

NEWS RELEASE

Eight Member LRSD Indigenous Council Helps Students Succeed Building authentic relationships with staff, students, and families a key priority

May 5, 2021 (Winnipeg, MB) — As part of the Louis Riel School Division's (LRSD) commitment to reconciliation and building authentic alliances with Indigenous communities, the division is pleased to introduce the [LRSD Indigenous Council of Grandmothers and Grandfathers](#). The eight esteemed members who reflect five different Nations, including Métis, Cree, Lakota, Ojibwe, Ojibwe-Cree and Dakota First Nations are:

- Pahan Pte San Win
- Ed Azure
- Chickadee Richard
- Wanbdi Wakita
- Lionel Mason
- Jacinte Lambert
- Sherry Copenace
- W. Yvon Dumont

These extraordinary individuals who possess a wealth of experience, knowledge and perspective are highlighted in the [Celebrating Indigenous Culture and Community report](#) released on Thursday, May 5.

“Our Council plays a crucial role in supporting LRSD students, staff and community,” said Bobbie-Jo Leclair, Indigenous Education Consultant, and a member of the Indigenous Education team. “They support us by imparting traditional knowledge, culture and oral tradition while ensuring we continue to work in an authentic way with our Indigenous community.”

The ICGG began in 2019 with four members but has continued to grow each year with Jacinte Lambert, the eighth member, joining in 2021. ICGG member Lionel Mason believes students can achieve success when they have a network of support.

“Residential schools and our collective experiences have discouraged us from pursuing formal learning. Yet, we need formal education to further our place in society,” said Mason. “Teaching and learning in our communities needs to involve everyone: older siblings, our parents, aunts, uncles, and especially grandparents. When I enter a school, I know I need to support both teachers and students because they are each unique flowers that are growing in two soils.”

In addition to providing support, learning and encouragement to the community, the ICGG regularly consult with the LRSD Senior Leadership Team on projects and programs.

“Each time we come together as a group and talk about improving supports, outcomes and well-being for all students, I am grateful to have their input, experience and understanding inform our decisions,” said Christian Michalik, Superintendent. “I am excited about always building a deeper relationship with our ICGG, as they are key to building collective capacity and co-creating strategies to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.”

The [Celebrating Indigenous Culture and Community report](#) also includes summaries of the current Indigenous initiatives, projects, and programs in LRSD.

“With Indigenous teachings, culture and language being sizeable and important components of our Multi-Year Strategic Plan, we are indeed fortunate to be able to rely on our ICGG and Indigenous Learning Team for the guidance they offer as we journey together in truth and reconciliation,” said Louise Johnston, Chair, LRSD Board of Trustees. “This report is a wonderful way to celebrate, honour and share the contributions of a truly remarkable group of individuals.”

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LRSD was established in 2002 after the amalgamation of St. Boniface and St. Vital School Divisions. LRSD is in the southeast quadrant of Winnipeg and has more than 2,100 staff who serve 15,600 students across 40 schools. The LRSD mission is to provide a safe, inclusive, and engaging environment where personal and collective learning is valued, and each one of us reaches our full potential.

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