



DIVISION SCOLAIRE
LOUIS RIEL
SCHOOL DIVISION

2019 - 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

WWW.LRSD.NET



AS THE WORLD FACES THIS UNPARALLELED CHALLENGE, THE CRITICAL ROLE THAT SCHOOLS PLAY IN SUPPORTING THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF LEARNERS, AND INDEED THE WHOLE SCHOOL COMMUNITY, THROUGH SCHOOL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING PROGRAMS, HAS BECOME MORE APPRECIATED THAN EVER.”

- UN EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO)

»» TABLE OF CONTENTS

Our Treaty Acknowledgement	04
Our Vision, Mission & Motto	05
Message from the Chair	06
Your Board of Trustees	07
Message from the Superintendent	08
Senior Leadership Team	09
LRSD by the Numbers	10
Dollars and Cents	14
A Shout Out to our Students	18
Planning for the Future	20
BELONGING QUADRANT	
Discovering New Ways to Support Literacy Development	22
Indigenous Communities in LRSD Leading the Way	24
Set Up for Success	26
Convocation and COVID-19: Celebrating Students During a Pandemic	28
MASTERY QUADRANT	
Levelling Up with eSports	37
Learning Through a 21st Century Lens	38
A Collaborative Move to an Online World	40
Shaking Up Schedules in Schools	42
INDEPENDENCE QUADRANT	
Helping Staff Stay Safe	45
Driving Towards Data Literacy	46
Bridging the Gap	48
Digital Library Visitor Numbers Jump off the Page	50
GENEROSITY QUADRANT	
Feeding Mind, Body & Soul	53
Distance Can't Stop Friendships from Flourishing	54
Stepping Up to Support Frontline Workers	56
Connecting During COVID-19	58

OUR TREATY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

**THE LOUIS RIEL SCHOOL DIVISION
ACKNOWLEDGES THE LAND ON WHICH
OUR LEARNERS, STAFF AND FAMILIES
GATHER IS TREATY ONE TERRITORY AND
THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORY OF THE
ANISHINAABE, ININEWAK, AND DAKOTA
PEOPLES, AND HOMELAND OF THE
MÉTIS NATION.**

Our division recognizes the importance of the Calls to Action outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. In our collective effort to see Indigenous learners flourish, LRSD has made significant local investments to address several of the education-specific Calls to Action. LRSD has also implemented the Circle of Courage, which is a model of positive youth development first described in the book, *Reclaiming Youth at Risk*, co-authored by Larry Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, and Steve Van Bockern, as a whole-learner framework and as a reference tool in our strength-based class profile process in all 40 LRSD schools. LRSD is committed to a renewed relationship with Indigenous learners, families, staff and the broader community.



OUR VISION

Our Vision is for all members of our community to excel as caring, confident, capable, and resilient life-long learners who contribute to a democratic and sustainable world.



OUR MISSION

Our Mission is to provide a safe, inclusive, and engaging environment, where personal and collective learning are valued, and each one of us reaches our full potential.



OUR MOTTO

Thriving Learners ∞ Flourishing Communities

Des apprenants épanouis ∞ Des communautés florissantes

Gegwe-gikenjigewaad ∞ Mamino-ayaang Eyaang

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

During a typical school year, every day, in every classroom in each of our 40 schools, students overcome hurdles, navigate challenges and realize goals. Public education, even in the time of a pandemic, continues to be about nurturing a journey toward lifelong learning, developing respect for oneself and others, and creating environments where curiosity and imagination is encouraged and thrives, all the while knowing that the confidence to take risks can lead to greater learning and self-discovery. As I write this message and reflect on the past year, I remain deeply appreciative of a divisional culture and climate that nurtures and encourages curiosity and inquisitiveness in all who work and learn in Louis Riel School Division (LRSD).

'Normal,' as we may have defined it a year ago, has changed. What remains firmly in place and unwavering in nature, however, is a deep and abiding commitment to student engagement and success on the part of both the LRSD Board of Trustees and Senior Leadership Team. The 2019-2020 Annual Report to the Community documents and commemorates another year of progress, resilience, and victories, both big and small, in our rapidly growing school division.

I invite you to immerse yourself in this report and as you turn the pages, take time to marvel in the work, the stories and the learning taking place each day in the third largest school division in Manitoba. It is a true testament to the dedication of teachers, administrators, staff, parents, and students themselves, that we can share so many accomplishments, experiences and insights.

The LRSD organizational chart places our students at the centre of all we do, and rightly so. Their success is at the heart of our work, and it is with this in mind that the LRSD Board of Trustees celebrates this report to our community.



I HAVE NO SPECIAL TALENT. I AM ONLY PASSIONATELY CURIOUS."

- ALBERT EINSTEIN

YOUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Louis Riel School Division is governed by a nine-person Board of Trustees elected every four years by the LRSD community. The board advocates for, and is accountable to, the LRSD community on matters of public education throughout the division. Elections are held in conjunction with the Winnipeg Civic Election and are run on behalf of metro school divisions by the City of Winnipeg. To see how the division is divided into Wards and to find out which Ward you live in, please visit our website at www.lrsd.net and click on the School Board heading.

WARD 1



Louise Johnston
Vice-Chair
(204) 612-7121



Cindy Turner
(204) 294-3047

WARD 2



Chris Sigurdson
(204) 230-4601



Robert Page
(204) 541-1303

WARD 3



Sandy Nemeth
Chair
(204) 230-6475



Neil Vadeboncoeur
(204) 254-7636



Josie Landry
(204) 292-4661

WARD 4



Tom Parker
(204) 298-9249



Pamela Kolochuk
(204) 297-5339

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

The 2019-2020 school year marked the first year of our Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP). As such, I had anticipated our Annual Report to the Community (ARC) would be about the progress we made towards accomplishing the bold and audacious goals that we had set out to achieve by 2023. Of course, we couldn't have anticipated the impact that a worldwide virus would have on our plans, or education as a whole, for that matter. Much of the school year captured in the ARC is defined by the unprecedented situation we confronted in the spring and summer of 2020. Nothing from our collective lived experiences could have prepared us for the pandemic that impacted all of our lives. And yet, our community showed a collective capacity, a level of caring and collaboration as extraordinary and unparalleled as the situation we faced. Our resilience and resolve as individuals and as a community allowed us to respond to the unpredictability of the pandemic with agility and confidence—improvisation was the order of the day. And, this agility we have demonstrated as individuals and as a community is the quality that will see us through the coming months as we continue to adapt to this new reality.

The MYSP we created together back in 2018-2019 identified core values that guided our responses to the unprecedented challenge of a global pandemic. These goals will continue to be our roadmap for our continued efforts in 2020-2021. The four strategic priorities that frame our MYSP also frame the ARC for 2019-2020:



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1:

Creating a Culture of Equity and Inclusion



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2:

Creating a Culture of Learning and Well-Becoming



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3:

Creating a Culture of Inquiry and Responsibility



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4:

Creating a Culture of Caring and Collaboration

In June 2020, when I looked at national and international planning documents as inspiration for our preparedness planning for a return to school in 2020-2021, I was struck by how the eight big ideas that make up the four strategic priorities in our MYSP resonate in the literature. When I read the stories about our response to the pandemic, I hear the themes of our MYSP echo in the words that describe the incredible work and innovation of staff, students and families that have given it their all. After reading the ARC, I hope you agree that it honours that amazing collective effort. At the heart of the stories is the notion that kindness and community have been key to our ability to thrive and flourish under extraordinarily challenging circumstances.

You might be wondering what insights we've gained or what lessons a pandemic has taught us since we've done more than just navigate a crisis. The answer is that it's been about seeing and seeking opportunity. It's been about resilience, agility, ingenuity, and an even stronger sense of community. As we continue to rise to the challenge of the pandemic, I have no doubt that we will continue to solve problems and innovate. If I'm honest, I am less certain about what happens when we come out of the pandemic. When it's over, what of all of our hard work and innovation? Will we build on it and continue to nurture what we've learned? This unique time has brought out the best in all of us, so the question will be, was it the catalyst for positive and lasting change? Despite my initial uncertainty, my vote is yes.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

(SLT) WORKS WITH MANAGERS AND COORDINATORS AT THE DIVISIONAL LEVEL, ALONG WITH PRINCIPALS AND VICE-PRINCIPALS, TO UNDERTAKE THE WORK OF THE LOUIS RIEL SCHOOL DIVISION (LRSD).

VISION

The SLT's vision for LRSD is one in which every person is cared for morally, intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally on their journey of learning and well-becoming.

MISSION

The central focus of the SLT is to nurture learning and well-becoming in LRSD by cultivating the conditions for impactful collective practice in all LRSD schools.



Christian Michalik
Superintendent and CEO



Marna Kenny
Secretary-Treasurer



Lisa Aitken
*Assistant Superintendent,
Glenlawn Collegiate family of schools*



Jennifer Hume
Assistant Secretary-Treasurer



Marlene Murray
*Assistant Superintendent,
J.H. Bruns Collegiate and Nelson
McIntyre Collegiate family of schools*



Clarke Hagan
Director of Information Systems



Irene Nordheim
*Assistant Superintendent,
Dakota Collegiate and Windsor Park
Collegiate family of schools*



Steven Lawrie
Director of Student Support Services



Henri Peloquin
*Assistant Superintendent,
Collège Béliveau and Collège Jeanne-
Sauvé family of schools*



Charles Robert
Director of Facilities



LRS D BY THE NUMBERS



EARLY YEARS PROGRAMMING

12 Family Centres provide free programming to parents with children up to six years old. Topics include learning and literacy, nutrition and health, positive parenting, and community building.

2,561

TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE REGISTERED

1,367

 CHILDREN

1,195

 PARENTS/
CAREGIVERS

23,029

 TOTAL NUMBER OF VISITS TO FAMILY CENTRES THIS YEAR

ARTS

1,200

 STUDENTS JOINED A DAY OF MUSIC MAKING AT OUR GRADE 4 ORFF DAYS

1,000'S

 OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN WINTER CONCERTS, MUSICALS, AND PLAYS

500

 STUDENTS SANG AT THE CONCERT HALL FOR CHORAL CELEBRATION

75

 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS SUBMITTED ARTWORK FOR OUR VIRTUAL ART DISPLAY ART@HOME

ALMOST 2,500

 PEOPLE TUNED IN TO OUR VIRTUAL FOLK DANCE@HOME

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS CULTURAL ENRICHMENT PROGRAM 2019 – 2020



14

 STUDENTS TRAVELLED TO LUZHOU, CHINA ON A TWO-WEEK EXCHANGE PROGRAM

13

 STUDENTS TRAVELLED TO MEITOKU HIGH SCHOOL IN KOCHI, JAPAN FOR A FIVE-WEEK EXCHANGE PROGRAM

K-12 PROGRAM

284

 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FROM 30 COUNTRIES ATTENDED K-12 PROGRAMMING IN LRS D IN 2019-2020

TOP 6 COUNTRIES

-  CHINA
-  VIETNAM
-  NIGERIA
-  SPAIN
-  SOUTH KOREA
-  BRAZIL

POST-SECONDARY TOP 5 COUNTRIES

-  INDIA
-  CHINA
-  VIETNAM
-  COLUMBIA
-  EQUADOR

CONTINUING EDUCATION



2,145

 REGISTRATIONS IN 2019-2020

411

 COURSES OFFERED OVER THREE SEMESTERS

LRS D BY THE NUMBERS



CONTINUING EDUCATION BY TOPIC



STUDENTS, SCHOOLS & STAFF

15,723

STUDENTS IN 2019-2020

As of June 22, 2020

40 SCHOOLS

26 ENGLISH, 13 FRENCH IMMERSION, ONE TECHNICAL & VOCATIONAL AND ONE COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRE

2,123

TOTAL STAFF COUNT*

1,197

TEACHERS

926

NON TEACHING STAFF

**Permanent and term as of June 23, 2020*



LOUIS RIEL ARTS & TECHNOLOGY CENTRE

209

CERTIFICATE RECIPIENTS, WITH FOUR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

76

OF THESE GRADUATES WILL EARN LEVEL 1 APPRENTICESHIP

13

PROGRAMS & ONLINE ACADEMICS

6

PROGRAMS ACCREDITED BY APPRENTICESHIP MANITOBA (CULINARY ARTS, ELECTRICAL TRADES, AUTOMOTIVE TECHNICIAN, HAIRSTYLING, ESTHETICS, AND PLUMBING TRADES)



THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

When the pandemic hit in March 2020 and in-class learning was suspended indefinitely, LRS D had to quickly adapt to a new reality. Over the next three months, the division worked tirelessly to make the transition to remote learning as smooth as possible. This included:

21,951

ONLINE MEETINGS ORGANIZED IN LRS D

3,240

COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM PARENTS/ GUARDIANS AND ACTED ON BY LRS D

1,270

LAPTOPS AND TABLETS RECONFIGURED, SANITIZED AND DELIVERED TO STUDENTS

1,029

STAFF PARTICIPATED IN 119 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS ABOUT ONLINE EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY

619

FOOD HAMPERS PREPARED FOR FAMILIES IN NEED

488

STUDENTS CONNECTED WITH STAFF TO RECEIVE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

DOLLARS AND CENTS

THE 2020–2021 BUDGET WAS APPROVED BY THE LOUIS RIEL SCHOOL DIVISION (LRSD) BOARD OF TRUSTEES ON MARCH 12, 2020. OUR LEARNERS ARE THE GREATEST ASSETS AND THE BUDGET WILL IMPACT STUDENTS POSITIVELY BY IMPROVING SUPPORTS FOR A GROWING DIVERSITY OF NEEDS AND ADDRESSING THE ONGOING CHALLENGES OF GROWING SOCIO-ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES.

The budget continues to keep administration costs low and in line with the expectation of the Minister of Education. It also dedicates funds to maintaining and improving LRSD’s aging infrastructure and to increase non-instructional spaces that aren’t funded by the Manitoba Provincial Government. As with many businesses and organizations around the world, the arrival of COVID-19 had an impact on the LRSD budget as the cost to transition to a remote learning structure, enhanced cleaning protocols and to accommodate new public health safety measures requires additional and unplanned expenditures. Also, in April 2020, an arbitration board unanimously issued the Louis Riel Teachers’ Association an award that included retroactive and current year salary increases. Having been constrained by the unproclaimed Manitoba government Bill 28, which imposed a wage freeze on public sector members, the Board could only earmark approximately \$867,000 for wage increases. With the arbitration award, the final number is expected to be close to \$8.8 million. This will be the first time in the division’s history that it will be faced with the possibility of an accumulated deficit.

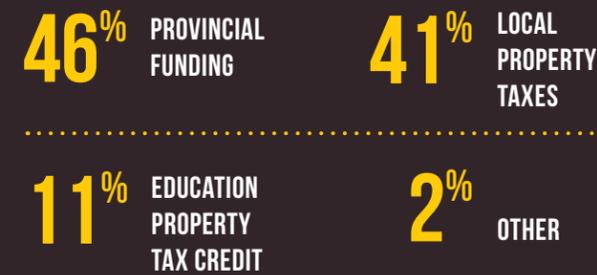


LRSD BUDGET 2020-2021

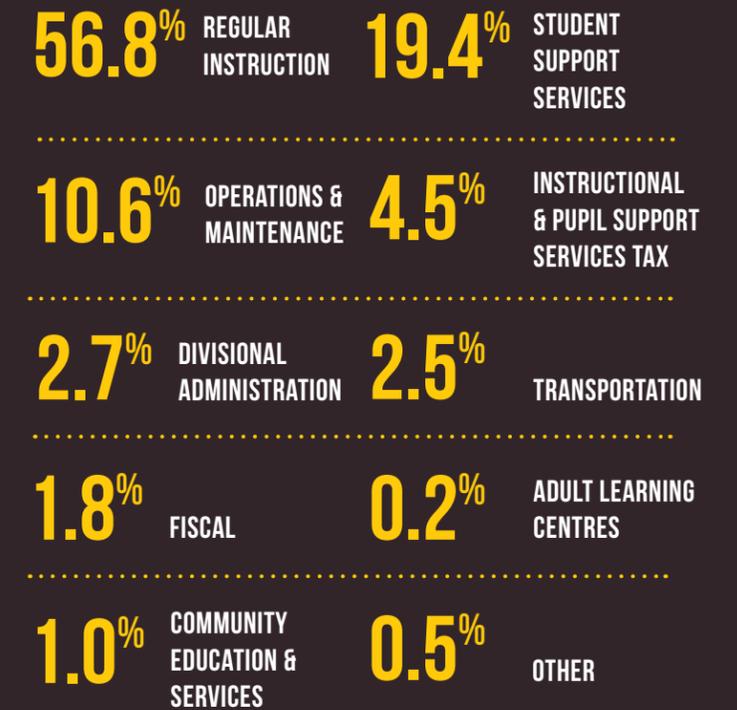
\$195,475,221

WHERE DOES LRSD’S FUNDING COME FROM?

LRSD spends 84 cents of every dollar on teacher and non-teaching staffing while the remaining 16 cents is spent on services, supplies, short term loan interest, banking charges, and transfers to other school divisions.



EXPENSES BY FUNCTION



EXPENSES BY OBJECT



BRICKS AND MORTAR

LRSD made nearly \$11 million dollars of investments in LRSD infrastructure in 2019-2020. LRSD invests in spaces where learners can excel as caring, confident, capable, and resilient lifelong learners who contribute to a democratic and sustainable world.

 **\$10,766,311**

TOTAL CAPITAL INVESTMENTS

A COMBINATION OF MOSTLY PROVINCIAL AND DIVISIONAL INVESTMENTS, AS WELL AS CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE CITY OF WINNIPEG, PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS FOR PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS, AND PRIVATE DONORS.

 **\$893,825**

WAS INVESTED IN OUTDOOR SPACES IN 2019-2020

THIS INCLUDES FUNDS FROM COUNCILLOR BRIAN MAYES AND PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS.

?

DID YOU KNOW?

THROUGH FUNDRAISING EFFORTS, PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS CONTRIBUTED MORE THAN \$132,676 FOR PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENTS IN 2019-2020.



INVESTMENTS IN LRSD

INFRASTRUCTURE

As of May 31, 2020

- \$4,052,262** COLLÈGE JEANNE-SAUVÉ COMMONS, ENTRANCE AND STUDENT SERVICES AREA

- \$1,787,764** COLLÈGE JEANNE-SAUVÉ HEATING AND COOLING REPLACEMENT

- \$1,088,340** ÉCOLE GUYOT TWO CLASSROOM ADDITIONS

- \$800,800** VICTOR MAGER SCHOOL RUNNING TRACK

- \$709,971** COLLÈGE BÉLIVEAU AIR COOLING CONDENSING UNIT REPLACEMENT

- \$524,854** GENERAL VANIER ROOF REPLACEMENT

- \$75,949** WINDSOR PARK COLLEGIATE GYMNASIUM FLOOR

- \$50,297** ÉCOLE JULIE-RIEL PLAYGROUND

- \$31,494** LAVALLEE SCHOOL COMPRESSOR UNIT

- \$30,339** ÉCOLE SAGE CREEK SCHOOL CLASSROOM RENOVATIONS

- \$25,784** ÉCOLE JULIE-RIEL COMPRESSOR UNIT

- \$16,824** J.H. BRUNS COLLEGIATE COMPRESSOR UNIT

INVESTMENTS IN INFRASTRUCTURE

IN PROGRESS

As of May 31, 2020

- \$684,062** LAVALLEE SCHOOL DAYCARE

- \$284,395** ÉCOLE GUYOT MULTI PURPOSE ROOM

- \$228,917** HASTINGS SCHOOL ELEVATOR AND GROOMING ROOM

- \$210,313** GLENWOOD SCHOOL STEAM SYSTEM REPLACEMENT

- \$161,167** VICTOR MAGER SCHOOL ROOF REPLACEMENT

- \$105,965** ST. GEORGE SCHOOL, GLENWOOD SCHOOL AND ÉCOLE VARENNES AIR CONDITIONING

- \$62,472** VICTOR H.L. WYATT SCHOOL GROOMING ROOM

?

DID YOU KNOW?

LRSD MAINTAINS MORE THAN 2.5 MILLION SQUARE FEET OF BUILDINGS AND LEARNING SPACE ACROSS THE DIVISION.

A SHOUT OUT TO OUR STUDENTS

WITH 40 SCHOOLS AND MORE THAN 15,500 STUDENTS, THERE'S A LOT TO CELEBRATE IN THE LOUIS RIEL SCHOOL DIVISION (LRSD). HERE ARE JUST A FEW OF THE NOTEWORTHY HIGHLIGHTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS FROM THE 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR:

A FIRST IN LRSD

Shaylean Skye, a student at Windsor Park Collegiate, was the first-ever LRSD recipient of a Manitoba Aboriginal Youth Achievement Award (MAYAA). Her name was originally put forward for consideration in the Health - South category, which is given to an individual planning to enroll full-time in a health care field at the post-secondary level. After reviewing her nomination and accomplishments, the selection committee awarded her with one of two special 25th anniversary awards.

SUCCESSING ON AND OFF THE COURT

Alex Krykewich, a Grade 12 student at Dakota Collegiate, was named the male winner of the Donovan Gayle scholarship, which recognizes local basketball players who best represent Gayle's attributes of strength, resilience, positive attitude and perseverance. Krykewich was also named the high school's MVP in the AAAA Provincial Volleyball Championships. He has committed to the University of Winnipeg's Wesmen Men's volleyball program as part of the 2020 recruiting class.

LEADER OF TOMORROW

Hayley Turner, a Grade 12 student at Nelson McIntyre Collegiate (NMC), earned two major scholarships; the BMO Financial Group Leader of Tomorrow Scholarship through the University of Manitoba; and a \$24,000 scholarship from the University of Victoria. Throughout her time at NMC, Turner was an active member in the school community, both athletically and academically.

A POETIC VOICE

Nawal Semir, a Grade 11 student at Glenlawn Collegiate, won the national Poetry in Voice/Les voix de la poésie recitation contest. More than 20,000 students participated and Semir wowed the judges with her recitations of *Verso 3.1* by Dionne Brand, *I am the People, the Mob* by Carl Sandburg, and *Illegalese: Floodgate Dub* by Wayde Compton.

ENSEMBLE À DISTANCE

A Grade 7 student at École Van Belleghem was one of the winners of the first-ever national *Concours virtuel* hosted by Canadian Parents for French. Students were tasked with sharing their experience during the pandemic. With the help of her mom, Kaila Kremski put together a fun and creative video highlighting a day in her life and showcasing her skills in French.

ALUMNUS WINS NOBEL PRIZE

Dr. James Peebles won the 2019 Nobel Prize in Physics for his theoretical discoveries in physical cosmology. The Princeton University professor emeritus graduated as class valedictorian from Glenlawn Collegiate in 1953.

IN THE KNICK OF TIME

For the past five years, Collège Béliveau's men's hockey team had been knocked out in the semi-finals of the Winnipeg High School Hockey League playoffs. This year, the team was finally triumphant, taking home the top prize in the 'B' Division Championships. The win came just before the city began to shut down due to COVID-19.

FULL SWEEP

The Dakota Collegiate Lancers swept this year's AAAA Provincial Volleyball Championships, with both the men's and women's teams coming out victorious. The teams were coached by Lancer alumni and previous provincial champs, Ryan Hudson and Sara Harrington.

AWARD-WINNING EDUCATORS

Six LRSD team members were recognized in the 2019-2020 Manitoba's Excellence in Education Awards. Charlene Smallwood, Principal at Nelson McIntyre Collegiate, was chosen as the recipient of the Outstanding School Leader Award for her dedication and exemplary leadership. Matthew Enns, Ashli Hodgert and Kristen Unrau, Student Services teachers at Windsor Park Collegiate (WPC), received the Outstanding Team Collaboration Award in recognition of their impressive collaborative effort while spearheading WPC's Co-Op Education Program. Patrick Hansen and Matt Patrician, teachers in the Propel program at Nelson McIntyre Collegiate, won the Premier's Award for Excellence in Education for their remarkable contributions to student learning and engagement.

MIND OVER MATTER

Avery Shtykalo, a student at J.H. Bruns Collegiate, received the Mark Dickof Memorial Award which recognizes high school students for their mental health advocacy. Her humility and desire to cheer on the underdog were highlighted as two of many factors that helped her award application stand out. Avery also started 'Mind Over Matter,' a daily mindfulness practice at her school to help her peers stay mentally healthy.





PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

In 2019, the LRSD community engaged in a series of conversations about visioning for our future. The themes that emerged informed our renewed Vision and Mission and helped illuminate four strategic priorities that frame our Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) for 2019-2023. Moreover, the collective aspirations of our community as well as a multitude of conversations inspired our efforts to identify meaningful and measurable strategic goals for each priority. There are desired outcomes detailed in each strategic goal that we are using to inform and guide our collective efforts as we move forward. We feel confident that the four-year journey our MYSP is taking us on will result in a thriving and flourishing future that every student, staff and community member can celebrate.

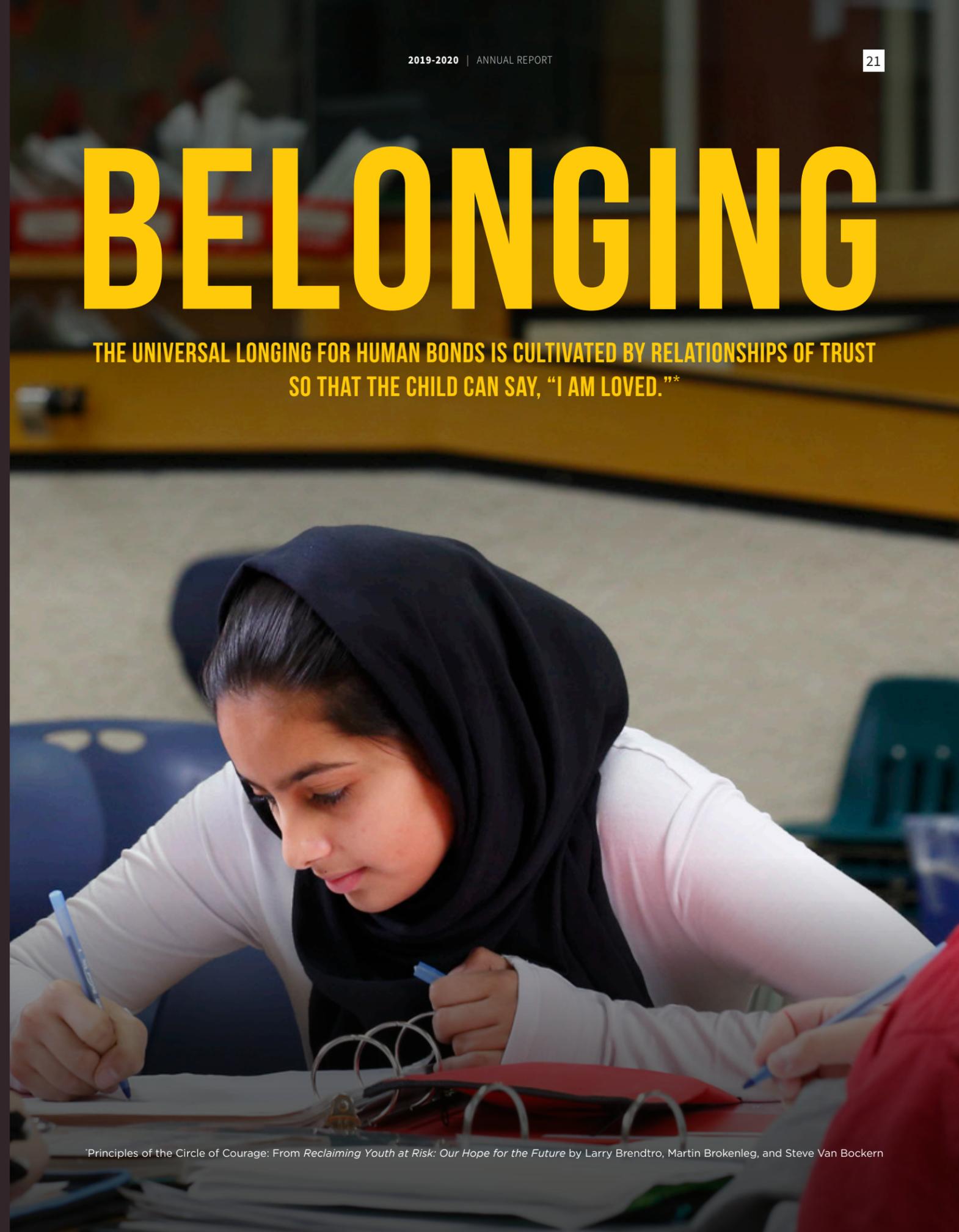
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2019-2023

Our four strategic priorities parallel the quadrants of the Circle of Courage, an Indigenous inspired whole-learner framework for a holistic learning journey that incorporates concepts of Belonging, Mastery, Independence and Generosity. These values are consistent with the landmark study by Stanley Coopersmith who identified these four foundations of self-worth.



BELONGING

THE UNIVERSAL LONGING FOR HUMAN BONDS IS CULTIVATED BY RELATIONSHIPS OF TRUST SO THAT THE CHILD CAN SAY, "I AM LOVED."*



*Principles of the Circle of Courage: From *Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Our Hope for the Future* by Larry Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, and Steve Van Bockern

DISCOVERING NEW WAYS TO SUPPORT LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

THE FUNDAMENTAL ROLE OF A TEACHER IS TO HELP STUDENTS LEARN, GROW AND REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL. BUT WHAT IF THERE ARE CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING THOSE GOALS? HOW DOES THAT AFFECT THEIR FUTURE LEARNING? AND WHAT'S THE BEST WAY TO HELP THEM?

For the past few years, École Howden's literacy and student services teachers and clinicians have been on a journey to discover, explore and propose some significant changes to early year's practices and philosophies.

Some might call what they are doing in this pilot project a paradigm shift. Others such as Ron Cadez, former principal of École Howden, describe it a little differently. "The current project is an extension of literacy work that has been going on at Howden over the last seven years. It involves multiple stakeholders working together in close collaboration, including administration, student services, literacy support and clinicians," says Cadez. "A key piece of the project transforms the early literacy teacher position from a pull-out model in Grade 2 into a co-teaching model in Grade 1 that focuses on systematic and explicit instructional practices that stem from the research."

Since École Howden is a French immersion school, approaching this opportunity poses some additional challenges. "In English schools, they can take programs, such as Orton-Gillingham (OG), and implement them directly into the classroom and/or interventions groups," says Nicole Neveux, a Student Services teacher, who is helping develop and implement the pilot program.

"In French Immersion, you can't just translate things into French as the sounds of each language are so different. We have had to find the appropriate information regarding sounds and their rules, which are extremely difficult to find and try it in the classroom."



WE ARE ALREADY STARTING TO SEE STUDENTS APPLYING RULES AND THINKING ABOUT LITERACY IN VERY DIFFERENT AND NOVEL WAYS."

- MICHELLE FOLLOWS



Robert George, a school psychologist and an integral part in this pilot project, acknowledges other difficulties, too. "The biggest challenge has been the limited amount of resources available in French and more specifically for French Immersion (FI) settings compared to English. Two of my colleagues in this pilot project, Michelle and Nicole, have been pivotal in developing and finding the teaching resources that can work in the FI setting."

01 Changing from a literacy teacher pull-out model in Grade 2 to a co-teaching model in Grade 1.

02 Implemented new screening tools in kindergarten and Grade 1 that help identify students who may be at risk for Specific Learning Disabilities in reading as well as other associated factors.

03 Working in collaboration with Lisa Reis-Tymchuk, Occupational Therapist, on the integration of specific fine motor and graphomotor screening and support in kindergarten and Grade 1 for writing development.

While creating the pilot project and finding language appropriate resources was a bit of a challenge, there has also been some exciting discoveries, too. "It's great to see the student engagement, interest and also the connections that the students are starting to see with many aspects of literacy," said Michelle Follows, the Intervention Précoce en Lecture (IPL) teacher leading the implementation of the pilot project. "Also, the collaboration with the teachers has been very rich: daily discussions about pedagogy, student progress, strengths and challenges, and how they are interested and willing to adapt their teaching to incorporate these approaches."

Even though the pilot project is still in the early stages, Follows is also happy about what she's seeing. "We are already starting to see students applying rules and thinking about literacy in very different and novel ways," said Follows. "Additionally, the ability to identify at-risk students earlier on has allowed for a more pro-active and planful clinical/student services approach to support our most at-risk students when it counts the most during kindergarten and Grade 1."

While the results coming to light are positive, how has the implementation of the program gone over with the learners who are participating? "Students are truly enjoying the multi-modality approaches as well as the explicit teaching that has been incorporated within the lessons," said George.

"They are starting to understand that there are many ways to learn (ie: multisensory)," said Follows. "Through daily dialogue, the students are tuning in to the fact that we all learn differently and that we need to be exposed to many different approaches to help our brain retain and learn information." Creating this positive connection with learners is key, but so is developing one with all staff in the program as well.

"The collaboration that has come out from this relationship between school leadership and clinicians has truly contributed to the rich and comprehensive nature of this pilot in addressing the whole child," said Cadez. "The clinicians have had an essential role to play in Howden's literacy journey for many years," said Neveux. "This current project stemmed from questions that the team would ask George about teaching students with specific challenges. That evolved into more specific questions that helped guide the team to learn more about dyslexia. At École Howden, the clinicians are constantly in consultation with the team and are often learning beside the team members, but also often guiding the learning based on their expertise."

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN LRSD LEADING THE WAY

THE LOUIS RIEL SCHOOL DIVISION IS COMMITTED TO A RENEWED RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIGENOUS LEARNERS, FAMILIES, STAFF AND THE BROADER COMMUNITY AND THAT PROMISE IS REFLECTED IN OUR MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN (MYSP).

This plan looked to the Circle of Courage, an Indigenous-inspired whole-learner framework for a holistic learning journey, that incorporates the concepts of Belonging, Mastery, Independence and Generosity, for guidance and inspiration. By introducing Indigenous Education, which are the ways of knowing and being, to our community, we can ensure that we are embedding Indigenous worldviews, practices and culture into our learning and activities. We're proud of the efforts of our Indigenous Learning Team and staff throughout the division who are bringing our MYSP to life in their instruction, classrooms and communities.

INDIGENOUS PARENT PROGRAM

In partnership with school leadership and staff across the division, the Indigenous Learning Team is proud to offer the Indigenous Parent Program (IPP) that is available every Tuesday afternoon at Marion School and every Wednesday afternoon at Lavallee School. The program is supported by two cultural Integration Specialist/Community Support workers who provide a safe place where parents can meet and discuss issues around parenting. Staff are also on hand to help parents support their children's successful educational journey. Throughout the year, parents are able to participate in sewing, arts and crafts, beading as well as making traditional Indigenous clothing such as moccasins, gauntlets and regalia. Families can also learn about cultural teachings and have received presentations from various community organizations. The IPP is accessible to all families throughout LRSD. Over the course of the school year, the program has more than 60 families from a variety of schools participate.

INDIGENOUS YOUTH LEADERSHIP

The Indigenous Youth Leadership Program (IYLP) has traditional Indigenous culture at its core. The IYLP provides mentoring and guidance to adults and students in the IYLP group and across the division. It also helps students find their voice and to use it to promote advocacy and agency regarding Indigenous issues and perspectives. The program also recognizes the importance of embedding Indigenous worldviews and practices into learning and activities. This helps validate student identity and supports their academic and personal goals. Cultural activities and events are designed to develop a sense of belonging and community. Students are encouraged to participate or facilitate cultural and learning activities, be it at their school or at the divisional level. These could include activities such as hosting a divisional feast or bringing awareness to the LRSD community on issues such as Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, the inequity of access to water on northern reserves or racism.

GRADUATION POWWOW

The division has been dedicated to bringing Indigenous Education to all the students and every community it proudly serves. One of the first of many opportunities provided to our learners came in 2016. The LRSD Powwow graduation event began as a dream and quickly became a reality and provided the opportunity for students of all ages to take part as dancers and graduates. Prior to the 2016 LRSD Powwow club being formed, Hastings School had a group of students engaged in Powwow dance.

In 2016, the divisional Powwow group took place at the René Deleurme Centre inside Lavallee School from two to four times a month. Many schools were represented in this group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth learning how to do something that once was outlawed in Canada. Learners were taught the Fancy Shawl dance and Grass dance by Indigenous leaders. Parents, caregivers, staff and volunteers came together and made the regalia dancers wore at the 2016 Graduation Powwow held at Dakota Collegiate.

The planning for the 2016 Graduation Powwow, and every Powwow thereafter, has had a group of committed divisional leaders lead by Corey Kapilik, principal, Marion School, with support from Coco Ray Stevenson, Powwow Emcee, to ensure the authenticity and spirit of a Powwow was honoured. The Louis Riel Arts & Technology Centre provided the food through their Culinary Arts program and students in the Broadcast Media program streamed the live event.

The LRSD Powwow club grew exponentially in 2019. In addition to the Hastings School and Lavallee School clubs, Marion School has also become a satellite space for all LRSD students to participate in Powwow dancing. Windsor Park Collegiate developed a space for high school students to join Powwow dancing and also became the first space in LRSD to have a drumming group. There were also plans for Darwin School to begin a Powwow group in the Spring of 2020 but it was put on hold as COVID-19 forced the closure of school buildings across the province.



I FEEL PROUD TO BE A PART OF A SCHOOL DIVISION THAT DEMONSTRATES ITS COMMITMENT TO INDIGENOUS EDUCATION THROUGH THE ACTIONS IT TAKES IN ORDER TO ENSURE INDIGENOUS EDUCATION IS DONE IN A WAY THAT HONOURS AND RESPECTS INDIGENOUS CULTURE AND PRACTICES.”

- BOBBIE-JO LECLAIR, INDIGENOUS EDUCATION TEAM MEMBER



SET UP FOR SUCCESS

WHILE MANY STUDENTS IN LOUIS RIEL SCHOOL DIVISION (LRSD) LOOKED FORWARD TO GRADUATING FROM HIGH SCHOOL THIS YEAR, A GROUP AMONG THEM WERE EXCITED FOR MORE THAN JUST THEIR DIPLOMA.

In the 2019-2020 school year, 71 Grade 12 students also earned the LRSD Skills Credential at their graduation ceremonies.

The LRSD Skills Credential was awarded to 17 recipients at Windsor Park Collegiate; 14 at J.H. Bruns Collegiate; 12 at Collège Béliveau; 12 at Nelson McIntyre Collegiate; 11 at Collège Jeanne-Sauvé; and one individual at Glenlawn Collegiate.

In partnership with RBC Future Launch, the LRSD Skills Credential was created in the 2018-2019 school year and is a divisional career development initiative that provides opportunities for senior high school students to consider who they are, determine which skills they possess, assess which skills they'd like to acquire, and recognize who values their skills outside school walls. Interest in the program since its launch has continued to climb from 33 students enrolled in the first year to 101 registered for the start of September 2020.

The Credential Program offers relevant and practical workshops, experiences and partnerships designed to explore ever-evolving work and life expectations. Self-reflection is at the core of all activities, providing a foundation for students to connect the dots of their personal, school and community experiences and to

make informed decisions about post-high school careers. Earning this unique distinction gives students résumé content, job interview skills and personal confidence.

During September and October, Grade 11 and 12 students in every high school are invited to join a career cohort that organizes the LRSD Skills Credential program.

"The credential is a jam-packed opportunity for students to explore their interests, develop new interests and skills, connect with professionals and be recognized for the skills they already have," said Angela Kaiser, teacher, Career Cohort Coach at J.H. Bruns Collegiate.

"The credential recognizes students for their skills, experiences and willingness to explore and expand upon their experiences to help in the beginning phase of carving their career path. It is an opportunity like no other."

Students must demonstrate at least eight different skills or attributes, such as critical thinking, financial literacy or social perceptiveness, during activities in grades 11 and 12 and are given a two-year maximum to earn the credential. Once completed, students are awarded a framed certificate at convocation.



"I'm grateful for the activities that I experienced within the Skills Credential because it helped me look at the big picture of what prospects are really out there in the world. Not only in the business side of my interests, but also the opportunities that any high school student can easily grab but are mostly ignored because of their reluctance to step outside their comfort zones," said Zeinah Dela Cruz, a graduate from Windor Park Collegiate and Applied Business Management from the Louis Riel Arts & Technology Centre. "I believe I struggled with getting outside of my comfort zones as well, but I didn't give in to it because I wanted to go out there and make a difference. I wanted my voice to be heard."

The Credential is a unique LRSD career program that augments www.myblueprint.ca, LRSD's online career management planner for all Grade 9 to 12 students. In the 2019-2020 school year, students logged into their online myBlueprint portfolio 21,588 times, which is above average for school divisions with 10,000 to 20,000 students and impressive for a program that's only in its second year of operation.

All students involved in the program must also prepare a LEAN Career Design Canvas presentation to their career coaches. The Canvas is a self-reflective tool that connects the dots of their myriad school, life and community experiences. By partnering with RBC Future Launch, students receive access to support and mentorship that helps them in the creation, planning and implementation of their goals.

"A program like the Skills Credential is important for high school students because it prepares them for the world that awaits them once they graduate and step outside high school," said Ridhima Singla, a graduate from Nelson McIntyre Collegiate. "It introduces you to a vast number of opportunities that helps you make a smart career choice."



A PROGRAM LIKE THE SKILLS CREDENTIAL IS IMPORTANT FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS BECAUSE IT PREPARES THEM FOR THE WORLD THAT AWAITS THEM ONCE THEY GRADUATE AND STEP OUTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL."

- RIDHIMA SINGLA



CONVOCATION AND COVID-19

Celebrating Students During a Pandemic

These are unprecedented times. I think we could agree that we've heard those four words more times in 2020 than most of us have heard in our entire lifetimes. Overused? Possibly. Accurate? Absolutely. While the pandemic has impacted all of us in small and big ways, for this year's graduating class, it has been especially challenging. In the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD), convocation took place in eight high schools and while the goal of each was the same, the celebrations looked much different in previous years. In some cases, these events had similar themes and inspirations, but in all cases, these graduations were characterized by each school community coming together, breaking with tradition when necessary, thinking outside the box, and facing the challenges of the current climate to hold unique, creative celebrations that should live on in our collective memory forever.

COLLÈGE BÉLIVEAU

At Collège Béliveau, Gilles Mousseau, principal, was happy about how the school community came together for its graduation celebrations. "We have a very good graduation team that met on a regular basis to try to make the best

situation for our graduates," Mousseau said, noting there was slightly less than 100 graduating students this year, who graduated in four groups. "It's important that our graduates were able to celebrate with their friends. We wanted it to be as memorable as possible." Mousseau said the physically distanced ceremonies were well-choreographed affairs, with parents guided in by staff. Creating a memorable occasion for everyone involved in the process was a key message from the Windsor Park-based school's principal. "I don't necessarily remember the graduation of 2014 or 2015, but I will certainly remember the graduation of 2020. Depending on the reaction of the students and their parents, we might incorporate some of these new ideas in the future," he said. Mousseau has known some of his students since elementary school and said that being a Grade 7 to 12 school means that the relationships formed with students over this period of time is significant. "Sometimes, the students will come and thank you for making time for them, and these pieces of grad can be quite emotional. It's nice to share this occasion, and the importance of it, with them. Our staff is very attuned to our students—it's about relationship, relationship, relationship. It's not unusual for them to go above and beyond." As part of the celebrations, teachers and staff also delivered life-sized cardboard cutouts of Mousseau to students for their lawns.



COLLÈGE JEANNE-SAUVÉ

As part of its graduation celebrations, teachers and staff created a video of themselves singing to the St. Vital-based school's class of 2020 graduates. The song of choice—Randy Newman's *You've got a friend in me*—was a fitting one. "We've been working very hard with the students to keep the connection with all of our Grade 12s," said Alain Michalik, principal, who was speaking on the eve of three days of physically distanced convocation ceremonies at the school. "We wanted to provide students with a bit of a choice." Michalik said students could choose whether to graduate with friends or individually, which determined which day they attended convocation, and they were each allowed a specific number of guests in line with provincial health guidelines. He added that students were invited to pick up their gowns to take pictures with family members. "When the students came in for that week, it was difficult for them not to be with their friends, but there were smiles on their faces," he said, noting this also gave them the chance to see teachers and staff members. "Of course, we'll miss the other events, such as the supper and the dance, but we have to be realistic and understand the new reality we're living through right now. This has been a real eye-opener for everyone—never in my wildest dreams did I think we'd be living through something like this. If we work together as a team, we can accomplish the same things and make the best of any situation," said Michalik.



“

IF WE WORK TOGETHER AS A TEAM,
WE CAN ACCOMPLISH THE SAME
THINGS AND MAKE THE BEST OF
ANY SITUATION.”

- ALAIN MICHALIK



DAKOTA COLLEGIATE

Things were a hive of activity at Dakota Collegiate in the run-up to this year's graduation celebrations. Dean Favoni, a teacher and member of Dakota Collegiate's 2019-2020 graduation committee, said this year's ceremonies were held in line with provincial health regulations and physical distancing measures. It ran across three days and featured nearly 280 graduates in groups of five with a limited number of guests each. "The grads marched in to *O Canada* and then there was our treaty acknowledgments, a pre-recorded message from trustees, the principal's message, and then the kids walked across the stage with their diplomas and any other awards," Favoni said, adding that a chance to take photographs followed, and that the ceremonies were also recorded and broadcast. Despite the unusualness of the second semester of school this year, Favoni said Dakota Collegiate's community came together to celebrate this year's graduation and the accomplishments of the class of 2020. "The entire school came together—the administration, teachers and educational assistants—to do everything they could to make this a special experience," said Favoni. "I just want to emphasize it was a full school effort to make the convocation ceremonies as special and as authentic as possible. Our goal was to have the grads leave the ceremony knowing that the school did all it could to celebrate their accomplishments and their time at Dakota Collegiate."



OUR GOAL WAS TO HAVE THE GRADS LEAVE THE CEREMONY KNOWING THAT THE SCHOOL DID ALL IT COULD TO CELEBRATE THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND THEIR TIME AT DAKOTA COLLEGIATE."

- DEAN FAVONI



GLENLAWN COLLEGIATE

At Glenlawn Collegiate, the school community also rose to the occasion to ensure this year's graduating students experienced an event they would remember. Principal Dionne Deer said there were 48 separate ceremonies featuring six students each, with a limited number of guests per student. Each of the ceremonies included students receiving their diplomas and taking pictures with their family and friends. In all, around 250 students were set to graduate. "From the start, our staff wanted to make it special for our students, and have taken it on themselves to do that," said Deer. "Staff members came in and got the grounds ready in time for the events, which are normally more formal. This year, things were more informal, with teachers acting as MCs throughout the events." Despite the lack of formality this year, Deer said there were many photo opportunities throughout the events and props from the musical and sporting departments were available to add to the fun while celebrating and embracing the achievements of this year's graduating students. Deer said this year also presented the opportunity to encapsulate a period in history that will make this year's graduates unique. "Our grads this year will have pictures that capture memories no other graduating class will ever have."



OUR GRADS THIS YEAR WILL HAVE PICTURES THAT CAPTURE MEMORIES NO OTHER GRADUATING CLASS WILL EVER HAVE."

- DIONNE DEER



J.H. BRUNS COLLEGIATE

Creative thinking was at the heart of a number of activities and events that were held in honour of this year's graduating class. Grade 12 Student Services teacher Pamela Kuorikoski said there was a blend of more traditional activities, as well as others with a "unique twist" at J.H. Bruns Collegiate. These included teachers delivering lawn signs, and a socially distanced car parade, which showcased a procession of vehicles appropriately decorated for the occasion. During the parade, the vehicles drove past different feeder schools in the community with teachers positioned at various points along the route cheering the drivers on. Kuorikoski said the fact high schools across the city have had to rethink this year's graduation celebrations, presented the chance to approach things a bit differently. "Some parts have been different, and some parts have been even better. This is an opportunity we wouldn't have had were it not for the pandemic," said Kuorikoski. She said the school held 31 short convocation ceremonies featured six graduates each with a limit of three guests. And things wouldn't have been the same without a classic hat toss, albeit a modified one, featuring each group of six in the school's gym. There were also video messages from teachers and a board for the students to sign.

"It was remarkable in its own way," Kuorikoski said. "People have been so creative by thinking outside the box. Even if it isn't like this next year, there might be pieces that we can take forward. Instead of looking at what we've lost, it's important to look at what we've gained. I've really seen the staff coming together and working really hard for the kids. It's been different, but definitely unique."



I'VE REALLY SEEN THE STAFF COMING TOGETHER AND WORKING REALLY HARD FOR THE KIDS. IT'S BEEN DIFFERENT, BUT DEFINITELY UNIQUE."

- PAMELA KUORIKOSKI



LOUIS RIEL ARTS & TECHNOLOGY CENTRE

Everyone at the Louis Riel Arts & Technology Centre (LRATC) stepped up to the plate to make sure this year's graduates remembered the personal touches.

Speaking on the eve of the graduation celebrations, Andrea Delisle, Student Services Teacher and graduation committee member, said this year's activities and events, slated to include pre-recorded addresses, were set to be livestreamed virtually so that everyone could enjoy the occasion. In keeping with physical distancing protocols, of course, things were a little different for the more than 200 graduates this year, such as the use of grad photos in lieu of students going up on stage, but everyone at the school worked hard to ensure the experience was a special one for the class of 2020. "Obviously, it's a little bittersweet this year, as this isn't our usual way of celebrating, but our teachers all got together and delivered graduation lawn signs to show the students we care about them."

The significance of the grad sign delivery process can't be understated as LRATC students live not only in southeast Winnipeg, but across the city and throughout rural Manitoba. In Delisle's case, her sign delivering route saw her leave the school and make stops in Westwood, Fort Richmond, St. Vital, Sainte-Anne and Cooks Creek.

"Our teachers have been volunteering to do whatever they can to help," said Delisle.



OUR TEACHERS HAVE BEEN VOLUNTEERING TO DO WHATEVER THEY CAN TO HELP."

- ANDREA DELISLE



NELSON MCINTYRE COLLEGIATE

It's been a busy time at Nelson McIntyre Collegiate. As well as celebrating graduation, this year's class of 2020 is the first one to come through the school's reimagined high school experience, which started during the 2016-2017 academic year. That year, the Grade 9 students were the first to be involved with the a new project-based learning, which nurtures a growth mindset, creativity, exploration and empowerment. Each year since, another grade has joined in. The model includes an ongoing working partnership with The Forks. "We always want the kids to do work for an authentic purpose, and an authentic audience," said Charlene Smallwood, the school's principal. "The kids buy into it, and one of the biggest pieces for us is the pride the kids have in their work. The Forks has been a wonderful partner, and this was one of the first pieces of the new model. The kids feel valued, which gives them a tremendous amount of confidence. It's been a wonderful journey." It's that very journey, Smallwood said, that came to an end for this year's Grade 12 contingent, which made the celebrations a little bittersweet for the staff and students that have grown so close in the last four years. In terms of the school's graduation celebrations, Smallwood

said lots of activities and events were planned. "It's the end of a journey for some, as our first wave are leaving the nest, so it's both heartwarming and sad. It's an amazing group of kids—they truly are the poster children for our program," said Smallwood, adding there were 68 graduates this year.

“
IT'S THE END OF A JOURNEY FOR SOME, AS OUR FIRST WAVE ARE LEAVING THE NEST, SO IT'S BOTH HEARTWARMING AND SAD. IT'S AN AMAZING GROUP OF KIDS—THEY TRULY ARE THE POSTER CHILDREN FOR OUR PROGRAM.”

- CHARLENE SMALLWOOD



WINDSOR PARK COLLEGIATE

The school's front yard area was the perfect location for its convocation celebrations. "We hosted convocation in our front yard and entry way," said Karen Haluschak, the school's principal. "We felt like our Grade 12 students left us very quickly, so this was a good way to bring them back one last time." Because of the landscape design at the front of the school, Haluschak said event organizers envisioned the ceremonies to resemble a runway scenario. "We had the students arrive almost like a fashion show runway, where they walk up it one way." After that, the 98 graduates moved on to receive their diplomas, one by one, and take part in photographs. Haluschak said organizers enjoyed taking part in the planning process, because it's so important to help make each and every graduate feel special in his or her 'spotlight moment.' "We all looked forward to seeing each other and cheering each other on, and we encouraged each kid to cheer each other on too," said Haluschak, adding local motorists added to the ambiance by honking their horns as the school is located on a busy street and bus route. Vice-principal Heather McCorrister said the school's administration and staff are proud at how the student body and the school's community has adapted to life during the pandemic and its numerous challenges it has brought since the school was closed in March. "We're grateful for the support of the community and our student's ability to adapt to change. The fact they handled it with such grace is an indication of future success, because if they can get through this, chances are they'll be able to get through other challenges, too," said McCorrister. "We hope the students see that and reflect on that."

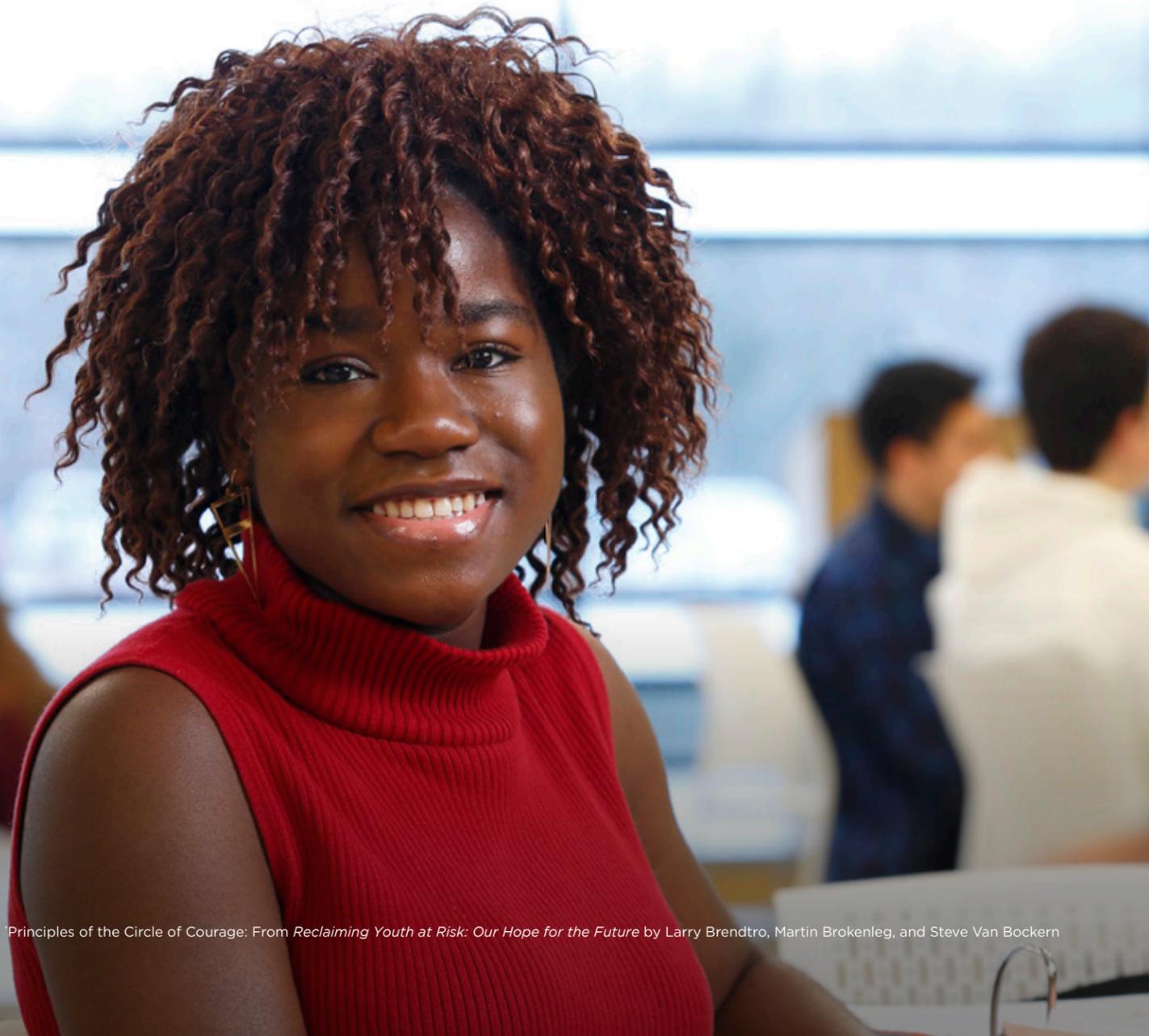
“
THE FACT THEY HANDLED IT WITH SUCH GRACE IS AN INDICATION OF FUTURE SUCCESS, BECAUSE IF THEY CAN GET THROUGH THIS, CHANCES ARE THEY'LL BE ABLE TO GET THROUGH OTHER CHALLENGES, TOO.”

- HEATHER MCCORRISTER



MASTERY

THE INBORN THIRST FOR LEARNING IS CULTIVATED; BY LEARNING TO COPE WITH THE WORLD, THE CHILD CAN SAY, "I CAN SUCCEED."*



*Principles of the Circle of Courage: From *Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Our Hope for the Future* by Larry Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, and Steve Van Bockern

LEVELLING UP WITH ESPORTS

EVEN THOUGH 2,340 KILOMETRES SEPARATES THEM, TWO SCHOOLS WENT HEAD TO HEAD IN AN INTERNATIONAL ESPORTS TOURNAMENT ON JANUARY 29, 2020.

The Canadian competitors from Archwood School in the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) took on students from James Monroe Middle School in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The two schools were both new to competitive gaming and found each other through social media.

Esports, also known as competitive gaming, has been skyrocketing in popularity over the past decade. Players, ranging from amateurs to paid professionals, compete in a variety of video games as individuals or as part of teams. What used to be seen as a hobby is now the centre of attention as global tournaments are streamed online and viewed by millions of people. It is also providing youth with opportunities for networking, post-secondary scholarships and career possibilities.

The tournament saw five students in grades 6 to 8 at Archwood School face off in one-on-one virtual matches against their American opponents in Super Smash Bros. Ultimate on the Nintendo Switch. It marked the first-ever organized esports tournament between middle years teams in Canada and the United States. In the end, James Monroe Middle School won the tournament 3-2.

Although esports may seem like all fun and games, Melissa Burns, a teacher at Archwood School, discovered the benefits it has on student development and decided to champion it in LRSD. "Competitive gaming teaches students transferable skills such as troubleshooting technology, digital citizenship, critical thinking

and teamwork," said Burns. "It also helps them learn to deal with the strong emotions that can come with competitive play."

After spending most of her maternity leave researching esports, Melissa launched Middle Years Esports Manitoba (MYEMB) in October 2019. There are currently 11 schools registered in MYEMB, seven of which are in the LRSD. The organization supports students in grades 6 to 8 with competitive gaming opportunities so they can experience the benefits of sport, community and skill development, regardless of physical ability. It also gives schools the resources to launch their own esports teams. "Esports catches students that may feel out of place participating in traditional sports and validates their interests and skillsets," said Burns. "A lot of students go home and play these games in isolation, but this gives them a safe space in our schools to create connections, feel a sense of belonging and learn about sportsmanship."



ESPORTS CATCHES STUDENTS THAT MAY FEEL OUT OF PLACE PARTICIPATING IN TRADITIONAL SPORTS AND VALIDATES THEIR INTERESTS AND SKILLSETS."

- MELISSA BURNS

LEARNING THROUGH A 21ST CENTURY LENS

DOCUMENTARIES, NOVELS, CLOTHING LINES, VIDEO GAMES AND FUNDRAISERS ARE JUST A FEW EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS THAT HAVE COME TO LIFE IN PROPEL AT NELSON MCINTYRE COLLEGIATE (NMC).

The interdisciplinary, project-based program invites approximately 25 high school students from across the division each semester to earn credits while pursuing an individualized area of interest.

Propel immerses students in project-based learning, an environment where they work on a project over an extended period that solves a real-world problem or answers a complex question. Students demonstrate their knowledge and skills by creating a public product or presentation for an authentic audience, such as a person or group outside of the teacher and classroom.

“The more we can find authentic context and audience, the more motivated we see them become,” said Patrick Hansen, teacher in Propel. “Students come to life in a really special way and the things they’re able to accomplish when we put them in those situations never ceases to amaze me.”

Hansen sees the high-quality work that comes out of the program first-hand, but the data also reflects the advantages of project-based learning. Student survey data indicates that 89.5 per cent of students in Propel are engaged and motivated, compared to 27 per cent as the national norm, and attendance rates are at 97 per cent.

“When students come to believe that they are the ones steering their learning, they have a new sense of ownership,” said Hansen. “They’re able to see that the work they do is applicable to the real world and become highly engaged.”

The success of the Propel gave administration at NMC the confidence to roll out a project-based learning model throughout the entire school. Now in its fifth year, inquiry, interdisciplinary opportunities and authentic public audiences are the guiding principles of all student work throughout the high school.

École Marie-Anne-Gaboury (ÉMAG) was also inspired to switch up its learning environment after seeing the positive effects of project-based learning on student engagement.

“We visited Nelson McIntyre Collegiate to see what it was all about,” said Lynne Daumler, Grade 7/8 teacher at ÉMAG. “Our senior administration was very open to tailoring project-based learning to our needs as an immersion school with multi-grade classes.” Grade 5 to 8 students are prompted to begin a project with a driving question that allows for flexibility and end each project by presenting to an authentic audience. Each new project starts with a launch event that pushes them toward the driving question. For example, students in Daumler’s class participated in a climate march and then were asked “What does eco-citizenship look like in St. Vital?” Students then created YouTube videos on the topic and given freedom to choose what those videos would look like.



“Choice is a huge component of project-based learning, however it’s critical to decide where choice will be an option for students and maintain some structure.” Dany Lachance, a Grade 5/6 teacher at ÉMAG, says that project-based learning focuses on 21st century skills that will carry students into the ‘real world.’

“The projects obviously have curriculum built into them, but they also teach soft skills that we need every single day in life such as communication, collaboration, researching, and even things like how to craft an email or properly store files,” said Lachance.

Daumler and Lachance both agree that the benefits that come out of project-based learning outweigh any growing pains. “As leaders, you have to be flexible enough for the challenge,” said Lachance. “It’s not more work, it’s different work—it’s tweaking what you’re already doing to change it to project-based learning.”



WHEN STUDENTS COME TO BELIEVE THAT THEY ARE THE ONES STEERING THEIR LEARNING, THEY HAVE A NEW SENSE OF OWNERSHIP.”

- PATRICK HANSEN



A COLLABORATIVE MOVE TO AN ONLINE WORLD

WHEN THE LOUIS RIEL SCHOOL DIVISION (LRSD) STARTED ITS REMOTE LEARNING JOURNEY IN MARCH 2020, THE TRANSITION TO ONLINE INSTRUCTION AND INTERACTION BETWEEN STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND FAMILIES REQUIRED A COLLABORATIVE AND SUPPORTIVE APPROACH.

Creating an equitable learning environment was a top priority. In early April, staff checked in with families across the division to find out what LRSD could do to help them with the switch to remote learning. Access to internet and access to laptops and tablets were two needs that were identified.



School staff followed up with 159 families who initially indicated they needed support accessing the internet. With many families making alternate arrangements during the interim, 17 families from 13 different schools were confirmed as requiring divisional assistance for internet access. Each of the 17 families were given access to the World Wide Web, with the division assuming the costs.

“Teaching has always been an incredibly complex and demanding profession, but during remote learning, reaching students and supporting their needs has been even more challenging,” said Warren Hart, Itinerant Instructional Support Teacher.

Principals and vice-principals liaised with divisional staff to deploy more than 1,600 school devices for students to continue learning at home. This included an extensive configuration and sanitation process.

Through Microsoft Teams and other software programs, educators used video to engage learners in whole group, small group and one-to-one meetings. The live, face-to-face interaction and chat space provided the ability for teachers to collect evidence in a multitude of ways.

Families that required more traditional paper and pencil tasks were also accommodated through drop-off and pick-up systems. “It’s all about providing opportunities for students to show what they know in a way that empowers their voice,” said Thaddeus Bourassa, Itinerant Instructional Support Teacher. “We know that no two brains are alike and therefore deserve personalized pathways of learning. The ability for students to demonstrate what they know in a meaningful and remote context was clearly supported.”

Both Hart and Bourassa are on the divisional Learning Team and are EdTech Mentors, a group of LRSD educators that guide staff in integrating technology into both their lesson design and everyday teaching.

With many LRSD staff working from home during the indefinite suspension of classes, the EdTech Mentorship Program and the expertise of the mentors was more important than ever.

More than 400 devices were distributed to teachers and educational assistants, and 1,029 staff members took part in 119 professional development sessions led by EdTech Mentors about online education technology.

Microsoft Office 365 applications saw a substantial spike in usage, too. The LRSD Educators Team, a collaboration hub for teachers on Microsoft Teams, was also created and had more than 1,200 active users sharing successes, learning resources and words of encouragement. Divisional email activity rose by more than 74 per cent, with approximately 6.4 million messages sent, received and read. OneDrive, a Cloud storage application, had usage rise by 22 per cent and activity on Microsoft Forms rose by 196 per cent.

While reflecting on the move to remote learning, one LRSD teacher said, “It has broken down barriers, created community and given students the opportunity to truly explore their own creative interests in ways that amplify their voice in powerful and meaningful ways.”

LRSD TechTalks, a channel on Microsoft Streams, was also established as a recourse for staff and was used to upload all webinars, professional development sessions and quick tips to ensure best practices and updates were kept at the forefront. This space soon filled with more than 50 videos and became a popular channel where virtual on-demand professional development was available 24/7 for educators to access and re-visit. “We saw a huge increase in staff collaboration,” said Hart. “Through safe connections online, teachers naturally shared ideas, files and talked about what was working for them. Staff came together in purposeful ways to build meaningful learning experiences for all learners.”

The move to this online world has not been without challenges, but LRSD’s students, staff and community members have continually showed a commitment to learning and adapting to this new reality. “Although we don’t know what the future will look like, one thing that will not change will be the need for thoughtful plans of learning and to provide experiences where students find meaning in their work, feel a sense of belonging, have opportunities to thrive, stretch their brains and feel a sense of mastery,” said Bourassa.

“

WE KNOW THAT NO TWO BRAINS ARE ALIKE AND THEREFORE DESERVE PERSONALIZED PATHWAYS OF LEARNING. THE ABILITY FOR STUDENTS TO DEMONSTRATE WHAT THEY KNOW IN A MEANINGFUL AND REMOTE CONTEXT WAS CLEARLY SUPPORTED.”

- THADDEUS BOURASSA

SHAKING UP SCHEDULES IN SCHOOLS

THIS AIN'T YOUR PARENTS' SCHOOL SCHEDULE.

For several learners in the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD), the traditional school day has been shaken up and reorganized as a way to increase physical activity and well-being. Two schools in the division, École Provencher and Lavallee School, have deviated from the old schedule that had two 15-minute recesses and an hour for lunch in exchange for one that has three 100-minute blocks of instructional time and two nutritional/fitness breaks. This balanced approach to education is aptly named a balanced school day.

Although the two school's daily schedules look slightly different, the benefits are the same: extended physical activity for students, more opportunities to eat throughout the day, more prep time and collaboration among teachers and maximized learning with fewer interruptions and transitions. The schedule switch-up in École Provencher was championed by Celeste Dilka, Student Services Teacher, based on her positive experience with it when she worked in a different school division. "I've never worked in a school with a 'traditional' schedule," said Dilka. "It was difficult to adjust, and I felt like I was always rushed and that there was a lot of wasted time."

Working with Lyette Carrière, the former principal of École Provencher, and David Charney, vice-principal, the three educators joined forces to create a plan of action. After months of research and consultations with staff, parents and senior leadership, École Provencher announced it would be implementing a balanced school day at the start of the 2019-2020 school year.

"There was a bit of a learning curve at the beginning, but overall, it's been pretty smooth," said Shelly Hynes, a Grade 3 teacher at École Provencher. "I've noticed the students aren't as tired at the end of the day. Kids learn

better in the morning—they're more focused—so this schedule helps them stay engaged." Students in Hynes' class also agree with her assessment of the new schedule. "I like that we don't have to stop and start a bunch of times," said Ruby, a Grade 3 student. "We don't have to rush and put our winter clothes on and off and on and off. Also, there's more time to play with friends."

For some learners, getting dressed for recess in the winter months can be challenging and time consuming, especially for younger students. With two longer recess breaks instead of three shorter ones, students are outside longer and transitions between classes are easier. As one of the recess supervisors, Charney sees the benefits firsthand. "The balanced school day allows for so much more authentic, play-based learning," said Charney. "Students can start a game and actually finish it within the new half-hour break. I think it's reduced feelings of anxiety because kids aren't rushed to get outside and have the time to problem solve, build friendships and work together."

Although increased physical activity is an important focus of the balanced school day, improved well-being is also a priority. École Provencher has a daily 15-minute mental health break in the afternoon to help students refocus and learn about mindfulness. These breaks include activities such as colouring, breathing exercises or quiet time.

Katie Anderson, who has one son in pre-school and one in Grade 3, said she sees a big difference in her oldest since he's been a part of a balanced school day. "My son, Paolo, has developed a new vocabulary around mental health. He's able to express the way he's feeling and recognizes when he needs to step back and take a break. He's also coming home feeling more tired, in a good way, because of the focus on physical wellness."

While the new schedule is showing a positive impact on learners, teachers have also been experiencing the benefits. Michèle Olson, principal at École Provencher, said she's noticed an increase in collaboration among staff.

"The longer blocks of time outdoors for students means longer blocks of prep time for our staff," said Olson. "Teachers can take time for themselves, debrief and collaborate with one another. We've held staff meetings during the breaks, and I've even seen a few teachers starting to do yoga together!"

Shelly Hopper, principal at Lavallee School, also saw an increase in staff satisfaction. "Staff were enthusiastic about the change to a balanced school day. Teachers are able to plan comprehensive lessons that are not interrupted by frequent transitions and often mention that the days actually feel shorter." Lavallee School was the first to implement the balanced school day in LRSD in the fall of 2017. Now in the school's third year with the new schedule, Hopper says keeping an open and ongoing dialogue with the community is key to the continued success of the new schedule.

"The biggest question from parents was in regard to packing lunches and ensuring that students had opportunities to eat at both breaks within the day," said Hopper. "We found it helpful to provide additional and ongoing support to students and families about packing nutritious lunches that are easily separated into two parts. We've noticed that students are eating more of their lunches throughout the day."

With students in kindergarten to Grade 8, administration at Lavallee School has had to adapt the school day schedule to ensure it fits everyone's needs. "There are a few times throughout the year that require some shuffling," said Hopper. "For example, if Practical Arts for Grade 7 and 8 students is in the afternoon, those students will follow a more typical schedule. We've also made accommodations for substitutes and part-time staff working mornings or afternoons."

Despite the need for occasional adjustments, the switch to a balanced school day for Lavallee School and École Provencher has been a relatively easy transition and a

change that Mark, a Grade 3 École Provencher learner, hopes is here to stay. "It's way better and I never want to go back to the other kind of day."

““

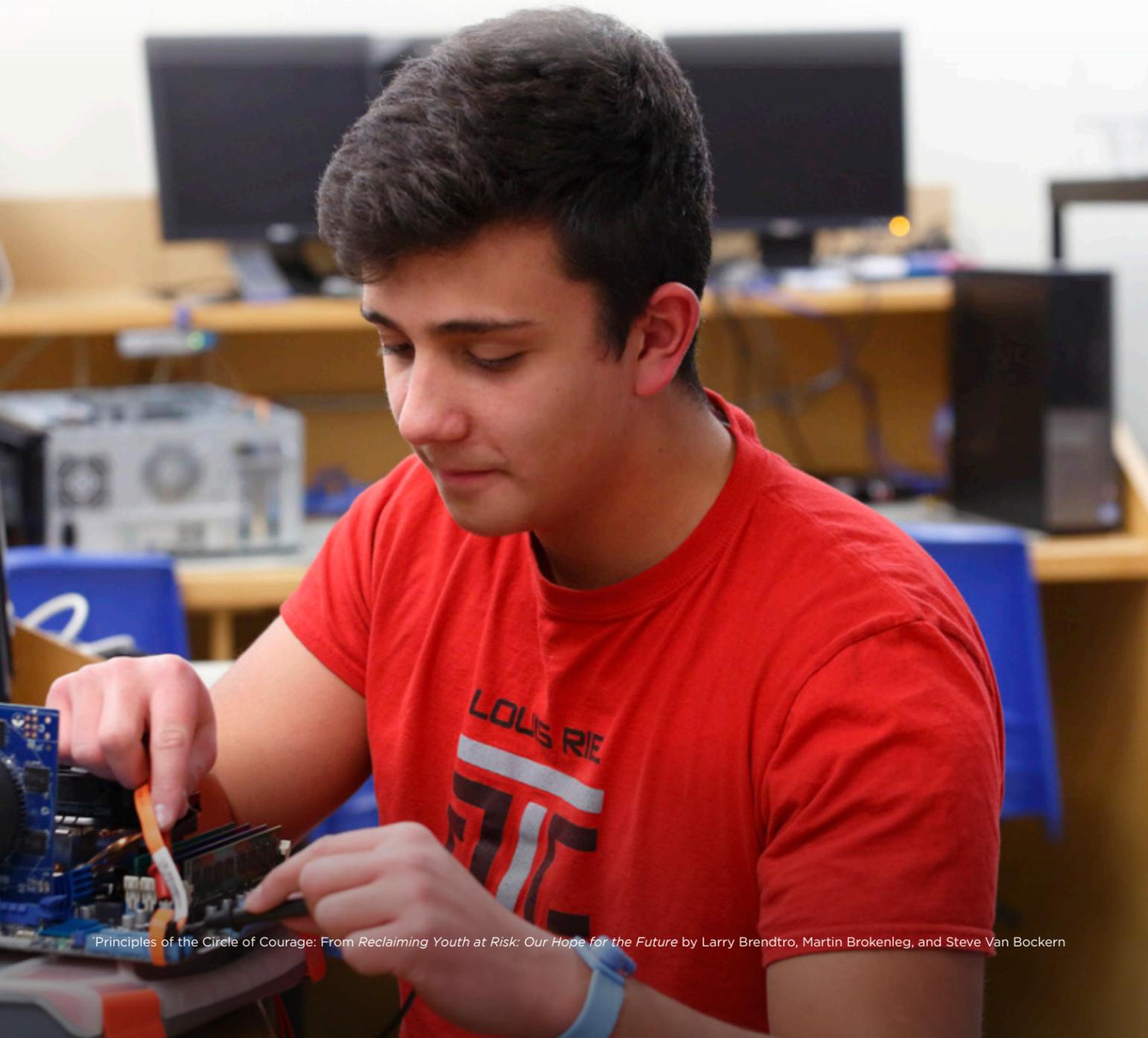
THE BALANCED SCHOOL DAY ALLOWS FOR SO MUCH MORE AUTHENTIC, PLAY-BASED LEARNING.”

- DAVID CHARNEY



INDEPENDENCE

FREE WILL IS CULTIVATED BY RESPONSIBILITY SO THAT THE CHILD CAN SAY,
“I HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE DECISIONS.”*



*Principles of the Circle of Courage: From *Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Our Hope for the Future* by Larry Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, and Steve Van Bockern

HELPING STAFF STAY SAFE

SAFE WORK PROCEDURES (SWP) HELP STAFF MEMBERS UNDERSTAND THE POTENTIAL HAZARDS IN A WORK ENVIRONMENT AND REDUCE THE RISK OF ILLNESS AND INJURIES BY SETTING OUT SPECIFIC GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS.

The safety of students, staff and the community is a top priority in the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD), and in a normal year, Tara Baschuk, LRSD Workplace Health and Safety Officer, is busy developing new SWP and revising old ones. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the suspension of in-class learning added an extra layer of complexity to her work and the need to define a new normal within workplaces.

The first step to developing these procedures is assessing the risk in divisional workplaces. Knowing that COVID-19 spreads in several ways, including through droplets when a person coughs or sneezes or from touching a contaminated surface before touching the face, the team quickly got to work determining how to keep staff safe in the adjusted working conditions.

With guidance from public health officials, Baschuk and Lisa Aitken, Assistant Superintendent, and several members of the Senior Leadership Team, worked collaboratively to develop more than a dozen COVID-19 related SWP.

Each procedure took into consideration the important prevention methods to minimize the risk of transmission such as proper disinfection and sanitation, physical distancing, hand hygiene, self-screening and more.

As more information about the virus became available and additional guidelines from public health officials were released, new procedures were necessary for situations that LRSD had not dealt with in the past, such as collecting, handling and delivering students' belongings during a pandemic.

“Staying safe requires alignment and autonomy. As we continue to navigate this pandemic, we remain hopeful that all staff and students will continue to support and

follow the guidelines that keep us safe and healthy because each of us recognizes it's the right thing to do,” said Christian Michalik, LRSD Superintendent and CEO.

All SWP were posted to LRSD's online staff portal and updated as often as needed. Leadership in schools and at a divisional level were notified by email any time a new procedure was made available and asked to share it with all applicable staff. The LRSD community was also encouraged to share any health and safety concerns they had through surveys and discussion with staff.

“

AS WE CONTINUE TO NAVIGATE THIS PANDEMIC, WE REMAIN HOPEFUL THAT ALL STAFF AND STUDENTS WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AND FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES THAT KEEP US SAFE AND HEALTHY BECAUSE EACH OF US RECOGNIZES IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO.”

- CHRISTIAN MICHALIK

DRIVING TOWARDS DATA LITERACY

ON JANUARY 16, 2020, LRSD SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM MEMBERS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION BEGAN WORKING WITH TEACHERS ON GOAL 3.2 OF THE LRSD MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN:

Enhancing all staff's data literacy. This goal has many stakeholders including system-level and school-level leaders, teachers, students and parents with numerous steps along the way. Achieving this goal will take many years with hopes of having it fully implemented in the 2023-2024 school year.

WHAT IS THE STARTING POINT?

LRSD's road to data literacy is mapped out by the Data Skills Framework, a tool that helps analyze current approaches to data literacy, identify imbalances of skills and address gaps. The framework illustrates how technical data skills must be balanced with other skills, such as service design, data innovation and change leadership, to help ensure data projects are impactful and lead to the best outcomes for everyone. There are enormous amounts of data already collected in LRSD that teachers and leaders can use to deepen understanding and make more informed decisions, but it was decided quite unanimously to start our data literacy journey with a focus on student achievement in the form of report card data. All the data used in the initiative comes from the provincial report card which was first implemented in 2013.

HOW DO WE GET THERE? HOW DOES THIS BECOME MEANINGFUL?

While the data journey for school leaders and teachers started in January, the journey started nine months earlier for the Senior Leadership Team and members of the Information Systems department. "When working with data, there is never an issue with there not being enough of it. Instead it's trying to find a way to organize it in an

informative and comprehensive way for our end users," said Clarke Hagan, Director of Information Services. Hagan and Christian Michalik, Superintendent, partnered with Dell Canada and Microsoft to get the project initiated. Microsoft's program called Power BI, in conjunction with data experts from Dell helped LRSD construct a data models and a "Data Dashboard" that aggregated data across all schools, grades and subject areas. This dashboard allows school leaders and teachers to interact with this data in ways never thought possible.

WHAT DOES DATA LITERACY LOOK LIKE?

The road to data literacy in 2023 is one of many twists and turns as well as frequent check-ins to determine where we are in relation to our goal. At the very beginning of the project, leaders and teachers were surveyed about their readiness to launch the initiative with all staff. Data literacy was a new domain for many staff, so their feedback was critical in gauging how others might respond to this initiative. After the first meeting, teachers and leaders both indicated they needed more time.



After more professional development and time for staff to learn about Power BI and what the data represented, the survey data showed an overwhelming response that the initiative was ready to be launched.

NEXT STEPS AND INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

Based on the positive Net Promoter Score (NPS)* score, LRSD's next steps were to move forward with a full launch of the Data Literacy initiative in the spring. However, COVID-19 struck four days later and we had to pause our progress. As we adapt to our new reality, we plan to continue exploring how we can use the tool and data to help us become better teachers and learners. Our future goals include:



100% OF SYSTEM-LEVEL AND SCHOOL-LEVEL LEADERS ARE:

-  Using Power BI reports to measure and impact school improvement tools on student learning
-  Teaching staff how to collaborate and build collegial trust in using Power BI as a data literacy tool

100% OF TEACHERS ARE:

-  Confident and comfortable using the division and school created Power BI reports to inform their assessment, evaluation reporting practices and their individual and collective teaching practices.

100% OF STUDENTS ARE:

-  Using their individual system-level Power BI report to inform their learning journey

75% OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS ARE:

-  Using system-level, school-level, classroom-level and collaborative learning cycle generated reports to their individual learner's learning journey.

*Net Promoter Score (NPS) is calculated based on responses to a single question. Score of 9-10 = Promoters: likely to exhibit value-creating behaviours. Score of 0-6 = Detractors: less likely to exhibit value-creating behaviours. Score of 7-8 = Passives: behaviour falls between Promoters and Detractors. NPS is calculated by subtracting the percentage of people who are Detractors from the percentage of people who are Promoters. Passives count toward the total number of respondents.



BRIDGING THE GAP

SINCE 2015, THE LOUIS RIEL SCHOOL DIVISION (LRSD) AND ITS EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDCARE PARTNERS (ELCC) HAVE BEEN EXPLORING WAYS TO BUILD A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE TWO SYSTEMS AND DISCOVER NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT A MORE SEAMLESS TRANSITION FOR YOUNG CHILDREN AS THEY MOVE FROM CHILDCARE TO SCHOOL.

“There used to be a bit of a divide between the two systems even though we were serving a lot of the same children and families, so we started discussing how we could work more collaboratively and learn together,” said Tammy Favreau, Supervisor of Early Years Programs, LRSD.

The Early Years Partnership (EYP) started with group discussions and planning sessions. A few shared topics of interest including play-based learning and the results of the Early Development Instrument, which measures children’s readiness for school across five domains: physical health and well-being; social competence; emotional maturity; language and thinking skills; and communication skills and general knowledge.

“Overall, the children in LRSD are well-prepared for school, but there are always areas to improve in,” said Favreau. “We started sharing the community-based information with our ELCC partners and planning together to provide learning opportunities for children where there were developmental gaps.”

In October 2019, the EYP continued to flourish when elementary school principals and early years partners came together at the LRSD Board Office to discuss opportunities for children and their parents to be welcomed into school communities as early as possible.

Planning teams discussed the specific context of their community and the needs of the families in their care. They worked together to identify opportunities to welcome parents and children into school communities to increase their comfort in school environments well before starting school. Each planning group identified how they would begin to implement the first steps of their plan over the current school year.

“The intent has always been to find ways to connect with families and lessen any fear or anxiety that kids might have moving from daycare to kindergarten,” said Brenda Charriere, Director of Rainbow Day Nursery. “After our most recent meeting, we were really eager to continue to build the relationship between all childcare centres—whether they are in a school or not—and the division.”



Throughout the next few months, elementary schools welcomed preschool children and their parents at various events, planning sessions continued at a local level and school events, and activities were shared through childcare newsletters.

With the arrival of COVID-19, in-person collaboration was put on hold; however the established relationship between LRSD and ELCC continued and was paramount to ensuring a safe and consistent approach to opening spaces for children in childcare centres.

The partnership helped support the transition from providing childcare for essential workers to expanding accommodation for all workers and, finally, to opening childcare centres at full capacity, all while adhering to public health safety guidelines.

Bonnie Ash, Executive Director at Morrow Avenue Child Care Programs for Families, says she was grateful for the communication and collaboration with the division during such an uncertain time.

“Seven of my programs are in LRSD schools, so I had to work closely with the division at each step of the way,” said Ash. “I worked in tandem with the school principals and divisional staff and discussed additional guidelines that would help make everyone feel a bit more comfortable.”

Although many EYP plans were put on hold this year, Favreau says she looks forward to continuing the journey.

“We’ve already seen some positive steps forward in our partnership with our early learning and childcare partners, so I’m hopeful we’ll continue expanding this partnership by putting more of our ideas into action once it’s safe to do so.”

“

THE INTENT HAS ALWAYS BEEN TO FIND WAYS TO CONNECT WITH FAMILIES AND LESSEN ANY FEAR OR ANXIETY THAT KIDS MIGHT HAVE MOVING FROM DAYCARE TO KINDERGARTEN.”

- BRENDA CHARRIERE

DIGITAL LIBRARY VISITOR NUMBERS JUMP OFF THE PAGE

SINCE 2012, THE LOUIS RIEL SCHOOL DIVISION (LRSD) DIGITAL LIBRARY HAS ATTRACTED A LOYAL FOLLOWING ACROSS THE DIVISION, BUT WHEN SCHOOLS, PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND BOOKSTORES CLOSED IN MARCH 2020 DUE TO THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC, ONLINE TRAFFIC ON THE SITE SKYROCKETED TO AN AVERAGE OF 10,000 ACTIVE USER VISITS PER WEEK, WHICH WAS A 525 PER CENT INCREASE FROM THE YEAR PRIOR.



With hundreds of new users and thousands of digital resources in circulation, the LRSD digital library responded to an emergent need to expand and diversify a contemporary virtual library collection.

Powered by Overdrive's kindergarten to Grade 12 digital reading platform, the online curation of the digital library collection is a collaborative and participatory effort. LRSD school library staff are dedicated to customizing a contemporary collection of learning resources and recreational titles that meet the individual needs and interests of our 40 school communities, as well as the division's professional learning library. With the increased demand for digital resources this spring, a team of teacher-librarians and library assistants was recruited to research and organize the requests of students, parents and divisional staff into virtual book carts. Real-time requests from people were reviewed, and those titles were uploaded and ready to borrow within a couple of hours. The online library offers LRSD patrons eBook, read-along, audio and video formats that support diverse learning styles in both English and French.

In the absence of access to physical resources, LRSD's digital library has become an invaluable resource in supporting the remote learning effort across the division by providing additional copies of books for online literature circles; providing alternative audio formats to meet individual needs for students; ensuring the availability of new releases for recreational reading; sourcing non-fiction titles for student research and inquiry-based learning; and offering access to professional educational resources to support teachers, administrators and school trustees.

"My three kids love to read and when public libraries closed, I wasn't sure how to fill their desire for new books. Luckily, the LRSD Digital Library had tons of titles that kept their love of reading going," said Rachel Boone, a parent in LRSD.

To assist students, parents and staff who are new users of the LRSD Digital Library and its SORA app, school library staff provided personalized instruction and troubleshooting services for digital devices such as laptops, tablets, and smart phones. Both teacher-librarians and library assistants created and shared made-in-LRSD documents on how to access the digital library such as step-by-step written instructions, annotated screen shots, how-to videos, and posts on social media. Feedback from LRSD families has been overwhelmingly positive, as students continue to have the opportunity to access quality learning resources in a variety of digital formats.

"Just thought I'd tell you that my daughter freaked out this morning because she said a whole bunch of new graphic novels appeared in the online library. She's so pumped!" said one parent who emailed their enthusiasm about the new book additions to LRSD library staff.

A library learning commons balances access to both physical and virtual resources, encouraging all learners to develop confidence in navigating from one to the other with ease and purpose. The LRSD Digital Library has thrived in recent months because it has continued to evolve and remain relevant to the needs of students and staff transitioning to new learning environments.

“

MY THREE KIDS LOVE TO READ AND WHEN PUBLIC LIBRARIES CLOSED, I WASN'T SURE HOW TO FILL THEIR DESIRE FOR NEW BOOKS. LUCKILY, THE LRSD DIGITAL LIBRARY HAD TONS OF TITLES THAT KEPT THEIR LOVE OF READING GOING.”

- RACHEL BOONE



GENEROSITY

CHARACTER IS CULTIVATED BY CONCERN FOR OTHERS SO THAT THE CHILD CAN SAY,
 "I HAVE A PURPOSE FOR MY LIFE."^{*}



^{*}Principles of the Circle of Courage: From *Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Our Hope for the Future* by Larry Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, and Steve Van Bockern

FEEDING MIND, BODY & SOUL

THERE'S MUCH MORE TO A SCHOOL DIVISION THAT SIMPLY PROVIDING EDUCATION TO STUDENTS. THE GOAL OF THE LOUIS RIEL SCHOOL DIVISION (LRSD) IS TO SUPPORT THE STUDENT, THEIR FAMILY AND THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY, TOO, AND THAT SENTIMENT WAS ESPECIALLY EVIDENT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

More than a dozen divisional staff members came out to pack food hampers at Dakota Collegiate Institute that would support more than 450 families in the division each week throughout the suspension of classes.

"We know people throughout our community are facing additional challenges in their lives in response to the COVID-19 pandemic," said Darcy Cormack, divisional principal and one of many involved in leading the coordination of the food hampers. "We wanted to be able to do something to help ease the burden many people face when trying to get enough food for their families."

The food hampers contained everything from canned fruit and fresh vegetables to pantry staples such as boxed cereal and bread. Community partners Peak of the Market, Dairy Producers of Manitoba, Dakota Family Foods, Cobb Bread and Prairie Routes, as well as many private donors were instrumental in supporting food security for families. LRSD bus drivers also helped by delivering the hampers to families.

"Educator Assistants are natural born helpers," said Margaret Lapenskie, Frontenac School, Community Liaison Worker. "The team that has come together to put together these hampers have demonstrated the compassion, empathy and care that are hallmarks of staff members across our division."

While the deliveries of food helped families refill their pantry, it also provided a sense of caring and community during turbulent times. After one of the hampers was dropped off to a family from Lavallee School, the mother sent a thank you email to LRSD staff.

"On behalf of myself and family, we were deeply moved by the thoughtfulness on the part of the division during this difficult time. My kids were so happy and they feel proud to be a part of your school. Thank you so much!"



DISTANCE CAN'T STOP FRIENDSHIPS FROM FLOURISHING

BACK IN MAY 2019, A GROUP OF EIGHT STUDENTS AND FIVE STAFF FROM THE LOUIS RIEL SCHOOL DIVISION (LRSD) HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF VISITING THE COMMUNITY OF ST. THERESA POINT FIRST NATION IN NORTHERN MANITOBA.

The trip was the culmination of a student-led initiative to create a partnership with an Indigenous community and to join paths on a shared journey of reconciliation. Over the course of the week-long trip, relationships were strengthened, and friendships formed between the visitors and hosts.

In February 2020, an opportunity to host members of the St. Theresa Point First Nation community became available and the students once again took the lead. Two of the original leaders, Nika Martinussen and Kelsey McLeod, who have since graduated, instilled their commitment to this partnership into two new leaders, Avery Shtykalo and Tristen Ryz. These two J.H. Bruns Collegiate students invited younger classmates to get involved to help the first relationships expand to a larger circle. Knowing that it could be challenging to keep a large number of children organized and engaged, the students spent many hours planning and preparing a wide range of fun activities.

In the end, the itinerary had St. Theresa Point First Nation students in kindergarten to Grade 4 spend the morning

at Darwin School while students in Grade 5 and 6 spent their morning at Marion School. All students joined together at Marion School for afternoon activities and an evening feast. Student leaders and staff from J.H. Bruns Collegiate supported this full day of friendship building.

“St. Theresa Point students were partnered with friends from Darwin School that were the same age and grade level. After a quick virtual field trip through Google Earth, students shared where their school was located in St. Theresa Point and in return Darwin School students shared some significant landmarks in and around Winnipeg,” said Nicholas Kelly, principal, Darwin School. “Students were fascinated by the fact that they all live and go to school in the same province but are located so far apart.”

Annalee Lawrence, a Darwin Grade 3/4 teacher, who was the lead teacher during the St. Theresa Point visit to the school, was pleased to see how children’s natural curiosity made quick work of any nervousness about making new friends.



“After a brief morning meeting, the students gravitated to each other and immediately started interacting. I was once again reminded how often children’s friendships and connections see no boundaries or barriers. The students from both schools clearly had many differences in their experiences, opportunities and backgrounds, but what brought them together naturally were the things they had in common: the love of interaction, friendship, belonging, fun and play.”

At Marion School, students from both schools sat together in groups at tables and shared information about themselves and a little about their communities.

“It did not take long before the students were smiling and laughing with each other,” said Alana White, vice-principal, Marion School. “Lead by Bobbie-Jo Leclair, a member of the LRSD Indigenous Education team, and joined by Grandmother Chickadee and Grandmother Pahan, the students had an opportunity to make slime, decorate cookies and bags. The classroom was buzzing with positive energy and you could see genuine friendships being made.”

The students had lunch together and watched a movie while waiting to be joined at Marion School by the group who started the day at Darwin School. In the afternoon, when all the groups were together, several activities were set up such as jiggling and cooperative gym games to continue building relationships in a fun and engaging way.

“Over the course of the day, what was noticeable was how initial shyness soon faded, and the kids got to know each other through their activities in the music room, and making some pretty impressive slime,” said Julie Cote-Marinelli, principal, J.H. Bruns Collegiate. “By the afternoon, they were jumping, tumbling, and running around the gym as if they’d known each other forever.”

Charlotte Turenne, a teacher at J.H. Bruns Collegiate, who was also a part of the day’s activities, said she loved seeing how quickly two communities separated by 465 kilometres could form bonds. “The thing that will stay with me is how excited the kids were to create new relationships, and I mean all the kids—from the young Grade 1’s to the most mature Grade 12 students. The little ones who immediately started holding hands with their guests really showed what it’s all about—we’re in this together.”

“

WHAT BROUGHT THEM TOGETHER NATURALLY WERE THE THINGS THEY HAD IN COMMON: THE LOVE OF INTERACTION, FRIENDSHIP, BELONGING, FUN AND PLAY.”

- ANNALEE LAWRENCE



STEPPING UP TO SUPPORT FRONTLINE WORKERS

LOUIS RIEL SCHOOL DIVISION (LRSD) DID ITS PART TO SUPPORT MANITOBA'S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM BY DONATING PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) TO FRONTLINE WORKERS DURING THE HEIGHT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN MANITOBA.

In early April 2020, custodians, science teachers and administrators from across LRSD's 40 schools worked together to search through cabinets, closets and storage rooms to collect a considerable donation for health care workers. The group collected nearly:

800 BOXES OF GLOVES	300 SAFETY GLASSES
30 BOXES OF N95 MASKS	20 FACE SHIELDS



"I am totally amazed by how quickly this all came together," said Charles Robert, Director of Facilities at LRSD. "Our maintenance staff picked up the supplies from schools on Tuesday, and staff members had started putting this together only a few days prior to pick up. Now that is teamwork!"

While the number of donated PPE was significant, LRSD made sure it had enough supplies on hand to help protect staff members who were busy ensuring schools were clean and others who were distributing materials to students. LRSD also donated fabric to Doctors Manitoba to assist in the manufacturing of protective gowns.

While many people were enjoying a peaceful and relaxed Good Friday, Heidi Forrester, Human Ecology Consultant, spent her holiday collecting fabric from the Textile Labs throughout the division so Doctors Manitoba could begin production as soon as possible.

"We all have to do what we can to help," said Forrester. "As a person who sews, our services are in demand like never before. I hope the Textiles students realize how valuable the skills they are learning are to others."

Industrial Arts teachers in LRSD pitched in as well, using 3D printers to produce face shields and ear protectors for healthcare workers. An organization called Shop 3D reached out to Richard Pharand, Industrial Arts Consultant, to coordinate the design, materials, shipping and logistics of the masks.

"When LRSD Industrial Arts teachers were asked to participate, the response was overwhelming," said Pharand. "We have 11 Industrial Arts teachers as well as a school principal producing several hundred units weekly, with many printers running up to 12 hours a day."

Pharand says the equipment was sent to health care workers across Manitoba and Canada, with the first batch delivered to Winnipeg Clinic.

“OUR MAINTENANCE STAFF PICKED UP THE SUPPLIES FROM SCHOOLS ON TUESDAY, AND STAFF MEMBERS HAD STARTED PUTTING THIS TOGETHER ONLY A FEW DAYS PRIOR TO PICK UP. NOW THAT IS TEAMWORK!”

- CHARLES ROBERT



CONNECTING DURING COVID-19

STAFF FROM ACROSS THE LOUIS RIEL SCHOOL DIVISION (LRSD) WORKED TOGETHER TO DEVELOP AND SHARE RESOURCES TO ENSURE THE WELL-BECOMING OF THE LRSD COMMUNITY AND TO MAINTAIN COMMUNICATION AND CONNECTION DURING THE MOVE TO REMOTE LEARNING IN MARCH 2020.

“The unprecedented announcement of a world-wide pandemic and suspension of classes in Manitoba has undoubtedly been a challenge for everyone,” said Mary Markesteyn, Clinical Services Supervisor of Well-Becoming. “Being social and maintaining positive connections and relationships has been crucial during this time of physical distancing.”

School clinicians shared information and resources to help students understand the virus and alleviate fears and worries. Families were also offered support, such as ‘how-to’ videos about navigating online learning, food hampers and access to the internet.

Whether it was a personal phone call, a message posted on the school portal, an inspirational video posted to YouTube or family check-ins about supports, LRSD staff reached out in many ways to make students feel that they were loved and missed.

Staff at all 40 schools also came up with creative ways to be together with students while staying physically apart in an attempt to provide some form of normalcy during such an uncertain time. Staff at Dakota Collegiate posted daily video announcements; senior administration at Niakwa Place School completed a 25-kilometre bike ride to visit students; divisional music specialists hosted a virtual Folk Dance in the Park; staff from J.H. Bruns Collegiate, Shamrock School and numerous schools organized car parades through students’ neighbourhoods. The list goes on and on.

Encouraging students to continue to be active and stay mentally healthy while spending more time than ever at home was another important aspect of supporting both physical and mental health. Livestreamed workouts, household items transformed into gym equipment

and an added emphasis on mental wellness were just a few ways physical education teachers across the division rose to the challenge of remote learning. They provided many opportunities for students to get moving and stay connected.

Staff also took care of each other, too. Staff at École Varennes sent wellness packages to colleagues with items to brighten each other’s day or the Student Services team at Collège Béliveau who contacted each staff member for a personal check-in.

“These acts of kindness and caring help to provide a sense of belonging,” said Markesteyn. “Clinicians, Learning Team teachers and school staff work collaboratively to ensure the mental health and well-becoming of our students.”

“

FOCUSING ON THE HERE AND NOW AND FINDING A LITTLE JOY ONCE IN A WHILE IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF WELL-BEING AND RESTORATIVE MENTAL HEALTH.”

- MARY MARKESTEYN

“

LIFE'S CHALLENGES ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO PARALYZE YOU; THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO HELP YOU DISCOVER WHO YOU ARE.”

- BERNICE JOHNSON REAGON, COMPOSER, SCHOLAR AND SOCIAL ACTIVIST





DIVISION SCOLAIRE
LOUIS RIEL
SCHOOL DIVISION

Louis Riel School Division

900 St. Mary's Road, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2M 3R3
(204) 257-7827 www.lrsd.net

Find and follow us on the following channels to stay up to date with LRSD news, important dates and more!

