

MASS **Journal**

Spring 2023

The official magazine of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents



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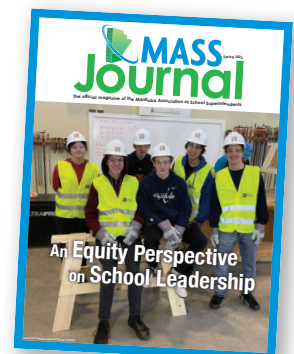
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On the cover: The Portage la Prairie School Division's (PLPSD) approach to career development is deeply rooted in relationships. Pictured on the cover is a group of Portage Collegiate Grade 9 students that participated in the Intro to Building Construction Trades series of workshops, at the Carpentry Union Local 343. This photo was provided by Portage la Prairie School Division. Turn to page 18 to learn more about how PLPSD is Nurturing the Culture of Career.



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It is spring 2023, and the *MASS Journal* is being prepared for release. In some ways, so many things are different and yet so many things remain the same. We are busy blending the best practices that emerged because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and are focused on staff and student well-being and equity leadership. I have no doubt that there is new learning that each of us can garner from our journal entries that focus on equity in leadership.

Governance discussions in our school system typically focus on adults. We all appreciate and value student voice, and the development of a student trustee board is intriguing. You can learn more about the importance of this board and how it can lead to systematic changes in a school division.

Relevant learning has been a topic of discussion and a priority for many years. Several school divisions talk about this further with their engagement in career development, high school apprenticeship, and dual credits. There are so many creative ways that divisions are enabling more relevant and career focused learning for students. Two divisions will highlight their journey for you.

Staff recruitment is a challenge that northern school divisions face throughout the entire school year. Frontier School Division shares their creative partnership with the University of Manitoba to help address the shortage of clinicians. There is much to be learned from this initiative to inform the work for other divisions.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion sit heavy on the hearts of all educators. Many divisions have engaged in policy development and action projects to address these priority topics. Have you had the courage to engage in a conversation with your local staff, students, and families to hear their stories and experiences with the education system? Working to grow a staff where students can see themselves reflected is such important yet hard work. Taking the first step to hearing personal stories and journeys can help move this work forward.

As I pause and reflect on this edition of the *MASS Journal*, I am once again in awe of the tremendous work that is occurring in this great province of ours. Thank you, MASS leaders, for your unwavering commitment to the students we serve and your willingness to share those stories here. I am aware that this journal highlights only a small sample size of the student focused work that occurs every day in public schools in Manitoba. Manitoba public school divisions have much to be proud of!

Krista Curry
President



Nous sommes au printemps 2023 et le *MASS Journal* est en cours de préparation. D'une certaine manière, bien des choses ont changé et pourtant, beaucoup sont restées les mêmes. Nous sommes occupés à combiner les meilleures pratiques qui ont émergé en raison de la pandémie de COVID-19, et nous nous concentrons sur le bien-être du personnel et des étudiants et le leadership en matière d'équité. Je ne doute pas que chacune et chacun d'entre nous puisse tirer de nouveaux enseignements des articles de notre journal qui portent sur l'équité dans le leadership.

Dans notre système scolaire, les discussions sur la gouvernance se concentrent généralement sur les adultes. Nous apprécions et valorisons la voix des élèves, et la création d'un conseil d'élèves est riche de promesses. Vous pourrez en apprendre plus long sur l'importance de ce conseil et sur la manière dont il peut conduire à des changements systématiques dans une division scolaire.

L'apprentissage pertinent est un sujet de discussion et une priorité depuis de nombreuses années. Plusieurs divisions scolaires poussent la discussion plus loin en misant sur le développement de carrière, les programmes d'apprentissage au secondaire, et la double reconnaissance de crédit. Tant de divisions scolaires adoptent des méthodes créatives pour permettre un apprentissage plus pertinent et axé sur la carrière pour les élèves. Deux d'entre elles vous feront part de leur parcours.

Le recrutement du personnel est un défi auquel les divisions scolaires du Nord sont confrontées tout au long de l'année scolaire. La Division scolaire Frontier nous fait part de son partenariat créatif avec l'Université du Manitoba pour remédier à la pénurie de cliniciennes et cliniciens. Il y a beaucoup à apprendre de cette initiative pour éclairer le travail des autres divisions.

La diversité, l'équité et l'inclusion sont au cœur des préoccupations de toutes les personnes qui œuvrent en enseignement. De nombreuses divisions se sont lancées dans l'élaboration de politiques et de plans d'action pour traiter ces sujets prioritaires. Avez-vous eu le courage d'engager une conversation avec le personnel, les élèves et les familles de votre région afin d'entendre leurs histoires et leurs expériences avec le système éducatif? Accroître les effectifs en s'assurant de mettre en place un personnel dans lequel les élèves peuvent se reconnaître est un travail important mais difficile. Faire le premier pas pour écouter les histoires et les parcours personnels peut grandement aider à aller de l'avant dans cette voie.

Alors que je prends le temps de réfléchir à cette édition du *MASS Journal*, je suis une fois de plus émerveillée par le travail formidable qui s'accomplit dans notre magnifique province. Merci à vous, leaders de la MASS, pour votre engagement inébranlable envers les élèves que nous servons, et pour avoir bien voulu nous faire part de ces histoires ici. Je suis consciente que ce journal ne présente qu'un petit échantillon du travail axé sur les élèves qui est effectué chaque jour dans les écoles publiques du Manitoba. Les divisions des écoles publiques du Manitoba ont de quoi être fières!

Krista Curry
Présidente



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By Leslie Redelinghuys, Sylvan Learning (Redelinghuys)

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As we move into the latter part of the 2022/2023 school year, we again have the opportunity to reflect on the work being done by school divisions to meet the challenges of equity, diversity, and inclusion within our schools' systems. As noted in the fall issue of the *MASS Journal*, MASS as an organization has committed to a continued focus on early learning, Indigenous education, and mental health and well-being through the lens of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Thank you to the authors of the articles in this edition of the *MASS Journal* as you provide the opportunity to think about ways of engaging students, staff, trustees, and school communities in the quest to provide authentic learning experiences for all. Each article is an example of the time, energy, compassion, and dedication that is prevalent on our systems to support positive learning outcomes for students. The wide scan of ways in which learning opportunities and supports for learners are prioritized speaks to the leadership in our school divisions.

The path forward during this year has provided many opportunities to reflect on how we might want to think about or do things differently as we continue to move out of the pandemic. The teaching and learning opportunities and experiences continue to pay particular attention to the mental health and well – being of everyone.

Planning for the many end of year celebrations is underway. We look forward to celebrating with you all in-person once again. To those who have retired in the last year, we look forward to honouring you and wish you many opportunities to enjoy new experiences in the time ahead. Thank you for your leadership in your school division, and with the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents.

Thank you to each of you for your commitment, dedication, and leadership to public education in this province. The leaders of the future are being mentored by the leaders of today, which includes each one of you.

Barb Isaak
Executive Director

Alors que nous entrons dans la dernière partie de l'année scolaire 2022-2023, nous avons à nouveau l'occasion de réfléchir au travail accompli par les divisions scolaires pour relever les défis de l'équité, de la diversité et de l'inclusion au sein de nos systèmes scolaires. Comme on a pu le lire dans le numéro d'automne du *MASS Journal*, la Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS), en tant qu'organisation, s'est engagée à poursuivre les avancées en matière d'apprentissage précoce, d'éducation autochtone, de santé mentale et de bien-être sous l'angle de l'équité, de la diversité et de l'inclusion.

Nous remercions les rédacteurs et rédactrices des articles de ce numéro du *MASS Journal*, qui nous donnent l'occasion de réfléchir aux moyens d'engager les élèves, le personnel, les administrateurs et les communautés scolaires dans la quête d'expériences d'apprentissage authentiques pour toutes et tous. Chacun de ces articles met en lumière le temps, l'énergie, la compassion et le dévouement qui prévalent dans nos systèmes pour favoriser des résultats d'apprentissage positifs pour les élèves. Le large éventail de moyens déployés pour donner la priorité aux possibilités d'apprentissage et aux soutiens aux élèves témoigne éloquentement du leadership de nos divisions scolaires.

Le chemin parcouru au cours de cette année a fourni de nombreuses occasions de réfléchir à la manière dont nous pourrions aborder ou faire les choses différemment, alors que nous sortons de la pandémie. Les possibilités et les expériences d'enseignement et d'apprentissage continuent d'accorder une attention particulière à la santé mentale et au bien-être individuel et collectif.

La planification des nombreuses célébrations de fin d'année est en cours. Nous nous réjouissons à la perspective de les célébrer une fois de plus en personne avec vous. À ceux et celles qui ont pris leur retraite au cours de l'année écoulée, c'est avec émotion que nous nous apprêtons à vous rendre hommage, et nous vous souhaitons de nombreuses occasions de vivre de nouvelles expériences dans l'avenir. Merci pour le leadership dont vous avez fait preuve au sein de votre division scolaire et de la Manitoba Association of School Superintendents.

À chacune et chacun d'entre vous, merci pour votre engagement, votre dévouement et votre leadership dans le domaine de l'éducation publique dans cette province. Les leaders de demain sont encadrés par les leaders d'aujourd'hui, et vous en faites incontestablement partie.

Barb Isaak
Directrice générale

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Lake

STAFF:



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Karen Wohlgemuth
Executive Assistant

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 learners in our care.

MASS believes that *improved achievement and well-being for all 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. ■



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Write for the *MASS Journal*!

The *MASS Journal* reaches readers every spring and fall, sharing stories of best practices, challenges and how they've been overcome, thoughts on leadership, and much more! If you would like to write for the Fall 2023 issue, please send an abstract to Executive Director Barb Isaak (barb.isaak@mass.mb.ca) and copy editor Jenna Collignon (jcollignon@matrixgroupinc.net). Include your name, position, and division, and two to three sentences on your topic.

Here are details for the Fall 2023 issue:

Theme: Welcoming Newcomers to Manitoba Schools

Abstracts due May 26, 2023

Final articles due September 8, 2023



Notes:

If your abstract is accepted, you will be notified and provided with a word count and further details.

Articles cannot be company or product promotional.

The preference is to have articles written by school and division senior leadership (superintendents, principals, etc.). If you do not fall within this category but have a great idea, please work with your senior leadership on the abstract and, if accepted, the final submission.

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The School Psychology Practicum Team, Norway House Fall 2022. Pictured from left to right: Silpa Sasikumar, Danika Wiens, Kyla Smorang, Jonathan Berrington, Janine Montgomery, and Kimberly Merasty. Photos courtesy of Frontier School Division.



Meeting the Clinician Challenges from a Northern and Rural Perspective

By Tyson MacGillivray and Jonathan Berrington, Frontier School Division

Within the Manitoba's School System, clinicians provide important support for both staff and students. Speech and Language Pathologists, School Psychologists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Mental Health Specialists, and many others all work alongside the core school staff to ensure the success and well-being of all students. For example, school psychologists help with identifying and supporting appropriate programming,

provide professional development opportunities, consult with teachers and parents, create and support interventions, respond to crises, support behavioral management, and assess the needs of students.

According to the National Association of School Psychologists, the recommended ratio of students to school psychologists is 500:1. The ratio should not exceed 1,000:1 to ensure the best outcomes for students. In Manitoba our rural school divisions have a severe shortage of clinicians,

including school psychologists. One rural school division has a ratio of 960:1, while another has a ratio of 1,720:1. Frontier School Division currently has a ratio of students to school psychologists of 3,579:1, which is one seventh of the recommended number.

Many rural school divisions, including Frontier School Division, have open positions that are not being filled due to recruiting challenges. There are plenty of potential causes for these shortages in rural divisions, including the difficulty of encouraging new clinicians to move

Pictured from left to right: Denise Hunnie-Menow, Danika Wiens, Jonathan Berrington, Janine Montgomery, Silpa Sasikumar, and Kyla Smorang.



outside of the metro area and the low number of new clinicians entering the field. There are often fewer new school psychologists looking for jobs than there are positions available. The abundance of available positions leads to new clinicians accepting jobs closer to home. Living rurally can pose its own challenges, which can make it difficult to entice new clinicians to pack up their lives and relocate to a new town.

To enhance equity in education, the schools that have the highest need would need additional support. Analysis of American schools found that schools in lower socio-economic status neighbourhoods had fewer school psychologists per 100 students than schools in higher socio-economic status neighbourhoods. This inequity of service contributes to an ever-widening gap between these two neighbourhoods. Schools that frequently have the greatest needs often have the least access to support. In Manitoba, our northern and rural schools will continue to experience challenges when they do not have appropriate access to the support provided by a strong number of clinicians.



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Northern and rural school divisions are aware of the shortage of clinicians. Many programs and incentives are initiated each year in the hopes of hiring and retaining more clinicians. The Department of Education provides the northern and rural bursary, which creates an important financial incentive, this incentive on its own has not proven to meet the staffing gaps. Divisions continue to focus on intensive recruitment and retention campaigns with limited success. Frontier School Division works closely with Jordan's Principle to hire Mental Wellness Workers who provide essential mental health support to students. Given the shortages of clinicians in Manitoba and more specifically in northern and rural divisions, a provincial strategy needs to be initiated with input from all sectors to reduce clinician workloads and be able to better support students needs.

Recently, Frontier School Division has partnered with the University of Manitoba to create a practicum experience for students in the School Psychology Graduate Program. Frontier School Division's student services coordinator, school psychologist, and the Program Coordinator of the School Psychology Graduate Program have supervised a group of students on week-long practicum experiences in northern schools. There have been three of these practicums completed to date with the next one being planned for Spring 2023. The upcoming practicum will include nine graduate students working with both of our schools in Norway House.

Previous practicums have provided much needed assessments in several of our northern schools and have proven to be a huge success. The graduate students received valuable practical experience in rural and northern schools that augmented their academic learning. Many schools in rural and northern Manitoba have difficulty accessing Educational Psychologists and the essential supports they provide to both staff, students, and parents. This model has proven to be a stop gap helpful measure until the staffing shortages can be addressed. Staff in these rural schools were also able to receive valuable professional development from The University of Manitoba Program Coordinator of the School Psychologist Graduate Program.

The professional development provided staff with tangible tools to effectively support the needs of their students. This initiative has in some cases benefited recruitment efforts, as students get to experience new communities and areas of the province, showing the beauty and vibrancy of Northern Manitoba and what it has to offer. Frontier School Division has hired a recent graduate because of the northern practicum experience, and we hope many more will join the growing student support team at Frontier School Division.

Frontier School Division hopes to expand the program to engage more students, with the potential to expand to other faculties at the University of Manitoba to provide practicum experiences for additional graduate programs. As the need for clinicians rises, creative programs and initiatives will help to enhance equity in communities we serve. ■

Tyson MacGillivray is the Superintendent, and Jonathan Berrington is the School Psychologist for Frontier School Division.



Nurturing the Culture of Career



Relationships! Relationships! Relationships! The Portage la Prairie School Division's (PLPSD) approach to career development is deeply rooted in relationships. It is an indisputable fact that all community career credits, whether high school apprenticeship credits, career development credits, or credits for employment, depend entirely on the support of employers and community partners. This programming provides "real-world" learning opportunities that can only be experienced outside the school's walls. The working relationship between student, school, and employer can be related to a three-legged stool that can only provide stability when everyone works together to support the needs of all invested.

PLPSD sees the value in career development programming. It supports the transition of its students into the world of work, most notably in a mandated Grade 9 Career Development course taken by all students. The system is delivered as a year-long offering opposite Grade 9 English Language Arts. It recognizes that students at this age are considering their first job and provides them with the tools to take the first steps towards this

goal as safely as possible. The course has students creating resumes, participating in mock interviews, completing Young Workers Readiness Certification, and learning about their rights as an employee. This front-loading provides students with the prerequisite to earning up to two credits for employment. These credits are an excellent means to acknowledge the hard work that students are doing regarding balancing school and part-time employment. Employment provides the means for students to learn and practice several critical soft and hard skills, such as working effectively as part of a team, following a schedule, and demonstrating responsibility. In addition, the credits for employment immediately make all employers community partners.

All aspects of career education need to be explored during a student's formative years. Students need to know the local career development programs, the requirements and how to access the different programs. The division mandating the Grade 9 career development course has opened opportunities for all our students. By having students take this prerequisite, many career credits options are now available to the student when they want to access them. The barriers are removed for the student in Grade 9. In the 2021/2022 school year, over 300 career credits were earned by our students.

Breaking down the barriers between employers and students is essential to a healthy career development program. Events and opportunities to invite employers into the school are a welcomed occurrence. Being receptive to the needs of employers and truly listening helps foster these positive relationships. The strong working relationship between the career development coordinator and the employer is one of the most critical components for the success of the career development program. The employer needs to know and trust that the career development coordinator understands each company's individual needs and is placing students to fit those needs. The employer trusts that the career development coordinator is listening to the needs and demands of the company and

Breaking down the
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program.

entrusts that the right students are being placed that will fit the company's needs and values.

This partnership is further emphasized in the High School Apprenticeship Program. Students earn up to eight credits toward high school graduation and authentic apprenticeship hours toward certification in a trade. This program requires a cheerleader to promote its benefits to students, parents, and employers. Without this essential piece, high school apprenticeship remains education's best-kept secret in most divisions. This program involves a lot of communication and accommodation on the school and employer's part. Navigating this path and balancing the needs of employer, student, and school only works when everyone is "on the bus" and working together to meet the needs of all involved. The skilled trades are at the forefront of many divisional initiatives, including the most recent pilot of an Intro to Skilled Trades intensive workshop geared towards encouraging and supporting Indigenous and female students considering careers in the skilled trades. This Teacher Idea Fund-sponsored project is being piloted this year and is being offered with the assistance of the Manitoba Construction Sector Council. This initiative will see students getting hands-on exposure to various trade-related careers, including carpentry, plumbing, and heavy-duty construction.

We have had many success stories of our apprenticeship students in the field – the importance of knowing that the students are receiving information and skills first-hand from a red-sealed trade journeyman. The student is learning the

1. Portage Collegiate student Colton Olafson gets an opportunity to experience a flight simulator with KF Aero Site Manager Jeff Fletcher.
2. Portage Collegiate Ag Technician High School Apprentice Parker McCutcheon.
3. Portage Collegiate students who participated in the Red River College/ Portage Collegiate Health Care Aide Program, where they attend Red River College full-time semester two of their Grade 12 year, and earn Health Care Aide Certification.
4. Portage Collegiate students who participated in the Intro to Building Construction Trades series of workshops, at the Plumbers and Pipefitters training center.
5. Portage Collegiate students who participated in the Intro to Building Construction Trades series of workshops, at Century Union Local 343. Photos courtesy of Blair Hordeski.

job, on the job. One of our Long Plain First Nation students was riding the bus into town, and the Long Plain bus was having some mechanical issues. The student who is currently apprenticing with the mechanic that fixes that bus was able to help the situation. The student could communicate with the mechanic and fix the issue so the bus could safely reach school. Incredibly, the student had the bus back on the road in about five minutes, again demonstrating this program's importance.

The division also partners with the local Red River Polytechnic Campus,

which has Grade 12 students taking Health Care Aide certification during semester two of their graduation year. Students earn the necessary steps toward high school graduation during the first semester. All graduation requirements must be during this semester to participate in the program. It is inspiring in June to see our graduates walk across the stage at Red River Polytechnic Campus to receive their graduation diploma from the Health Care Aide Program, just days before the student receives their Grade 12 diploma.

Although the pandemic put many projects on hold, we are now at an exciting time that marks the return of many in-person career-related events. Students are welcome to attend job fairs, post-secondary days, college and university tours, local industry visits, field trips to Ag Days, and trades-based events such as the Manitoba Construction Career Expo. PLPSD was thrilled to welcome and participate in the return of Take Our Kids to Work Day 2022.

When the employer cannot come to the school, the school will plan a bus trip to the employer. This is a unique bus trip, as groups of students do not get off the bus, but the employer gets on the bus and gives a short presentation of what their company develops and potential job opportunities and requirements in their field. This is a unique opportunity for all students, as this field trip may allow the students to see up to five local industries during a morning or afternoon tour. This allows students access to industry employment opportunities and options that they would not have the chance to see if we did not offer this option.

PLPSD believes all students should participate in career development education. The Career Development Coordinator produces a bi-annual newsletter called *The Dispatch*. This newsletter showcases different students in a variety of career development programs. It also showcases the various programs and the educational employment partners supporting our students. The local partnerships and the province have very well received it, as other school divisions have adopted a similar newsletter.

We need to support all our students, those who continue their post-secondary studies and choose a career development path. It all comes down to that in an evolving world, the division recognizes that most students will not follow the university route and strives to provide authentic and meaningful career-related exploration opportunities for all, regardless of the path. ■

Blair Hordeski is a Career Development Coordinator, and Pam Garnham is the Assistant Superintendent for Portage la Prairie School Division.

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SEVEN OAKS
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community begins here

Enrichment for All:

**By Matt Henderson and
Monica Gadsby, Seven Oaks
School Division; Camille
Pineda and Charlotte Genthon,
Wayfinders; and Clayon
Scheller, Maples Met School**

As a species, we often engage in what Orwell describes as doublespeak. That is the political rhetoric which smooths over a truth that is not easily digestible. In education, doublespeak manifests itself in the contrast between our aspirations for children and the ideological decisions that manifest themselves in policy, budgets, and day-to-day practice.

We want educators to move their practice further and deeper, but the schedule gets in the way. We want more progressive ways of evaluation, but the grammar of schooling dictates that exams in gyms fit the mold of rigour. Or as John Dewey argues, “It is not too much to say that an educational philosophy which professes to be based on the idea of freedom may become as dogmatic as ever as the traditional education is reacted against.” (2015, p. 22).

The tendency to engage in this dance of words also presents itself in our framing of inclusion. That is the philosophical stance that all learners should be included in public education. But in practice, many systems in the world engage in special education, removing learners with special needs from peers. Many systems create programs for “at-risk learners,” hiding them away in off-campus programs which exclude them from meaningful engagement with peers.

LawMakers is a partnership with the University of Manitoba that connects learners with an Introduction to Native Studies credit while matching them up with law student mentors.

Senior Years Dual Credits Act as Inclusive Pathway to Post-Secondary

Using Manitoba Education's dual credit system, we have developed several experiences for learners to engage in a university course, claim the university as their own, and dive deep into ideas and skills of significance.

Similarly, many systems create enrichment programs designed for some and not all. Programs like International Baccalaureate or Advanced Placement often, but not always, employ gate-keeping mechanisms to prevent many learners from participating. Students are allowed to apply to these programs, often required to write an entrance test. If they do not meet the entrance criteria, they are told overtly and covertly that they are not smart enough for these programs.



Tech Hub allows students to explore the different functions of utilizing technology towards a creative aim.



Dynamics of the Inner City is a dual credit focused on engaging learners in the relationship, for better or worse, between communities and systems. Photos courtesy of Matt Henderson.

In Seven Oaks School Division, we have attempted to design programs that offer enrichment opportunities for all, where learners make reasoned decisions to participate in specific programs that open post-secondary pathways to them which may not have existed before. Using Manitoba Education's dual credit system, we have developed several experiences for learners to engage in a university course, claim the university as their own, and dive deep into ideas and skills of significance.

Dynamics of the Inner City

Created through a partnership between the University of Winnipeg and Seven Oaks School Division, Dynamics of the Inner City is a dual credit focused on engaging learners in the relationship, for better or worse, between communities and systems. Led by community activist Mitch Bourbonniere, learners step out of our Senior Years schools twice a month to make connections to



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theory, neighbourhood champions, and the critical work that occurs on a dually basis to improve the lives of fellow Winnipeggers.

I would say the course provides an opportunity to build relationships with the community members and to experience parts of it through sharing experiences with a respected community elder. Several students have continued to be engaged with organizations and issues they are learning about outside the scope of the course (internships, summer jobs, etc.). I also think that it does a good job of getting a foot in the door to experience a little bit of how universities do things like registration, credits, etc. – Clayton Scheller, Maples Met School Advisor.

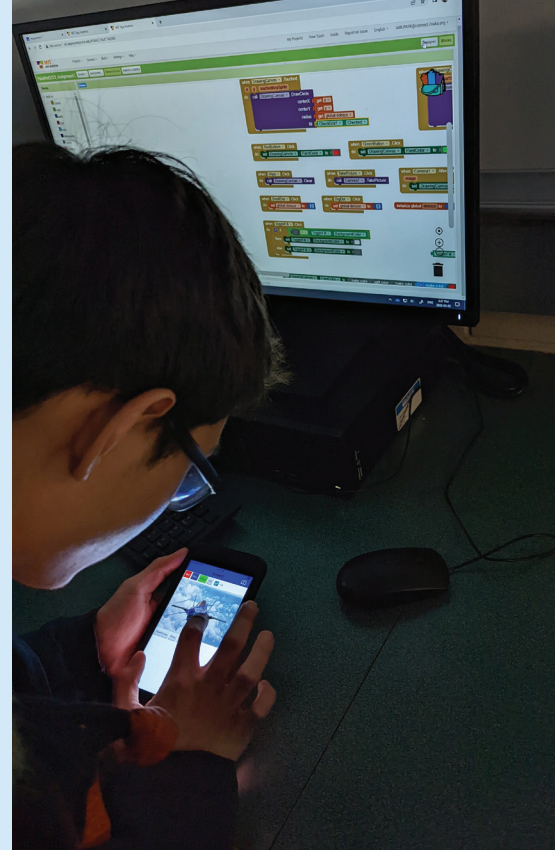
Tech Hub

Tech Hub after school is an extended learning opportunity for students that provides a unique opportunity for them to progressively transition into post-secondary studies while still receiving the comfort

and support of their high school community. We foster a community that provides the resources and support a high school environment can provide while achieving University outcomes. This includes providing a safe and inclusive space where students can be themselves with like-minded individuals, receive snacks, engage in positive conversations, and continue to build relationships with the University and the high schools.

This duo combination of our high school program and post-secondary elements makes this a unique learning experience for our students. Through the work that they produce, we encourage creative thinking that fosters a sense of belonging that will empower students to pursue their academic and personal goals.

Students display their creative process through their work through mediums such as adobe premiere, scratch, pixel art, earsketch and the MIT app inventor. We use these tools to offer ways in which students



Tech Hub after school is an extended learning opportunity for students that provides a unique chance for them to progressively transition into post-secondary studies.



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In Seven Oaks School Division, we have attempted to design programs that offer enrichment opportunities for all, where learners make reasoned decisions to participate in specific programs that open post-secondary pathways to them which may not have existed before.

can express their creativity through a curriculum that nurtures, encourages and support their learning. Our goal is to provide a learning space where University content can be delivered in an engaging and fulfilling way.

Tech Hub allows students to explore the different functions of utilizing technology towards a creative aim, and provides the opportunity to discover new interests and expand their skill sets outside of the school-day. For participants the strength of Tech Hub lies in providing a space to connect with like-minded peers and to have the opportunity to cultivate relationships with a diverse set of mentors that work in industry. It gives students the exposure, tools and networks to affirm their love of technology, while creating an understanding of the opportunities that might exist both in post-secondary and in industry. This after school program promotes critical thinking, relationship building, and expanding the notion that technology use exists beyond social media, and that we can all be creators. – Camille Pineda, Wayfinders SPSW.

LawMakers

LawMakers is a partnership with the University of Manitoba that

connects learners with an Introduction to Native Studies credit while matching them up with law student mentors. Indigenous learners engage in the deconstruction of colonial laws that have sought to remove them from land, language, and culture, so as to think of powerful solutions to problems of historical significance.

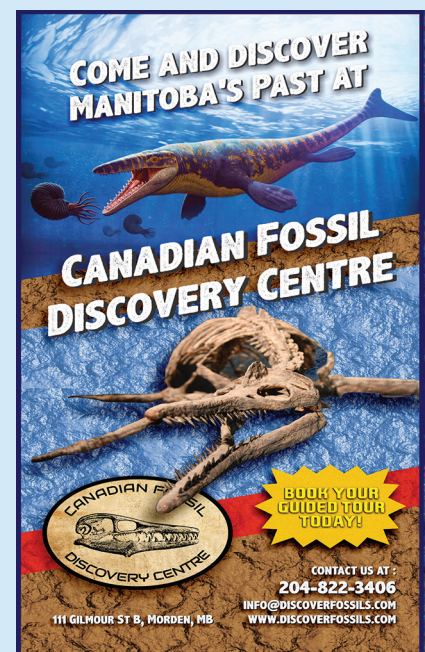
LawMakers has been an impactful after-school learning opportunity for sixteen different students across SOSD. It has been a program that has looked at how to engage in a dual credit blending the coursework and experience of University-level Indigenous Studies and Law 40S. The students are collaborating with current Law students on a weekly basis both through video calls and in person, with the goal of each student developing and exhibiting a project in an area of personal interest. The opportunity for learners to experience university study authentically and to learn from mentors – has been both the highlight and most impactful component of the program, which is having a direct impact on students' learning. The relationships that have been created with their peers have proven to be deeply meaningful. Learning about history

and the law through an Indigenous lens has impacted this cohort of students deeply, has empowered them in their learning, and supported them in thinking about the real changes needed to impact their communities. – Charlotte Genthon, Wayfinders SPSW

Conclusion

These dual credit programs are examples of how we can think differently about enrichment, extending the school day, and creating smooth pathways to postsecondary for learners who may not have a history of university in their family's experience. Turning enrichment on its head and inviting all learners to participate moves closer to the aspirations of public education and creating just and sustainable societies. Re-envisioning inclusion in this way obliterates the doublespeak and centres us all on ensuring everyone has the means for a decent life. ■

Matt Henderson is the Assistant Superintendent, and Monica Gadsby is the Tech Hub Coordinator for Seven Oaks School Division. Camille Pineda and Charlotte Genthon are Student Parent Support Workers for Wayfinders, and Clayon Scheller is an Advisor for Maples Met School.





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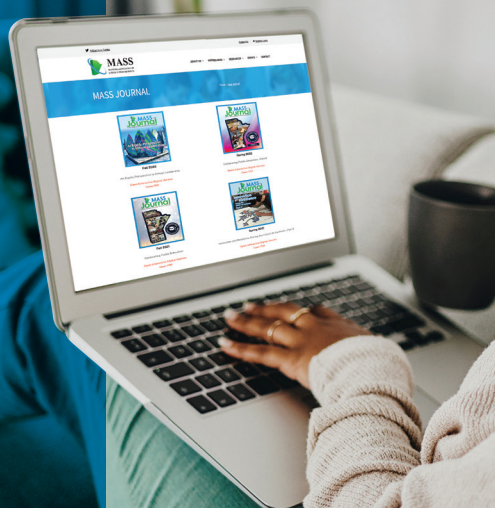
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Quality Assessment: Equity Through Alignment



EQUALITY



EQUITY

By Sandra Herbst, River East Transcona School Division

The image is familiar: three children standing behind a fence attempting to watch a baseball game. All are standing on a wooden cube of the same size and height; however, only two can see over the fence. The accompanying image, though, shows that for one child, even when the cube is removed, he can still see over the fence. For another, the cube remains, allowing him to continue seeing over the fence. But for the third child, a second cube has been now added and, finally, he can view the game, along with the others. In education, this image is often accompanied by a

description of the difference between equality and equity and, when viewed in its simplicity, is difficult to argue.

As educational systems across North America engage in dialogue about how fairness and justice can be enacted in process and realized in results, necessary focuses include resource redistribution, human resources practice disruption, and removal of barriers. And yet, the primary relationship in our schools is that between teacher and student; it is in this relationship that equity – the type of equity that changes lives – can flourish. Conscious attention needs be on the instructional relationship that centres students through a genuine and

deep understanding of how each student learns and sees the world.

As you read my words, you are likely nodding your head and asking yourself, “So, what is new? I have heard all of this before.” I would agree with you. That is why I am left wondering why, on one hand, educators collectively nod when the importance of equity is mentioned and then, on the other hand, return to their schools and classrooms, requiring all students to demonstrate their learning similar ways, filling their gradebooks with marks derived from product (even while simultaneously acknowledging the importance of watching and listening to their students),

Schools are called to provide evidence of their growth and learning through school planning processes and continuous improvement cycles. But how schools provide evidence of that growth and improvement need not be identical.

stating that involving their students in co-constructing the description of quality and proficiency takes too long, and/or conflating evaluative feedback with the kind of feedback that can feed learning forward.

Equitable outcomes result from differential treatment. Educators know this; it is in the examination of daily practice, particularly through the lens of assessment and evaluation strategies, that unequivocal differences in the lives our students can be made. Simply put, quality assessment practices are, by their very nature, equitable.

As system leaders, our focus cannot solely be on the design of equitable assessment and evaluation systems in classrooms. The research and writing in this area is already overwhelming. Rather, the real work lies in impacting the instructional relationship between student and teacher through leadership that illuminates equity in the assessment and evaluation practices that we, *as leaders*, use. What that does that mean, practically speaking? Let me unpack this by referencing a longitudinal research study in which I, along with three other researchers, was engaged and whose findings were published in the UK peer reviewed *The Curriculum Journal*.¹

In our classrooms, an aspiration for equity requires discernment; inviting students to determine the best way to show what they know. This does not mean that tests or exams are inherently bad; the creation of a false dichotomy is, at best, intellectually lazy. However, teaching students to consider the method and the timing by which they can best unveil their learning to those who will judge that learning is a means to creating equity; it centres the learner. This does not mean that a curated list of options equates equity. It is in the conversation with the learner that potential pathways can be generated and ‘just right’ decisions made.

This is equally true at the system level. Schools are called to provide evidence of their growth and learning through school planning processes and continuous improvement cycles; how schools provide evidence of that growth and improvement need not be identical. The research revealed that school leaders, in conversation with system leaders, can describe the best way for them to demonstrate the learning and development of their school, staff, students, and community. And, as system leaders, we are modelling the conversations we know are impactful between student

and teacher and that are, by their very nature, equitable.

In our classrooms, an aspiration for equity requires triangulation; valuing evidence from multiple sources over time. Triangulation is a significant pathway to equity. It acknowledges that evidence in a singular form – evidence that privileges a certain way to demonstrate learning – is not equitable. For some students, demonstrating understanding, application, and knowing in the form of a product is appropriate; for others, it is the conversations about the learning or the observation of the learning in process, or a combination thereof, that enables them to best demonstrate progress and growth.

This is equally true at the system level. It is often said that we evaluate that which we value. In the research, system leaders modelled the concept of triangulation by valuing their school leaders’ voices and ways of knowing. They balanced external, lagging data (products) about development and achievement with evidence gathered from observations and conversations. Evidence collected from these triangulated sources was not only acknowledged, but also actively and purposefully pursued, curated, examined, analyzed, and communicated. When we do this as system leaders, we are modelling the promise of equity that triangulation offers our students.

In our classrooms, an aspiration for equity requires active participation. Students who are intentionally invited to co-labour and generate with one another and their teachers an understanding of quality and proficiency are more likely to use that knowledge in their own work. This co-construction of criteria is not to be confused with reviewing externally created rubrics, of benefit only to students who are able to infer or who use a perceptual data set to fully understand the meaning of the evaluation criteria. Rather, equity is achieved in the act of slowing down to build that understanding together.

This is equally true at the system level. Policies, statements, and documents that describe what is expected,

no matter how clear, can leave some school leaders uncertain. When system leaders roll up their sleeves to collectively unpack and then understand the impact of these policies, statements, and documents on the work that school leaders do, they increase the school leaders' access to understanding what is expected – no matter the expertise or experience. This is equity. And, along the way, the system leader models the importance of co-constructing definitions of quality and proficiency with learners of all ages.

In our classrooms, an aspiration for equity requires feedback. When feedback feeds learning forward, rather than serving to evaluate it, power dynamics are altered. Equity is ensured because opportunities for refinement, that may have heretofore remained unseen, are unveiled. The learner – the individual – is centred. When that feedback is coupled with an opportunity to revise understanding, learning explodes with possibility and promise.

This is equally true at the system level. When system and school leaders are *in* the work, are *in* the learning, external, or more traditional measures can be set aside; powerful 'just-in-time' data is leveraged to provide frequent feedback. There is no need to wait until the end. Again, power dynamics are altered; system leaders are viewed as

walking alongside, rather than evaluators from afar. When power dynamics shift, equity is enhanced. The research findings showed that when system leaders implicate themselves and increase the feedback (not evaluation) they provide, a commensurate increase in quality feedback across the organization occurs.

Quality assessment practices powerfully amplify equity in our classrooms. If relegated to classrooms only, the research shows system leaders may, unwittingly, ignore a compelling element of their leadership practice: the ability to enhance equity through the alignment gained when modelling is a robust leadership skill. ■

Sandra Herbst is the Superintendent/CEO of River East Transcona School Division and the author of many books, articles, and research papers in the areas of assessment, evaluation, and leadership.

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Forging a Fellowship:

A Student-led, Board Supported Model for Governance

From the ashes a fire shall be woken, a light from the shadows shall spring; renewed shall be blade that was broken, the crownless shall again be king.¹

By Ryan Anderson and Chris Szun, Seine River School Division

The COVID-19 pandemic drastically changed how decisions were made in public education. Public health orders and provincial mandates prevailed. In the wake of the pandemic, however, a new model of governance emerged in Seine River School Division (SRSD).

The Seine River School Division Student Trustee Board. Photos courtesy of Ryan Anderson.



Taylor Dawson and Nydia Goosehead discussing the leaps and bounds the Student Trustee Board has made, the personal impact it has had, and the Board's future goals.



Pictured from left to right: Jordan Gottfried, Vidhi Mistry, Taylor Dawson, Nydia Goosehead, Nic Spenst, Oyindamola Eluwade, and Breanna Stronciski.

Unified in their frustration, a group of high school students from Collège St. Norbert Collegiate joined together to discuss matters and what could be done to address their concerns. During the pandemic, several policies, procedures, and processes altered both their lives and their education. However, it wasn't the three Ps that frustrated them; it was the absence of student voice in the division's decision-making process that sparked their collaboration.

Like the Company of the Ring in *The Fellowship of the Ring* by J. R. R. Tolkien,

these students embarked on a journey that shifted the balance of power in their world. Beginning in February 2022, approximately 15 students from SRSD's three high schools, Collège Lorette Collegiate, Collège St. Norbert Collegiate, and Ste. Anne Collegiate, came together to form the Student Trustee Board. With the support of school administration, the group increased to 43 students and created a constitution with a mission "to unify Seine River School Division and to place greater value on student voice and consultation."²

In May 2022, the Student Trustee Board brought a delegation to SRSD's Board of Trustees. Moved by their efforts, the Board promptly created a new standing committee called the Board Student Liaison Committee. Without another model in Manitoba that formally includes students in the governance process, both the Student Trustee Board and the Board Student Liaison Committee looked to the province of Ontario for inspiration. Moved by how Ontario embedded student trustees into their governance structure,



*Sifa Kagundu and Oyindamola Eluwade
eagerly setting up a presentation for a
Student Trustee Board meeting.*

both groups used the Ontario framework as a blueprint for how their work would take shape.

The forging of this relationship between student and elected trustees unlocked the potential for more purposeful governance in Seine River School Division. Early work by the two groups produced “quick wins.” Initial meetings focused on how to empower student voice, increase student participation in the governance process, and co-develop policies that reflect the needs of students across the division. Their initial meetings also resulted in the co-creation of a mandate for the Board Student Liaison Committee.

The mandate gives specific direction to the work of both groups. Even though it is still being finalized at the time of this writing, the mandate outlines how the elected trustees engage with student trustees on matters related to student experience, how it receives student input on policy decisions, and how it informs governance-based decisions made by the Board. It also becomes a training ground for student trustees to experience the delineation between governance and administration.

More than anything, this new model for governance provides deep and transformative learning for the student trustees. “When students have a say in how their schools are run, they become more engaged in their learning, more committed to their education, and more invested in the success of their school.”³ By empowering student voice, student trustees are improving educational outcomes for themselves and others. They are building partnerships across their schools and communities. They are developing their own skills around leadership and governance. In essence, they are changing the landscape of learning, leading, and governing in SRSD.

The Student Trustee Board was showcased at the Manitoba School Boards’ Association (MSBA) annual convention on March 15-17, 2023, at the Delta Hotel in downtown Winnipeg. As recipients of MSBA’s Grades 9-12 Team Citizenship Award, they were invited to facilitate a session on the initial phases of their work. The presentation provided an overview of the process the Student Trustee Board went through to spark interest among students and how they engaged school and division administration, and the Board of Trustees. They presented on the obstacles they faced in forming their group, drafting their constitution, and how they got traction with the issues that emerged from their initial meetings.

Even though both groups are in their infancy, student and elected trustees spoke with pride and conviction about how their working relationship continues to take shape. During the session, elected trustees from across the province questioned student trustees about their successes and challenges. Some trustees even sought guidance from the students on how their boards could pursue the creation of their own student trustee boards.

As it relates student voice in the governance of public education, SRSD has entered a new era. The Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) stated, “Governance is the backbone of successful education systems, ensuring that the right people take the right decisions, backed by appropriate information and accountability mechanisms.”⁴ SRSD’s Student Trustee Board represents the “right people to take the right decisions,” and it is now on the Board of Trustees and senior administration to provide the “appropriate information and accountability mechanisms.”

Upon learning of Sauron’s ring, Frodo lamented, “I wish it need not have happened in my time.” In response, and in maybe the most profound lessons taught through the story, Gandalf responded, “So do I... and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us.”¹ And so it is with us who serve in leadership roles across public education in Manitoba. It is now up to us to empower our youth and further enhance governance in the post-pandemic era.

To conclude, the poem “The Road Goes Ever On” penned by Tolkien, provides an invitation for us all to embark on the journey towards student inclusive governance in education:

“The Road goes ever on and on
Down from the door where it began.
Now far ahead the Road has gone,
And I must follow, if I can,
Pursuing it with eager feet,
Until it joins some larger way
Where many paths and errands meet.
And whither then? I cannot say.”¹

Ryan Anderson, Ph.D., is the Superintendent of Seine River School Division. Chris Szun is the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. Prior to his appointment, Chris served as the principal of Collège St. Norbert Collegiate and was instrumental in the creation of the Student Trustee Board.

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From *Memories* to *Reflection:*

Educators in Seven Oaks Build Upon Their Experiences

By Duane Brothers, Ph.D., Seven Oaks School Division

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For decades, the Seven Oaks School Division has made significant efforts to address issues of equity. Programs such as an annual graduation Pow Wow, breakfast programs, low-cost school supplies, summer learning programs, and the WayFinders mentoring and tutoring program are all examples of work to assist largely racialized young people to improve their life opportunities. In spite of these initiatives, the superintendent Brian O'Leary explained that his thinking in this area



Jennifer Lamoureux and Elder Mary Courchene. Photo courtesy of Jennifer Lamoureux.

has in fact evolved since participating in a study that explored the thinking of superintendents related to racialized and Indigenous poverty (Brothers, 2017). He talked about how the murder of George Floyd strongly influenced him to become more focused on effective Indigenous education and anti-racism work, “Yeah, I think the murder of George Floyd, and the finding of Indigenous graves on the sites of former residential schools, created a huge visceral reaction for many of us.” This sentiment was shared by the previous board chair of the division, Greg McFarlane, who asked Brian to push further into the area of anti-racism. A Black man, Greg talked about why anti racism is so important when he considers his

As we consider equity, diversity, and inclusion, their voices need to be heard.

own son. “I have a son and I’m starting to teach him that some people are gonna be fearful of you (being Black) because they have their biases.”

Brian spoke about increasing the number of Indigenous people and people from marginalized communities into positions of influence in Seven Oaks, “Instead of talking about affirmative action, we said we want our kids to see themselves reflected in the staff in the building... It’s very hard to quarrel with that.” To that end, he has purposefully hired people from diverse communities to work specifically in the areas of anti-racism and Indigenous education. Currently, the positions include an Indigenous Elder, Mary Courchene; two Anti-Racism Initiative Lead teachers, Clifford Weekes and Tyler Blasko; Adult Education Director, Sherri Denysuik, and divisional teacher team leader for Indigenous education, Jennifer Lamoureux.

Rebecca Chartrand worked previously as the Anti-racism Lead but has since moved to doing successful consulting work at the provincial and national level. Each of these leaders, four Indigenous women, a Black man, and a member of the 2SLGBTQ+ community shared how experiences from their backgrounds deeply influence their work today. Each of them expressed often hurtful memories of shame, embarrassment, and a disconnection to their communities as part of painful journeys to claim their identities as ‘othered’ influentials working in a public education system.

Elder Mary, a residential school survivor, spoke of attending the apology to Indigenous survivors of residential schools made by then Prime Minister Stephen Harper and how the apology triggered painful memories. Mary remembers looking around the room at fellow survivors. “I stared at the tears of so many others in the room and then felt them running down my own cheeks, I was back to being a little girl and I am sobbing, and I was so embarrassed, broken down... I had thought I was the only one.”

While Jennifer, Sherri, and Rebecca, now identify as strong, independent women who as young adults began to claim their identities as Indigenous woman, each of them shared stories of the racism each of them experienced during their formative years. Rebecca shared, “I had a very close friend who was Portuguese, and her family thought that I was too. When they found out that I was an Indian, my friend Anna wasn’t allowed to hang out with me anymore.” It was very clear. “I was an Indian.”

Sherri grew up with parents who wanted their children to be away from the reserve and “be raised in mainstream society.” She talked about the experiences of “being one of the only brown faces in schools. By the time I got to high school, I was very adept at blending and denying who I was out of shame. Back in the 80’s it was not okay to be an “Indian.” Tyler said the discrimination he faced manifested in the questioning or minimizing of his work because of his queerness. “My overt queerness at times leads to

To become an organization that champions equity, diversity, and inclusion, people from marginalized communities need to be evident in all positions of influence so that racialized people can see themselves reflected.

questioning of my abilities and also leads to specific expectations related to my identity.”

Jennifer expressed the feelings of shame that she had and a powerful motivation to just ‘fit in,’ even if it meant enduring slights. Being told by a fellow student that “I shouldn’t be in this lead role for a play at school because I was brown” and the teacher told him to apologize, I said, “no, it’s okay. So I learnt really quickly to just to go with the flow and just be ok with it.” Clifford shared that he became “the Whitest Black guy that I know because I wanted to fit in.” Jennifer again shared “I internalized a lot of that racism, it caused me to separate myself from being Indigenous and just sort of denying it, seeing myself as different than an Indigenous person because of all the stereotypes and all of the racism attached to it.”

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all positions of influence so that racialized people can see themselves reflected. The majority of staff, parents, and students can see and interact with diverse representations of people as they are. Each of them were hired for their significant skills as well as the fact that they represent the growing diversification in the leadership roles in the division. Each of the individuals not only shared memories of past discrimination, but they also shared how their experiences have influenced their current work as educators.

Sherri says that “her Indigenous identity infuses all of her work” and as an educator, she feels a huge responsibility to ensure that “Indigenous ways of being, knowing, and learning are centred in all that I do in hopes to motivate teachers and students to learn from Indigenous peoples strengths, perspectives and ideologies.” Clifford talked about the challenges of anti-racism work, “staff and students are often not ready to talk about race and racism but just

because they’re not ready, it doesn’t mean we can’t start the conversation,” while also expressing the dilemma of being black in white organizations, “Yeah, I have to prove myself. We shouldn’t have to prove ourselves because we’re a color, but it just sits there in the back of your mind.”

Tyler believed that the work of anti-racist and Indigenous education needs to be enthusiastically championed across the system and beyond. “I am actively engaged in it because as a Queer/White/Métis educator, my journey is nuanced where I have responsibilities as a White man in a racist system, a Queer person who understands being othered, and Métis person learning my history/culture alongside students.” Rebecca said words that were like those of Jennifer, Sherri, and Mary when she said “it is important for me to feel I am contributing to and through an empowered Indigenous Canada. “For far too long Indigenous have been fighting to have a seat at the table, to feel we have access to opportunity, and can

be part of decision-making that affect our families and communities. It’s important that we create safe caring spaces where our children can grow free of discrimination and prejudice that undermine their sense of safety and belonging.”

Educators from diverse and often racialized groups have often faced discrimination. This reality can inform their thinking and their practice in the here and now. As we consider equity, diversity, and inclusion, their voices need to be heard. Elder Mary’s words are important, “Yes, yes the more society listens to our truth... the more our tomorrows will be better for our descendants.” ■

Duane Brothers, Ph.D., is the former Superintendent of the Louis Riel School Division, the Sunrise School Division and the former Assistant Superintendent of the Seven Oaks School Division. He currently serves on a number of non-profit boards including the Board of Governors at the University of Manitoba.

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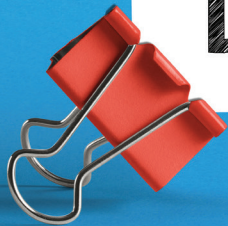
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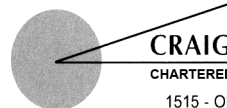
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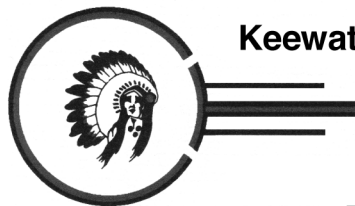
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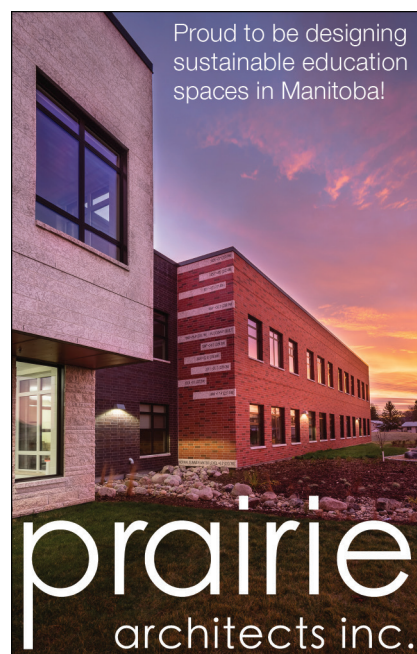
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