign a pact. It is the duty of the teachers to assist students in addressing any barriers to attendance. In return, students must attend class. Roving Campus teachers take calls on evenings and weekends, and during the summer. They work whenever they are needed and sometimes they serve as surrogate lawyers, doctors, and cab drivers.

The approach schools take to engaging students who are unwilling to attend school must be designed around community needs and school capacity – the Roving Campus has managed to do both well and the students agree. ■

*R. Todd Cuddington is the Superintendent and CEO, and James Kostuchuk is a Literacy Coach for Portage la Prairie School Division.*

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# Samsung/Autism Speaks Canada Project



By Cheryl Mangin, Prairie Spirit School Division

**T**his fall, Autism Speaks Canada sent out an invitation to participate in a pilot project in conjunction with Samsung. Prairie Spirit School Division entered a memorandum of understanding (MOU) agreement for the use of 25 Chromebook devices to be distributed to students who would benefit from access at school and home.

Troy Sigvaldason, IT Supervisor, and Leslie Norrie, Student Services Administrator, met to determine the rollout process, which involved the Resource Teachers and School Counsellors, who identified their students at the school level.

Troy gave the Student Services group an overview of the many ways the Chromebooks could be used to support their students. With CLEVER Badge, Google Sites, and Canva, the Student Services group went to work on creating inclusive and engaging opportunities for their students.

Testimonials were provided to Autism Speaks Canada as part of the MOU agreement, and we are extremely grateful for the opportunity this has given our students.

What follows are a few of the testimonials to give you a glimpse into the work done and possibilities that lie ahead for our students in the pilot.

## Testimonial 1

"Our two Samsung devices were used in different ways. Both devices were set up with a Google Site and programs, checklists, and organizers based on the specific student. They are easily accessed with the use of a Clever Badge specific to the students' identification. The first student, a Grade 2 student, has a site that includes links to a visual daily schedule with a checklist function so that it is easy for him to

follow a schedule for the day. He can check the activity, choices, or scheduled regulation breaks he has during the day. This has been a game-changer for him because he knows what to expect and can review what will happen during the next class. Eventually, he will use his device to present his stories or a researched topic in a Google Slide presentation to the class. The Samsung Chromebook has also opened the lines of communication with this student. He can type out what he wants or needs in the moment when he is having difficulty expressing himself verbally."

## Testimonial 2

"The second is used by a Grade 7 student. His site includes links to his Google Docs where he types out his writing ideas and then shares his writing, projected to the class. He uses the Google Read & Write read back function. The Chromebook audio does the reading so his classmates can understand what is being said. This gives the student the ability to communicate with his peers, sharing his ideas and knowledge. Eventually, he will use his device to present his stories or even a researched topic in a Google Slide presentation to the class. His site also includes links such as EPIC for reading, listening to books, or researching a topic in different subjects. There is also a link for him to practice his keyboarding, with the hope that this will open his lines of communication with others. The Samsung Chromebook has given us the opportunity to bring more independence for this student."

## Testimonial 3

"I decided to use the Samsung Chromebook as an additional support for a specific student that receives therapy in our sensory room. This particular student has significant struggles

with gross and fine motor skills, as well as stamina to complete work tasks and remain attentive to them. Her Occupational Therapy (O.T.) plan has a lot of different areas where goals are set, which requires a variety of resources and venues to keep her engaged and practicing specific skills, without it feeling too much like 'work.' Last year, I relied on a variety of specific websites and YouTube videos to add to this student's sensory room routine. Creating a Google site, specifically tailored to her O.T. goals, that housed many of these activities, videos, and slides, would be a great addition to her daily routine, while keeping within our allotted time frame within the room. The goal will be to continually update her schedule page with new and relevant activities, videos, and slides as her goals change and the Occupational Therapist provides new recommendations."

## Testimonial 4

"We have been given two Chromebooks. One is used for a student when he is struggling to regulate. He goes to his page and chooses what he needs to help him regulate. He sets a timer and then rejoins class. It has been very effective for him. We are using the second Samsung Chromebook with a student with Autism. She has all her programs on it. So, it's everything from her Boom cards in her speech program, to her alphabet and number learning apps. It's all on her page and easy to find." ■

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*You can learn more about the partnership between Autism Speaks and Samsung: <https://www.autismspeaks.ca/samsung-tablet-program>*

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*Cheryl Mangin is Superintendent of Prairie Spirit School Division.*

# Retain, Relinquish, and Revolutionize: Reconsidering Continuous Improvement in Light of the Pandemic

By Karen Boyd, Jason Drysdale, Mark Bruce, Tammy Mitchell, and Kelly Barkman, River East Transcona School Division

**T**he cyclical nature of the school year is comforting to those of us who have lived, learned, and worked in it for much of our lives.

Assemblies, exams, athletic events, and convocation all have a happy place and tradition within our years. As comforting as this predictability is, it is also difficult to make change in such a system. Disrupting the cycle becomes a bit like putting a stick in the spoke of the wheel. It enacts change, but it also often sends someone over the handlebars. The pandemic stopped the wheel. It gave us pause to reflect on what we were doing and to consider how to make thoughtful and needed change. We challenged our school leaders to consider what they would relinquish, restore, and renew (our 3Rs, inspired by Kath Murdoch, educational consultant and author), based on this pause.

For the senior administration team, our reflection on our new 3Rs were focused on the development of the division priorities, strategies, and data sources that make up the divisional plan. For several years, we tweaked our priorities of literacy, numeracy, and safe and caring schools. In the spring of 2021, we sat together and stared at a blank page to revolutionize our priorities. Continuing to recognize our interconnected work with literacy, numeracy, and well-being, the outcomes were rewritten to align with each other and broaden to include the most current research in all three areas.

For example, the literacy outcome became: “By June 2022, students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 will become

literate citizens who use language to communicate, comprehend, and critically think. This will be reflected through multiple modes (print, digital, oral, and written) that are drawn from multiple data sources (products, observations, and conversations) that are student specific, strength based, and ensure learning acceleration and evidence of growth over time.”

The new outcome reflected a broader view of literacy and an evidence-based consideration of assessment. The numeracy and well-being outcomes mirrored the literacy one. Our next step was to revision the indicators that we would look to in order to define success. While students have always come to us with a wide range of needs, and we have programmed accordingly, this task is an even more prominent professional responsibility given the wide range of learning experiences students may have had as a result of the pandemic.

We needed to have a clear picture of these diverse learning needs. Our previous indicators included large scale aggregated data from report cards and provincial assessments. Our revised indicators for each priority followed a specific pattern: A K-12 global indicator, an early years/middle years/senior years global indicator, and then a rotating indicator through each level that targeted a group of students that requires additional monitoring, such as children in the care of Child Family Services (CFS), self-identified Indigenous students, and students on individual education plans (IEPs). Examples of the targeted indicators are: “By June 2022, 75 per cent of students who identify as

Indigenous in Grade 3 will report an increased feeling of agency and skill in mathematics as reported on a divisionally developed measurement tool,” and “100 per cent of students with modified course designation from one school will report an increase time in classrooms when compared to the previous school year.”

The revised outcomes and indicators have rejuvenated the conversations that we have with schools regarding their school plans and have allowed for targeted strategies that build the assessments directly into the planning rather than add-ons at the end of the process. The revised outcomes also provided a frame when allocating the COVID-19 Safe School funding. It was efficient for us to develop a strategy that aligned with the work that was already in the divisional plan and enhance it with the additional funding in all schools with fidelity.

Every moment matters as we engage our students to become literate, numerate, and well members of our democratic society in a safe learning environment. It is our shared professional obligation to ensure that all students in our care receive appropriate, challenging, and relevant programming that helps them to accelerate their learning and that is supported by professionals asking what we will retain, relinquish, and revolutionize. ■

*Karen Boyd, Jason Drysdale, Mark Bruce, and Tammy Mitchell are Assistant Superintendents, and Kelly Barkman is the Superintendent/CEO of River East Transcona School Division.*

# Quality Outdoor Physical Education: A Local Focus

By Jason Cline, Rolling River School Division



**R**olling River School Division (RRSD) physical education teachers spent much of the 2020-2021 school year outdoors, doing an incredible job keeping our students active and safe during a very difficult time in education.

RRSD is in the western part of Manitoba, bordering Riding Mountain National Park to the north and stretching to the Trans-Canada Highway to the south. We have over 1,800 students across 12 community schools and five Hutterian colony schools. Our division is fortunate to have some of the most skilled, caring, creative, and dedicated teachers and staff supporting our students. These skills came to the forefront as our division faced the pandemic head-on in 2020.

Between September and November 2020, RRSD was able to have all students in class full-time. However, by mid-November many of our gyms became classrooms and although most of our physical education was already taking place outdoors, our physical education classes needed to shift outdoors, almost exclusively.

RRSD teachers have a long history utilizing our outdoor spaces near the schools, inside our communities, and across Westman as part of their physical education programs. For decades, our students have benefitted from both school and divisional expertise and equipment to support outdoor lifestyle sports and activities. For many years, our physical education teacher group has coordinated and maintained an itinerant equipment program using local needs and teacher driven ideas to support this program. The divisional equipment includes multiple sets of cross-country skis and snowshoes, juggling props, indoor curling, tchoukball, speedminton, and omnikin equipment, canoes, as well as a class set of mountain bikes. The divisional maintenance team

maintains the delivery schedule for our schools that share this equipment to support physical education and health classes for our students.

RRSD physical education teachers met the challenge of heading outside with enthusiasm and a love of outdoor education. Their positive attitudes were contagious and although mother nature cooperated for much of the 2020-2021 winter, there were many days that our teachers worked outside for several hours under difficult weather conditions. Students were asked to participate outdoors for a 30- to 55-minute outdoor class but our teachers would often have five or more outdoor classes per day. They braved the elements to ensure that physical activities for our students did not stop. Their dedication and resolve to support the physical and mental health of our students across RRSD was only reinforced during the pandemic.

With restrictions on field trips, travel, and community use for students in the 2020-2021 school year, several schools had skating rinks created on-site with the help of local fire departments and community members. These rinks were built once again this school year and have been extremely popular and well-used by our students. Volunteers also groomed cross country trails in school yards to give students a skiing option close to their own school.

The positive feedback from families and students about outdoor physical education was heard across the division. Some students shared that they liked many of the outdoor games and activities as an option compared to the more traditional indoor structured gym games. Teachers have incorporated lessons learned last year ensuring that increased outdoor physical education activities are a regular part of their programs going forward. ■

*Jason Cline is the Superintendent for Rolling River School Division.*



*Students and staff have shared that they liked many of the outdoor games and activities as an option compared to the more traditional indoor structured gym games.*



*Community volunteers groomed new cross country trails that could be easily accessed by students.*





# Learning to Live with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

By Simon Laplante and Elaine Lochhead, Seine River School Division

**S**eine River School Division prides itself on being an inclusive school division. We look for ways to include all students in authentic ways. We consider inclusion to be an attitude, which means inclusion pervades all our decisions and choices. Students with “invisible” challenges pose unique challenges for schools. Students who have “obvious” challenges, such as using a wheelchair, walker, or a walking stick, are visible to society.

Across Manitoba, students who have invisible challenges, such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), face tests that are just as real. Seine River School Division recognizes that one of the most effective ways to support our communities around invisible challenges is to provide professional learning and information. We want our staff to know the facts about FASD so their knowledge about this “invisible” disability helps them to make good decisions and plans for students.

More than four per cent of Canadians live with FASD. Although this represents over one million Canadians, FASD continues to be misunderstood and ineffectively supported by our school communities. The fiscal cost of FASD to our country is enormous but more importantly, it has a huge impact on the justice, social, and health systems, as well as our families who struggle day to day to meet the needs of children and adults with FASD.

FASD is a permanent physical damage to the brain caused by the exposure to alcohol in utero. It is a lifelong condition that is sometimes visible with specific facial traits but for most people, the signs are invisible. People with FASD often struggle with intellectual, emotional, and social difficulties. They often have difficulty understanding

Where things get complicated is the fact that for 80 per cent of people with FASD, the disorder is absolutely not visible and is often hidden behind vivacious cognitive abilities, yet impetuous behaviours.

cause to effect and social norms, regulating their emotions, and managing daily responsibilities. They are often very intelligent, creative, and intuitive. In this dichotomy resides the difficulty for so many educators to make sense of the challenging and unpredictable behaviour of an individual who appears very capable.

Not every diagnostic of FASD requires birth mothers to admit consuming alcohol during the pregnancy. However, whether it is visible or not, a certain number of deficiencies in the cognitive and emotive functions are necessary for a diagnostic. Only 20 per cent of people with FASD have facial traits and evident intellectual challenges. Where things get complicated is the fact that for 80 per cent of people with FASD, the disorder is absolutely not visible and is often hidden behind vivacious cognitive abilities, yet impetuous behaviours. In these cases, a diagnostic requires confirmation that there was alcohol consumption during the pregnancy, which can be difficult to establish and very traumatic for the mother.

A practical example of support in Seine River School Division for students diagnosed with FASD occurred in one of our Kindergarten to Grade 8 schools. An early years’ teacher had a student in her classroom with FASD and the year had been quite trying in terms of helping him managing his behaviour. Over the year, she established routines and built trust with the student and soon the unwanted

behaviours started to decrease. At the end of the school year, the teacher agreed to follow the student up to the next grade and as a result, the student had a very successful year. Routines, trust, and consistency are essential in helping students with FASD to be successful.

For many members of our school communities, it may be difficult to engage and welcome students with FASD. Failure to do so, however, will promote misunderstanding, impatience, and social isolation for the families. Despite the numerous challenges faced by individuals with FASD, there are many examples of success for people with FASD who have become engaged citizens.

With appropriate support, such as housing, work placement, education, and supported families, there are endless possibilities. There is a movement to have a national strategy around FASD so that we can better understand the various challenges and celebrates successes. This information needs to be shared across all systems – staff, families, and society. In Seine River School Division, and other divisions, there is and continues to be tremendous efforts to support students. We recognize it will take even more efforts to ensure inclusion is secure for all students with challenges. ■

*Simon Laplante and Elaine Lochhead are co-Superintendents for the Seine River School Division.*

# Raising and Levelling the Bar in Seven Oaks

By Brian O'Leary, Seven Oaks School Division

**A**s we talk about the impact of poverty in Manitoba, our talk of percentage rates and achievement gaps often obscures the daily grind children in poverty face. We look to schools to ameliorate the impact of poverty. The link between poverty and school outcomes is clear, but the link between school and children's daily lives is even more clear.

A few years ago, Seven Oaks School Division began looking at barriers to participation among students. One of our teachers told the story of a student asking to be excused from a field trip with a modest cost. Unable to pay, the student claimed to have a doctor's appointment that day in order to avoid the cost and shame of asking for help.

There are things schools can do, such as eliminate cost barriers. Schools charge for all kinds of things – field trips, lockers, books, lunch supervision, and musical instruments. A middle year's school supply list can cost upwards of \$150 per student. In Seven Oaks School Division, we've eliminated or greatly reduced those charges. Students no longer miss school on a field trip day because they can't afford to go. Participation in high school band increased by 50 per cent when we began providing instruments at no charge.

We need to increase opportunity. Students with less need more. Students in Elwick Community School in Seven Oaks participate in the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra's Sistema program. They receive intensive musical instruction after school, five days a week. Though expectations are high, students rise to those expectations. Research on the impact of Sistema conducted by the University of Manitoba shows that in addition to musical ability, children in Sistema make substantial academic gains and even more substantial gains in confidence, pride, and identity.

Wayfinders, our after-school tutoring, mentoring, and scholarship incentive program, boosts high school graduation and post-secondary entrance rates. Wayfinders serves high school students marginalized by poverty, students in care, and students who've left their remote community to attend school in Winnipeg. Wayfinders involves those students in after school and summer programming. It provides tutoring, nutrition, and mentorship. Participants consistently graduate at or above provincial graduation rates and over 80 per cent of participants continue to a post-secondary education.

We need to bridge the digital divide. Throughout the pandemic Seven Oaks School Division distributed devices to over 3,000 students every time our schools transitioned to remote learning. That levels the bar a bit. But it doesn't really open up opportunities.

To really raise the bar, Seven Oaks, in partnership with New

Media Manitoba, launched Tech Hub – an after-school course in video game programming. One hundred and fifty high school students attend after school classes where they learn the basics of video game programming from experts in the field.

The most important thing we do in Seven Oaks is to ensure that all students have access to highly skilled teachers and healthy engaged classmates. We don't stream students into segregated classes. We invest in classroom-based supports and reasonable class sizes. We value inclusion.

We know that poverty has an impact. It influences outcomes but it doesn't determine them. We know that schools can't do everything, but they can do something. Let's focus on that something and do it well. ■

*Brian O'Leary is the Superintendent for Seven Oaks School Division.*



SEVEN OAKS  
SCHOOL DIVISION  
*community begins here*



*Students who participate in Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra's Sistema program make substantial academic gains and even more substantial gains in confidence, pride, and identity. Photo taken pre-pandemic.*



# Educational Opportunities and Training Needs

By Cameron Mateika, Swan Valley School Division

**T**he Swan Valley School Division (SVSD) and the Swan Valley Regional Secondary School (SVRSS) have worked for many years to address the training needs within the region. The opportunities are at the high school level as well as within the adult population. We are 500 kilometres from Winnipeg training institutes and 200 to 350 kilometres from University College of the North and Brandon post-secondary schools. For some of our students and adults those distances are just a part of life and their training needs are being achieved very successfully. However, for many individuals who are unsure of their direction, and lack knowledge of all the opportunities available, it can be a fearful experience to relocate and embark on a rigorous training schedule.

Through the Manitoba Education Multi-Year Teacher Idea Fund, the SVSD has been able to establish the Northern Lights Institute of Trades and Technology (NITT). The concept is that NITT will act as broker for educational opportunities within the region. It is under the management and control of the SVSD but has the flexibility to partner with other accredited institutions to bring training to our Grade 12 students as well as adults within the region. Many long-term partnerships have developed over the years and have formed the basis for the development of NITT.

We have been able to establish Level 1 programs within our new Heavy-Duty Shop, as well as our newest Building Trades Shop. The Trades Shop affords space for the construction of a 1,500 square foot house, along with room for a full lineup of construction equipment, a classroom, and Industrial Electrical lab space. A partnership with our local building supply outlet,



*Students practice on mannequins while earning their Red Seal in hairstyling.*

Northern Specialties, provides over \$200,000 worth of materials each year to build a fully finished house. This year our third house will once again be sold by Northern Specialties to the Sapotawayak Cree Nation community, which has been a strong SVSD partner for many years.

NITT has also brokered a partnership project with Louis Riel Vocational College in Winnipeg to deliver an 18-month Indigenous Focused Early Childhood Education II program. Currently, there are 16 students who are three months into the program. In the newly renovated

SVRSS hairstyling lab, an adult Red Seal Hairstyling course is training 13 students to work in industry. Enrollment for a second intake starting September 2022 is underway.

In addition, students can earn Level One Technical training in welding, automotive, culinary arts, and electrical. We also have job-readiness training in multimedia, Microsoft Certification, Applied Commerce, and through our award-winning Environmental Management program. ■

*Cameron Mateika is Superintendent of Swan Valley School Division.*

# Mentorship in Turtle Mountain School Division



By Grant Wiesner, Turtle Mountain School Division

**T**urtle Mountain School Division is a small school division that, in the past five years, has seen a demographic shift in staff; 44 per cent of the division's teaching staff are new to the profession and have taught for five years or less. Not only has there been extensive turnover, the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on teaching and learning has been significant.

In response, in the spring of 2021, Turtle Mountain School Division's senior administration, school principals, and literacy and numeracy teacher-leaders began working on a mentorship program for new teachers. The purposes of the mentorship program are to ensure that staff will have the opportunity to learn about school division and provincial priorities, model best practices in their classrooms, and be actively involved in professional development. For the 2021-2022 school year, it was decided that Turtle Mountain School Division's literacy and numeracy teacher-leaders would take on the task of mentoring the new staff, under the supervision of school principals and the superintendent.

The first component of the mentorship program is to guarantee that school division priorities are understood by teachers and are being demonstrated in the classroom. In 2019, Turtle Mountain School Division, in consultation with key stakeholders, had identified four priorities in its 2020-2024 Strategic Plan. They were to:

1. Strengthen literacy and numeracy achievement;
2. Enhance student experiences and engagement;
3. Strengthen pathways to student success; and
4. Develop strong and resilient students.

The Division's mentorship program, led by the literacy and numeracy teacher-leaders and school principals, provides a

As a result of targeted mentorship this year, teacher Professional Growth Plans are reflecting divisional and school priorities and discussions between mentors and mentees are focusing on ways that classroom practices can support divisional and school goals.

way to ensure that teachers are matching their practice with divisional goals.

As a result of targeted mentorship this year, teacher Professional Growth Plans are reflecting divisional and school priorities and discussions between mentors and mentees are focusing on ways that classroom practices can support divisional and school goals.

The second component of the mentorship program is to establish that educators are aware of and employing Manitoba Education learning outcomes. Through spending time with new staff and helping them understand the importance of curricular outcomes and how to use assessment to inform their instruction, Turtle Mountain School Division's literacy and numeracy teacher-leaders and school principals are building a strong teaching foundation. Through Teaching Sprints, common knowledge and understanding are being fostered, in particular with reading and writing instruction and assessment, and in numeracy teaching skills.

The third component of the mentorship program is ensuring that teachers in Turtle Mountain School Division are aligning their educational practice with current research. Are teachers aware of the most recent understandings of best practices? Is their teaching reflecting that awareness? Some examples of best practices that are supported by research are teacher effect on student engagement; assessing for learning, as learning, and of learning; and using differentiated instruction to support all students. Through the Teaching Sprints model, teachers are using data from research and classroom-based

assessments to guide their instruction and identify the next steps that they need to take with students.

The final component of the mentorship program is for teachers to be actively involved in their professional development by identifying what they need to build their teaching skillset. This is done through guided support from the literacy and numeracy teacher-leaders and school administrators. School-based professional learning communities, monthly early dismissal times, the mRLC's Numeracy Achievement Program, and Teaching Sprint grade groups have made it possible for teachers to learn from one another, to individually assess their teaching practices and beliefs, and to be proactive agents of change within their classrooms and schools.

In reviewing this year's mentorship program with the division's literacy and numeracy teacher-leaders and school principals, we feel that we are reaching the goals set out at the onset of the project. New staff are demonstrating a greater understanding of division priorities and goals, applying and referring to curricular outcomes, using data to inform their instruction, and focusing on professional development to build their skills. The division's next steps are to develop mentorship relationships between teachers and have school principals be even more involved in leading mentorship within their schools. ■

*Grant Wiesner is Superintendent/CEO of Turtle Mountain School Division.*



# Schools are More than Bricks and Mortar

By Tim Stefanishyn, Whiteshell School Division

**R**eflecting back to March 2020, it's easy to understand how we underestimated the mental toll the following two years would take on learners' personal and collective well-being. In the Whiteshell, we counted ourselves among the lucky. We had space in our schools to creatively meet physical distancing requirements, allowing us to have all learners in schools everyday with no lost days. Indeed, we were fortunate.

However, we were also hyper-focussed (like everyone else) with cleaning, travelling in hallways, cohorting students, masking, and cancelling all school extracurricular activity. Our acute default position was to be thankful that, unlike many divisions, we had learners in live lessons daily. However, we missed the subtle deterioration unfolding.

As September rolled into October and a darker version of *Groundhog Day* continued, we began to make notable observations. Classroom management issues and school related behaviour incidents were non-existent – a silver lining of sorts in an otherwise cloudy period. However, we discovered other notable things missing from the environment. Classrooms felt like library spaces and hallways were void of the usual school buzz, busyness, and life. One of our teachers asked a group of peers, "When was the last time you remember hearing laughter?" The question lingered in silence as a large white elephant walked through our front doors.

"We will come out stronger on the other side...we're all in this together," we said. It was our rally cry, but it didn't reflect reality; we were all experiencing the challenges in different ways. The only thing we were doing together was sinking and watching our spirit and community connectedness (our life blood) drain from the faces of our student body.



*Both indoor and outdoor activities during the wellness days resulted in more smiles and laughter for students and staff.*



*Students took part in wellness day jamborees that incorporated many different activities, inside and out.*

It was a moment of epiphany when we began to weigh the value of traditional learning against the value of mental wellness and the creation of a plan to address the latter was embarked upon. We were well-focused on curriculum preparation, Zoom meetings, and attention to

maintaining learning continuity, but we had temporarily lost sight of our old Whiteshell motto: *Schools are more than bricks and mortar.*

Our teaching staff began collaborating on a plan for a series of wellness-day jamborees that would allow our school



communities to rejuvenate, reconnect, and rebuild relationships with one another through a combination of new and familiar activities. There were only simple fundamental criteria that had to be met: activities had to be fun, playful, creative, student-led to the greatest extent possible, and incorporate both indoor and outdoor stations. The result was a cornucopia of activities, including soap stone carving, snow shoeing, pumpkin carving, ice fishing, low-organized games, quinzhee building, Easter egg decorating, snow sculpting, escape room challenges, hockey, ice skating, campfires, broomball, and STEM activities. What was our primary indicator of success? It was laughter in abundance measured in three-digit decibels. It was the wrinkled eyes that unmasked veiled smiles of joy.

With laughter reverberating through our buildings once again, we reflected on our success and other key findings from the wellness days. We celebrated a tremendous victory when we noted that our attendance levels were higher than normal and that our most at risk, vulnerable, and isolated students were present and engaged. We had reached, connected, and/or reconnected with them in ways (not surprisingly) Zoom meetings and sterile feeling learning environments could not.

Post-activity surveys indicated that both teachers and learners at all levels valued and appreciated our wellness days more than any other days throughout

the school year. Community connectedness has always been a cornerstone of our small division's success. Our resolve was challenged, we learned many lessons, and we passed. Our focus moving forward is to identify key wellness outcomes, set targeted criteria, apply strategies, and increase intervals to learn and foster self-care, community care, and wellness for all. Our ultimate goal is to flourish, continuing to use smiles and laughter as one of our key indicators of success. ■

*Tim Stefanishyn is Superintendent of the Whiteshell School Division.*



*The Whiteshell School Division's goal moving forward is to flourish and continue to use smiles and laughter as their key for success.*



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# 150 Years of Learning

By Pauline Clarke, Betty Edel, and Jamie Dumont, Winnipeg School Division

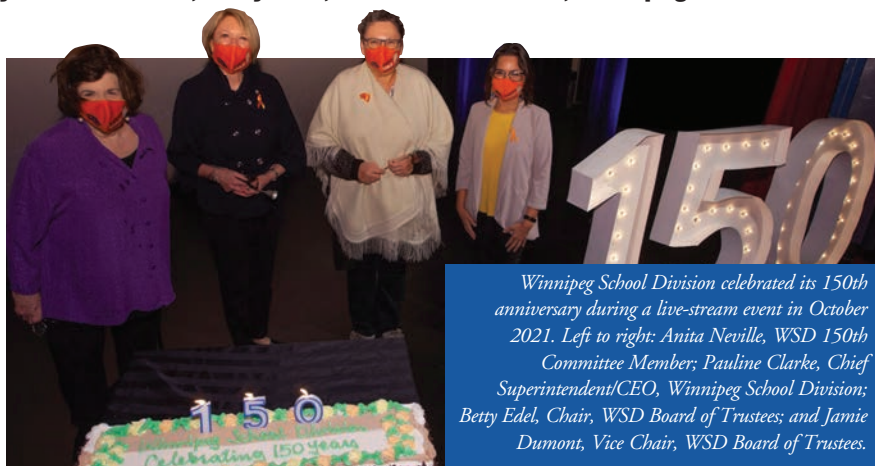
**W**innipeg School Division (WSD) marked its 150th anniversary on October 30, 2021, a significant and extraordinary milestone for any organization and especially for one in education. One year after Manitoba became a province, it passed the *School Act* and the first school was in the then Protestant School District Number 10, which was re-named District Number 1 in 1875.

In 1871, Winnipeg had a population of 241. Its first public school opened on October 30th of that year, in a log cabin, on the southeast corner of Maple Street and Common Street, now known as Henry Avenue. Twenty children attended their first day of school with William Fisher Luxton as their teacher. Two years later in 1873, Winnipeg incorporated as a city with a population of 1,869.

With each passing decade, Winnipeg's population grew and by 1971 there were 246,246 residents living in the city. During its 100th year, WSD consisted of 84 schools, eventually increasing to 103 schools in ensuing years. Today, WSD has 78 schools with almost 30,000 students from nursery to Grade 12.

As a school division, staff and students are reflecting on lessons of the past and opportunities for the future throughout the 2021-2022 school year. WSD stands out as the first school division in Canada to develop and implement an Indigenous Education Policy that incorporates cultural and land-based teaching into its school curriculum. It was also the first school division in the province to establish nursery school in communities where young children could benefit from a structured learning environment.

Many milestones have supported the WSD vision, which is to provide a learning environment that fosters the growth of each student's potential and equitable opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills, and values necessary



Winnipeg School Division celebrated its 150th anniversary during a live-stream event in October 2021. Left to right: Anita Neville, WSD 150th Committee Member; Pauline Clarke, Chief Superintendent/CEO, Winnipeg School Division; Betty Edel, Chair, WSD Board of Trustees; and Jamie Dumont, Vice Chair, WSD Board of Trustees.

for meaningful participation in a global and diverse society.

Programs and services to support students and families include Special Education/Inclusion Support Services (1888); Vocational Education (1912); Clinical Support Services (1941); Indigenous Education (1960); French Immersion (1973); Bilingual Language Programs – Ukrainian (1979), Cree/Ojibwe (1990s), Hebrew (1991), and Spanish (2016); Newcomer Services (1982); and International Education (2017), to name a few.

A glimpse into WSD's history shows how much we have progressed as a society. In 1877, male and female students attended separate schools and participated in separate activities. Today, all students collaborate with one another

and participate in co-ed activities from home economics and industrial arts to physical education and sciences.

Winnipeg School Division has always been, for the entirety of its 150 years, a unique and forward-thinking member of the education world. It is thanks to the grit, determination, and compassion of our division and school leaders, teachers, and division-wide staff that WSD maintains the many programs and services that support the needs and aspirations of an amazing student body. ■

*Pauline Clarke is the Chief Superintendent and CEO of the Winnipeg School Division. Betty Edel is the Chair and Jamie Dumont is the Vice Chair of the Winnipeg School Division Board of Trustees.*

## Interesting notes:

In 1915, the Julia Clark School was built to care for orphaned and abandoned children, as well as children of single parents. During World War I, it was also home to children of soldiers fighting overseas. In 1921, students were transferred to a newly built facility, Sir John Franklin School.

Jameswood Place School operated from 1946 to 1954. It was created to meet the educational needs of approximately 135 families living in Jameswood Place, an emergency housing project after World War II. It closed in 1954 to make way for the expansion of a manufacturing plant.

WSD also provided classroom instruction for students at Detention Home School, a Salvation Army facility which opened on Simcoe Street in October 1908. Detention Home School focused on helping children under 16 years of age who were detained, incarcerated, or in protective custody. The facility was an alternative to jail with support from the child's family.

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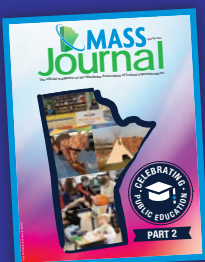
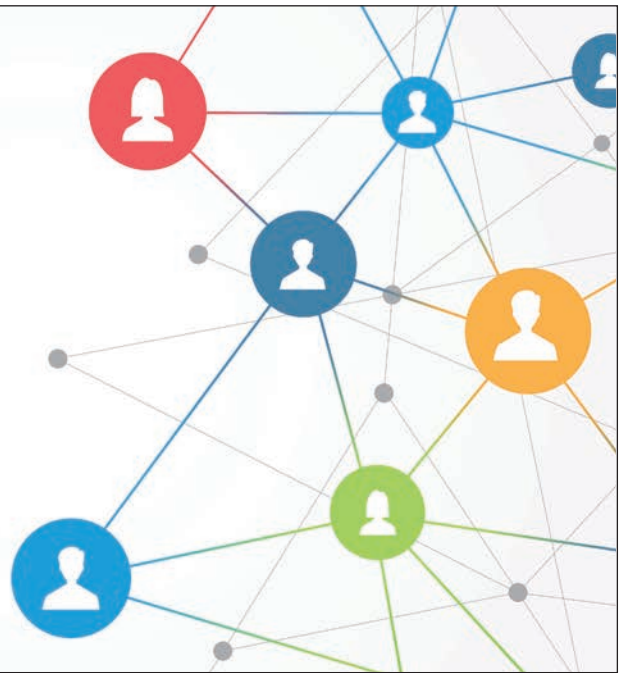
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Victoria Inn Hotel & Convention Centre  
<http://mass.mb.ca/events>

**CASSA Annual Leadership Conference**  
“Reimagining Education”  
July 6-8, 2022  
Algonquin Resort  
St. Andrew's By-the-Sea, New Brunswick  
<http://conference.cassa-acgcs.ca>



Katie White

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# Unlock the Whole Child

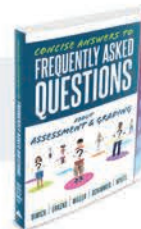
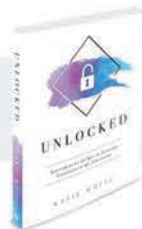
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