



Annual Report

**2022
2023**

“

As a classroom community, our capacity to generate excitement is deeply affected by our interest in one another, in hearing one another's voices, in recognizing one another's presence.

— bell hooks

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Land Acknowledgement

The Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) brings together a community of schools on the traditional land of the Anishinaabek, Ininewak, and Dakota. Our division is located on the homeland of the Red River Métis. We recognize that Manitoba is also the traditional land of the Anishininwak and Dene.

We respect the treaties made on this land and acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past and present. We dedicate ourselves to authentic alliances with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and cooperation.

The ongoing development of LRSD's land acknowledgement is guided by our Indigenous Council of Grandmothers and Grandfathers, and we thank them for their generosity and collaboration.

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

HOW DO WE PRIORITIZE BELONGING?

This was the overarching question asked by Louis Riel School Division leadership and the Senior Leadership Team in making a commitment to every future graduate, staff member, and teacher. This was the focus through which conversation was encouraged, feedback gathered, and opinions heard in the 2022-2023 school year.

‘Prioritizing belonging’ has become a mantra of sorts, and is at the heart of ensuring everyone who works and learns in LRSD knows they have a place, feels valued, respected, cared for, safe, and welcome.

Our Annual Report to the Community is filled with facts, data, and stories that together paint a picture of a growing and flourishing community; a community that values student voice, recognizes the importance and necessity of courageous conversations, and honours diversity in its many forms.

It is so much more than words on a page. It is a celebration of who we are and where we are going, showing evidence of success in committing to a culture of anti-racism, equity, and inclusion.

A newly adopted Multi-Year Strategic Plan for 2023-2027 will build on a previous plan that was ambitious in its goals. As some work continues, new work will begin as we ready for a future that is unpredictable, requiring informed and focused efforts to ensure our students leave LRSD prepared and excited for what comes next, confident in their abilities, and eager to continue learning.

On behalf of your board of trustees, I extend sincere appreciation to students, parents, and our greater community for their engagement. We acknowledge the commitment and dedication of all teachers, staff, and administrators and we reserve special recognition for our Senior Leadership Team who continues to innovate and lead with unwavering purpose, intent, humility, caring, and kindness.

—Sandy Nemeth

“

Diversity is a fact. Equity is a choice. Inclusion is an action. Belonging is an outcome.

— Arthur Chan

Your Board of Trustees 2022-2026

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



Francine Champagne
(204) 257-3323



Cindy Turner
(204) 294-3047

Ward 2



Chris Sigurdson
Vice-Chair
(204) 230-4601



Irene Nordheim
(204) 290-3739

Ward 3



Sandy Nemeth
Chair
(204) 230-6475



Darlene Gerrior
(204) 293-3621



Ryan Palmquist
(204) 290-9976

Ward 4

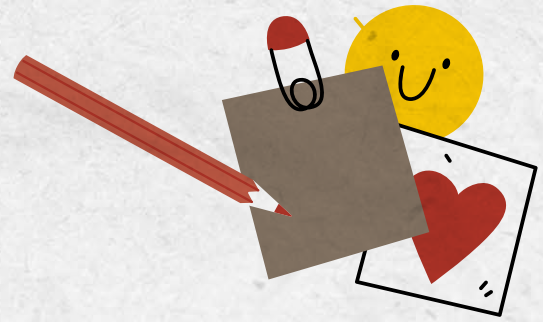


Chipalo Simunyola
(204) 688-7479



Pamela Kolochuk
(204) 297-5339

Message from the Superintendent



I am thrilled to share our Annual Report to the Community (ARC) for the 2022-2023 school year, marking the culmination of our Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) for 2019-2023. As we reflect on the last 12 months, we celebrate many of our accomplishments and acknowledge some of the challenges we've faced that have further strengthened our commitment to human flourishing being at the centre of the journey in Louis Riel School Division (LRSD).

With features about new initiatives and important research to rebuilding relationships and learning together, the nurturing of community at the heart of our MYSP is highlighted across the pages you will read. The report celebrates only some of our students' and staffs' individual and collective accomplishments, highlights investments in infrastructure in 2022-2023, and touches on the budget for 2023-2024 that the board adopted in March 2023.

Among the stories we share in this year's edition of the ARC, you can read about the incredible work happening at all ends of our division: The Kitchen Brigades program empowers students with valuable culinary skills and a passion for nutritious meals. Our commitment to fostering linguistic and cultural diversity that has resulted in a vibrant Indigenous Language Program. A Student Attendance Task Force's efforts to address the rise in student Absences. The establishment of a Student Advisory Board that has allowed student voices to be heard, shaping

decisions and initiatives that directly impact their learning experiences. Our continued participation in the Community-based Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (CATEP) to bridge the gaps in representation and enrich staff diversity in LRSD. A collaboration with school divisions and Microsoft in "Level Up: Winnipeg", a Minecraft Education build challenge that invited students to design virtual worlds that envision a more "connected, equitable, and sustainable downtown that moves Winnipeg forward without leaving anyone behind". The transformative experiences Indigenous students share from participating in our inaugural Culture Camp.

These stories and several more highlight our efforts to foster learning and work environments where all students and staff feel valued and thrive.

As we start the 2023-2024 school year, and launch a renewed MYSP for 2023-2027, we remain steadfast in our commitment to an educational journey focused on human flourishing by creating an ever more nurturing, equitable, and inclusive learning and work environment in LRSD. I look forward to supporting, contributing to, and celebrating the stories that will illustrate what we accomplish in the coming year.

— Christian Michalik

Senior Leadership Team



The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) supports and works alongside more than 2,200 staff, serving more than 16,700 learners across 40 schools.

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 & CEO



Jamie Rudnicki
Secretary-Treasurer & CFO



Michelle Jean-Paul
Assistant Superintendent, Staff Services
Glenlawn Collegiate Family of Schools



Marlene Murray
Assistant Superintendent, Student Services
J.H. Bruns Collegiate and
Windsor Park Collegiate Family of Schools



Jeff Anderson
Assistant Superintendent, Policy,
Planning & Research
Collège Béliveau and
Collège Jeanne-Sauvé Family of Schools



Darcy Cormack
Assistant Superintendent, Diversity,
Equity, Inclusion & Anti-Racism Services
Dakota Collegiate and
Nelson McIntyre Family of Schools
René Deleurme Centre
Louis Riel Arts & Technology Centre

LRSD By the Numbers



Students, Schools & Staff

16,725 Total Students*

40 Schools

ENG 26
English

FR 13
French Immersion

1
Technical & Vocational

2,231 Total Staff*

1,220 Teachers
Includes principals and vice-principals

1,011 Non-Teaching Staff

*Numbers pulled on June 30, 2023



Louis Riel Arts & Technology Centre

The Louis Riel Arts & Technology Centre offers courses to high school and adult students in trades, hospitality, media, early childhood education, business management, and more.

13
Certificate Programs

6
Adult Education Certificate Programs

232
Certificate Program Recipients

101
Adult Education Certificate Recipients (on June 28)

186
Participants in Work Experience Opportunities

101
Adult Education Participants in Work Experience Opportunities

117
Recipients of Apprenticeship Accreditation



René Deleurme Centre

The René Deleurme Centre (RDC) shares a building with Lavallee School and hosts a range of community-based programs and services to support children, youth, adults, and families. Staff at RDC also coordinate school-based programming with a focus on equity and inclusion.

Through a weekly food depot and emergency food cupboard, RDC distributed:

More than **34,730** pounds of food to the community and schools

Community members purchased **388** cost-shared Fresh Food Boxes over nine pick-up weeks

Through the LRSD Zone Settlement program:

More than **900** new client referrals received for settlement service via community partner organizations

415 clients participated in programs and information sessions (including English Conversation, Sewing, and Youth Wellness Programs)

The settlement team provided service in more than **10** languages

Indigenous Cultural Programming:

21 Beading & breakfast sessions

10 Full Moon Ceremonies

7 Traditional teaching sessions for students and caregivers from two participating schools

1 Summer sage picking outing for caregivers and youth

1 New caregiver/daughter program to enhance connections and well-being



Through RDC, LRSD has an ongoing partnership with the Mobile Vision Care Clinic (MVCC) to increase access to eye care for students and families in the LRSD community. In the 2022-2023 school year, this included:

1,407 Comprehensive eye exams

189 Prescription eyeglasses

16 Mobile Vision Care Clinics (15 schools + 1 community clinic)

ASPIRE (Academic Summer Program Including Recreation and Education) is an equity-based program designed to help students continue to grow as learners throughout the summer. In the summer of 2023, there were:

395 Children from 20 schools

54 Staff serving at 6 sites

RDC hosted 2 community conversations to guide its work.

Dollars and Cents



The Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) Board of Trustees approved the 2023-2024 budget on March 14, 2023.

“Education Minister Wayne Ewasko labelled the 2023-2024 funding commitment as ‘astronomical,’” said Sandy Nemeth, LRSD Board Chair. “This is not only misleading, but suggests LRSD has suddenly been afforded the ability to look after the needs of all learners fully and completely. The realities suggest otherwise as we continue to address pandemic-related pressures and funding that for several years has not kept up to inflation, enrolment, and growing needs.”

A Snapshot of LRSD’s Budget 2023-2024

\$224,776,978

84% \$190,423,486 Salaries and Benefits

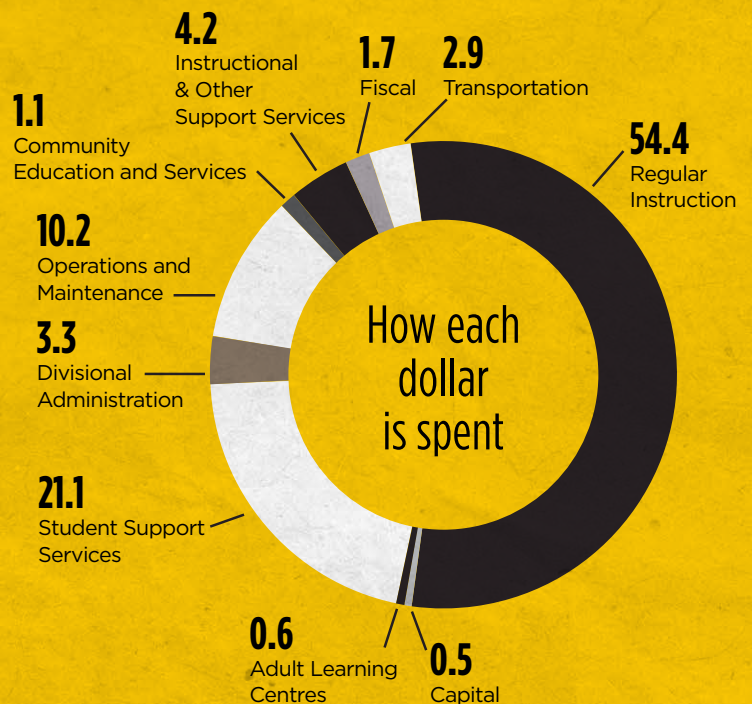
16% \$34,353,492 Supplies and Services

Divisional Administration

Divisional administration is made up of the following:

Board Office Administration
2.65

International Student Program Administration
0.65



The budget includes additional classroom staff, bringing the total to 620 full-time equivalent (FTE) educational assistants and 1,212 (FTE) teachers, including principals and vice-principals.

THESE ADDITIONAL STAFF WILL HELP SUPPORT LEARNING AND THE ONGOING EFFORTS ADDRESS:

- The ongoing impacts of the pandemic on learning outcomes;
- The declining mental health exacerbated by the pandemic; and
- The growing enrolment that would result in growing class size if we didn't address that growth.

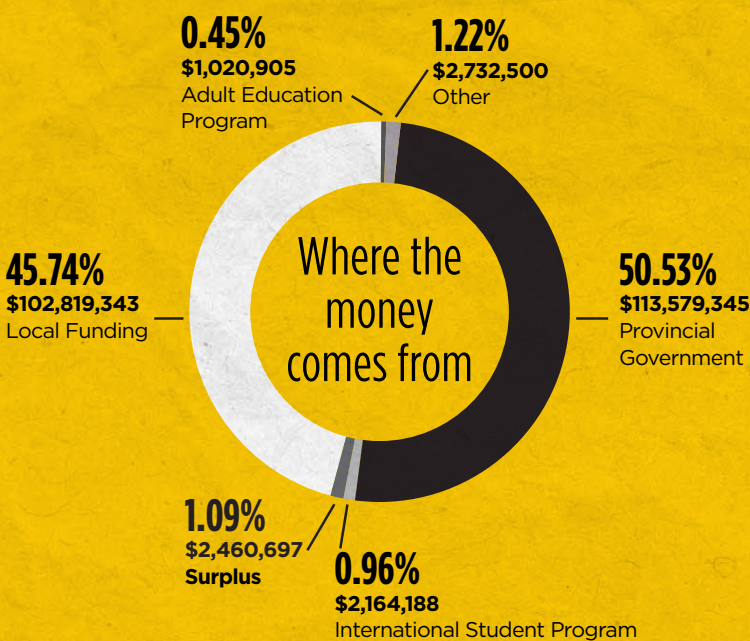
“The biggest challenge in designing the budget for 2023-2024 has been the enduring challenge of the last few years; balancing our response to the pressures we face with our ability to pay the cost of meeting those needs,” said Jamie Rudnicki, Secretary-Treasurer.

“Louis Riel School Division continues to be progressive, innovative, and future oriented in ensuring all students remain engaged in their learning and want to be in school,” said Nemeth. “A budget that would eliminate teachers,

staff, programs, and supports, especially with the additional needs coming out of a global pandemic, was not an option for the board.”

Given that the expenditures exceed the funding LRSD has received, the budget includes the use of \$2,460,697 from the division's accumulated surplus to make up for the funding shortfall in 2023-2024. Since its inception in 2002, LRSD has not been in a position where surplus funds have needed to be used to balance the budget. Unprecedented times and pressures require an unprecedented response.

“This use of accumulated surplus to make up for a shortfall in our annual funding is not sustainable and is very concerning,” said Christian Michalik, Superintendent. “We appreciate the funding this year is more predictable, in that the Manitoba government is making the one-time funding provided to school divisions in the last two years permanent. However, given the impacts of the chronic underfunding that preceded the pandemic and the spiraling of pressures and needs, it is still insufficient.”

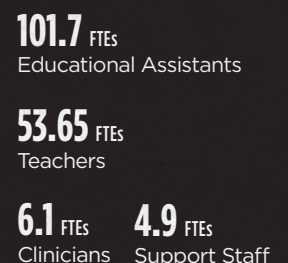


2,228 Total Staff



Additional Staff for 2023-2024

The calculation of full-time equivalent (FTE) is an employee's scheduled hours divided by the employer's hours for a full-time workweek. When an employer has a 40-hour workweek, employees who are scheduled to work 40 hours per week are 1.0 FTEs. Employees scheduled to work 20 hours per week are 0.5 FTEs.



What does this budget mean for property owners?

Based on an average home in LRSD valued at:
\$379,900

Results in a property tax increase of:
0.10% or \$1.91




Bricks and Mortar




LRSD invests in spaces where learners thrive and communities can flourish. Funding for capital investments is 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.


\$3,801,751
IN TOTAL CAPITAL INVESTMENTS


\$65,024 
Dr. D.W. Penner School
Asphalt Resurfacing

\$213,267 
Dr. D.W. Penner School
Universal Change Room

\$78,801 
École Guyot
Floor Replacement

\$89,388 
École Provencher
Gender Neutral Washroom

\$189,818 
Frontenac School
Universal Change Room

\$165,300 
Glenlawn Collegiate
Foods Room Renovation

\$1,063,431 
J.H. Bruns Collegiate
Universal Change Room & Roof Replacement

\$548,990 
Monterey Board Office
Roof Replacement

\$201,025 
Nelson McIntyre Collegiate
Universal Change Room

\$50,658 
René Deleurve Centre
Floor Replacement

\$54,348 
Samuel Burland School
Skylight Replacement

\$145,218 
Shamrock School
Foods Room Renovation

\$753,483 
Windsor School
Boiler Replacement

\$183,000 
Windsor School
Parking Lot



Capital Projects Underway



BUDGET

\$54,073,492

A new French Immersion K-8 School in Sage Creek to serve Sage Creek and Bonavista communities



CLASS D ESTIMATE

\$13,000,000

Major Addition to Marion School



\$5,149,999

Marion School Building Envelope and Windows, Elevator, and Universal Washroom Project



\$13,638,506

Collège Jeanne-Sauvé 16 Classroom Addition, Science Classroom Renovations, Music, and Fitness Room



\$750,000

J. H. Bruns Structural Reinforcement Project



\$1,200,000

J. H. Bruns Roof Structure Reinforcement Project



\$2,852,768

Shamrock School Roof Replacement Project



\$1,735,300

Louis Riel Arts and Technology Centre Roof Replacement Project



\$892,250

St. George School Roof Replacement



\$175,000

Lavallee School Universal Washroom



\$175,000

Windsor Park Collegiate Universal Washroom



\$500,000

René Deleurve Centre Community Kitchen

Ventilation

The division is committed to continuously improving ventilation in all our schools and regular maintenance is performed on each ventilation system. This was especially important in the context of a global pandemic. All mechanical systems are continuously operating in occupied mode to maximize fresh air and have the highest level of air filtration allowable within the manufacturer's operating parameters of the existing HVAC system.

LRSD made numerous investments in ventilation:



\$57,300 Upgrades



\$1,112,600 Replacements (ENG RTUs, Chillers, and Air Conditioning Units)

Did you know?

LRSD maintains more than **2.5 million** square feet of buildings and learning space across the division.





Student Attendance Taskforce

It is widely understood that attendance at school is strongly and positively correlated with academic achievement and wellness. Students who attend school regularly are more engaged in learning, have a greater sense of belonging, and are more likely to reach their full potential.

Absences, when chronic and sustained, are disruptive to the learning process and to well-being. When a student is repeatedly absent, they miss key instruction which can impact learning and a sense of belonging. When multiple students in a class are repeatedly absent, the flow of instruction can be hampered, and the classroom community can be disrupted. This can quickly turn into a pattern that can be difficult to break.

Attendance issues have a range of contributing factors including academic, social, economic, and psychological. Improving student presence and engagement requires a coordinated and comprehensive system response. Most of all, it requires the nurturing of relationships.

Over the last couple of years, the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) developed both public and internal attendance data dashboards to help track patterns and trends in student attendance. These reports show a significant increase in absence rates in general and in the number of students who are chronically absent from school. A student is considered chronically absent when their absences exceed 10 per cent of the school year. Absence rates certainly spiked at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic; however, as our Fall Student Attendance and Winter Student Attendance website spotlight stories illustrated, absence rates continue to be a concern.

In response to this continued increase and to the Manitoba Early Education and Childhood Learning's (MEECL) January directive, the Superintendent launched a Student Attendance Taskforce in February 2023.

The taskforce's mandate to:

1. Create a Student Presence and Engagement Policy as per MEECL's directives.
2. Promote common understanding and greater consistency in the use and categorization of attendance codes.
3. Understand more fully the current state of presence and engagement and the multi-dimensional causes of chronic absences.
4. Identify the key components of and current barriers to effective prevention, early intervention, as well as sustained, individualized intervention.
5. Identify needed resources/tools to aid schools in addressing attendance concerns (i.e., resource materials, templates, data reports).
6. Make recommendations for an improved systems approach to prevention, identification/tracking, investigation, intervention, and monitoring of absences in LRSD.



In the following school year, we plan to seek input from more staff, as well as students, and parents/guardians as we start to implement recommendations and measure their impact.

A Shoutout to Staff & Students

With 40 schools and more than 16,700 students, there's a lot to celebrate in the Louis Riel School Division. Here are just a few of the noteworthy highlights and achievements from the 2022-2023 school year:

GOVERNOR GENERAL AWARDS:

Lord Dufferin, Canada's third Governor General after Confederation, created the Academic Medals in 1873 to encourage academic excellence across the nation. Over the years, they have become the most prestigious award that students in Canadian schools can receive. One student from every LRSD high school received the award:

- Aiden Anderson, J. H. Bruns Collegiate
- Bliss Ashishan Earnest, Collège Béliveau
- Lauren Sobkowich, Collège Jeanne-Sauvé
- Maeryn Rempel, Nelson McIntyre Collegiate
- Marcus Navasca, Windsor Park Collegiate
- Miles Saraswat, Dakota Collegiate Institute
- Joseph Esante, Glenlawn Collegiate Institute

HITTING ALL THE RIGHT NOTES

CBC Music challenges music educators across Canada every year to teach their students a Canadian song from a designated list. Teachers then create a video and send it to the Canadian Music Class Challenge. When J.H. Bruns Collegiate teacher Randy Haley submitted a video of his Senior Guitar class he wasn't expecting a first-place win. The Senior Guitar class received national recognition and \$3,000 in new musical instruments for their school.

BOOK LOVER'S APPLAUSE

Audrey Otto, Library Assistant at H. S. Paul School, won the 2023 Manitoba School Library Association's Outstanding Library Support Staff of the Year Award. This annual provincial award celebrates a library technician or library support staff member who is making an outstanding contribution to school libraries in Manitoba. Audrey was honoured this year for "the high caliber of her work, commitment to professional learning, and demonstrated leadership" at H. S. Paul School.

SLAM DUNK

Abby Sweeny is a Grade 11 student at Dakota Collegiate Institute; she received the 2023 Indigenous Athlete of the Year Award. The Manitoba Aboriginal Sports and Recreation Council recognizes local athletes, coaches, and volunteers with awards each year. The Indigenous Athlete of the Year Award is given to an athlete who is not only well-rounded in sports but who also gives back to their community.

WEALTH MANAGEMENT VISIONARY

There is a great demand within Indigenous communities and off-reserve for Indigenous financial management professionals; but very few young people are pursuing an education in the field after high school. Zailey Cameron, a Grade 11 student at Dakota Collegiate Institute, is helping address this gap. She was a recipient of the Nutrien Indigenous Youth Financial Management Award. Aboriginal Financial Officers Association Canada and Nutrien hosted a conference in February to celebrate her achievement and help kickstart her career in financial management.

NOTEWORTHY RECOGNITION

Justin Fraser, a French Immersion guitar teacher, won the Canadian Music Educators Association Builders Award for Newer Teachers. The award recognizes those who advance music education in any Canadian province through building community or establishing significant collaborative efforts.

GROUNDING: MINDFULNESS AND LAND-BASED LEARNING

Rebecca Sands, a teacher at Dakota Collegiate Institute, spent the year developing strategies to address specific problems she's seeing in French classrooms. Her project was Grounded: Mindfulness and Land-Based Learning as Tools to Address Anxieties Related to Climate Change in French Class; her hard work won her the H.H. Stern Award from the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers. The award recognizes innovative second language teaching practices and aims to help share these practices among second language educators.

ADVOCATE FOR WELL-BEING

Robert George, a school psychologist in the division, received the Award of Excellence from the Manitoba Association of School Psychologists. The award recognizes outstanding contributions to the practice of psychology in Manitoba Schools. Rob's dedication to inclusion, equity, advocacy, and collaboration sums up why he is worthy of this award.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Greg Kiesman, Vice-Principal of the Louis Riel Arts & Technology Centre, won the Making it Happen award from the Manitoba Association of Education Technology Leaders (MAETL). This award recognizes an individual for outstanding contributions to the integration, promotion, and advocacy of education technology in Manitoba.

CREATING A BETTER WORLD

The Loran Award is a highly competitive and prestigious award that recognizes student's character, commitment to their community, and actional drive to create a better world. Ridhwanlai Badmos, a Grade 12 student at Windsor Park Collegiate, was one of 36 recipients of the \$100,000 award.



QUEEN ELIZABETH II PLATINUM JUBILEE MEDAL RECIPIENTS

The Manitoba government created the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal in 2022 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the ascension of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to the throne. The Premier, MLAs, and other government officials give the award to those who have made exemplary contributions to their communities or to Manitoba as a whole. LRSD would like to highlight a few of our community members with close ties to the Division who have received this honour:

- Melissa Brown & Bonnie Ash in recognition of their dedication to the service of family and community;
- Corley McPherson in recognition of her advocacy work for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, & Two-Spirit;
- Nathaniel Brown in recognition of his work with Crohn's and Colitis Canada; and
- Rhonda Thompson in recognition of her work to build greater equity in our community through Black History Manitoba and promoting an inclusive culture for all Manitobans.

JULES LAVALLEE MEMORIAL BURSARY

Evan Clarke and Kyrra Kematch graduating students at Dakota and Glenlawn Collegiates received the Jules Lavallee Memorial Bursary at the 2023 Graduation Powwow. This award recognizes a graduating Indigenous student who has developed/used/shared their gifts to fulfil goals and aspirations in relation to their selves, families, and communities.





Inaugural Student Advisory Board



The Senior Leadership Team put a call out in September 2022 asking interested students to connect with the LRSD communications department or their school principal to join the Student Advisory Board. On October 25, 2022, 15 students met for the inaugural meeting.

“We have representation from all of our high schools on the board,” said Corey Kapilik, Divisional Principal of DEI & Anti-Racism.

“The students represent a wide range of diverse perspectives.”

Once a month, the student-led board meets to generate discussion, act on important topics, and provide feedback and guidance on divisional practices and policies.

“At first, I was really shy when I joined the board,” said Zailey Cameron, a Grade 11 student at Dakota Collegiate. “But it helped me grow as an individual and find what I am passionate about. It also allowed me to feel confident in asking senior leadership questions.”

Esther Raji and Fissy Olanrewaju are Grade 10 students at Glenlawn Collegiate. Esther said she joined the Student Advisory Board to help give the unheard a voice; it’s a model she brought from the nonprofit organization she started in 2021 with a group of teens. They amplify voices by addressing different social issues and finding ways to spread awareness.

Fissy said she believes this group is the first step to give a voice to the rest of the student body.

“I’m black,” said Fissy. “That’s the first thing people see when they see me. I’m part of the minority first. I could never be a leader. I could never give a speech to a bunch of important people. I can never, I can never. But here I am.”



I recently joined the Advisory Board because I wanted to be part of a team that was helping create a better future and inspire other adolescents. Just because you look different doesn't mean your voice matters any less. Growing up, I didn't even know I had one."

— Esther Raji

At the first meeting, Ridhwanlai Badmos, a Grade 12 student at Windsor Park Collegiate, realized the Senior Leadership Team was serious about listening to and growing student voice.

"Us being there and being able to say hey, I think we should focus more on this and having Corey and Darcy take the ideas we have to Christian to talk about is nice," said Ridhwanlai. "We're in a room full of leaders."

Sesinna Sium is a Grade 11 student at Dakota Collegiate. Sesinna joined the Board to be a voice for young black girls like herself to prevent the feelings of isolation she felt as a person of colour because she knows there is a place for everyone in this society and system.

"Growing up, I was often the only Black girl in my class and sometimes school," said Sesinna. "I never saw myself in the people around me, the books I read, and what I learned. It always left me feeling like I didn't belong."

Khalon Ntege, a Grade 12 student at Nelson McIntyre Collegiate, joined the Board because he

wanted to help make change at LRSD during his last year of high school. He wants kids across the division to know that no matter their culture, race, gender, age, or background, there are students who will represent their voices and fight for them on the Board.

"COVID-19 lockdowns set many of us apart during the better of the last three years and left many of my peers, both younger and older than me, with feelings of distress, anxiety, and isolation," said Khalon. "I remember when I first came to my school in the middle of Grade 10, in the middle of intense lockdowns and isolation, I felt lonely. That is not the case anymore... but a lot of other students still feel left out in the aftermath of COVID-19."

"Throughout these past four years, I learned that being a leader was not just about taking on a role that entailed an abundance of responsibility within a committee or group," said Bonnie Chen, a Grade 12 student at J.H. Bruns Collegiate and Student Advisory Board member. "Instead, being a leader was about asking the critical questions that mattered to both my team and me. We are enabled to be a force for good."

The students are also able to take ideas from their meetings and try to implement them at their schools.

One example of this was for National Mental Health Month and Week. Ridhwanlai is the founder of the non-profit Wake Up Mental Health. Ridhwanlai provided a few students with materials so they could run sessions on Mental Health at their schools.

The Student Advisory Board has also welcomed guest speakers to their meetings such as Whiteboard Collective to talk about resumes, planning for the future, and leadership.

"When people are thinking about joining next year, know it is a place that is inclusive, with likeminded people, a home away from home, where you can develop leadership and a sense of belonging," said Ridhwanlai.



LEVEL UP WINNIPEG

Minecraft has been successfully leveraged as a learning tool across the division for years, unleashing student creativity and bringing smiles to faces engaged in virtual learning.

This year, the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) launched Level Up: Winnipeg, a build challenge in collaboration with Microsoft Canada, Minecraft Education, Winnipeg’s six school divisions, the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine, Lord Selkirk School Division, Balmoral Hall, and the City of Winnipeg.

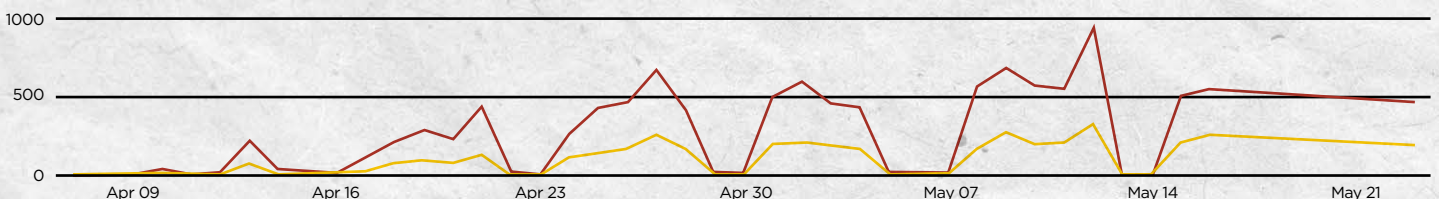
“We know that our students let their imaginations run wild within Minecraft, so we want to provide a structured approach that encourages our students to design solutions to challenges we’ve faced throughout our past and into the present,” said Andy McKiel, IT Coach, St. James-Assiniboia School Division.

“We’re delighted to support Level Up: Winnipeg and look forward to seeing the creative ideas that students bring to life in Minecraft,” said Allison Matthews, Head of Minecraft Education. “We’re honoured to be a part of this exciting initiative.”

Students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 were invited to design a virtual world that responds to the challenge prompt: How can we envision a connected, equitable, and sustainable downtown that moves Winnipeg forward without leaving anyone behind? They then shared their vision in a short video.

Sessions and Session Hours by Date

● Sessions ● Session Hours



“

Through Level Up: Winnipeg, we’ll be able to see our city through the eyes of our students and imagine a brighter future for everyone who calls Winnipeg home.

— Andy McKiel



On April 13, the Level Up: Winnipeg planning committee hosted a press conference at City Hall to kick-start the challenge. Students in attendance got to meet some of the non-playable characters, take home souvenirs, and explore the Mayor's office.

Divisional teams reviewed student videos and selected submissions to represent common themes to share with the City of Winnipeg. The downtown urban planning and design team is using this student input to help inform policy and inspire future downtown projects!

Students in LRSD engaged with the challenge for 4,000 total hours. Across the city and in Selkirk, students spent 15,000 hours in the virtual Winnipeg world. LRSD received 300 final video submissions. Popular solutions to the challenge included greenhouses, basketball courts, mixed-use buildings, facilities to address homelessness, grocery stores, sportsplexes, safe injection sites, mental health facilities, and the Death Star.

"Level Up, Winnipeg is a dynamic project that will fuel the creative spark for the next generation of urban planners and designers," said Mayor Scott

Gillingham. "By diving into the world of Minecraft, our young builders will have fun reimagining Winnipeg's downtown area and exploring some of our iconic sites. The next game-changing idea for Winnipeg's future might just emerge from this project."

The challenge concluded with a final celebration at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, showcasing student work and bringing together students from across the province, representatives from the city, and the many Manitobans who contributed their time and ideas to the project. Students from the participating school divisions and independent schools got to share their insights from the challenge with the large audience.

A special thanks to Scott Gillingham, Mayor; Murray Peterson, City Historian; Leslie Spillet, Knowledge Keeper; Ace Burpee, 103.1 Virgin Radio host; Kevin Chief, Principal of Chief Partnerships Manitoba; and Reanna Merasty, Intern Architect at Number Ten Architect Group for their support of the project.

Middle Immersion:

Equity in Action



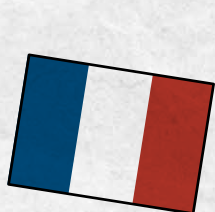
French Immersion first began in Canada in 1965 as an experiment in Quebec. In 2023, we celebrate fifty years of French Immersion in Manitoba. Approximately 27,000 students are registered in the program in 23 school divisions across the province, with one in five French Immersion students registered in Louis Riel School Division (LRSD).

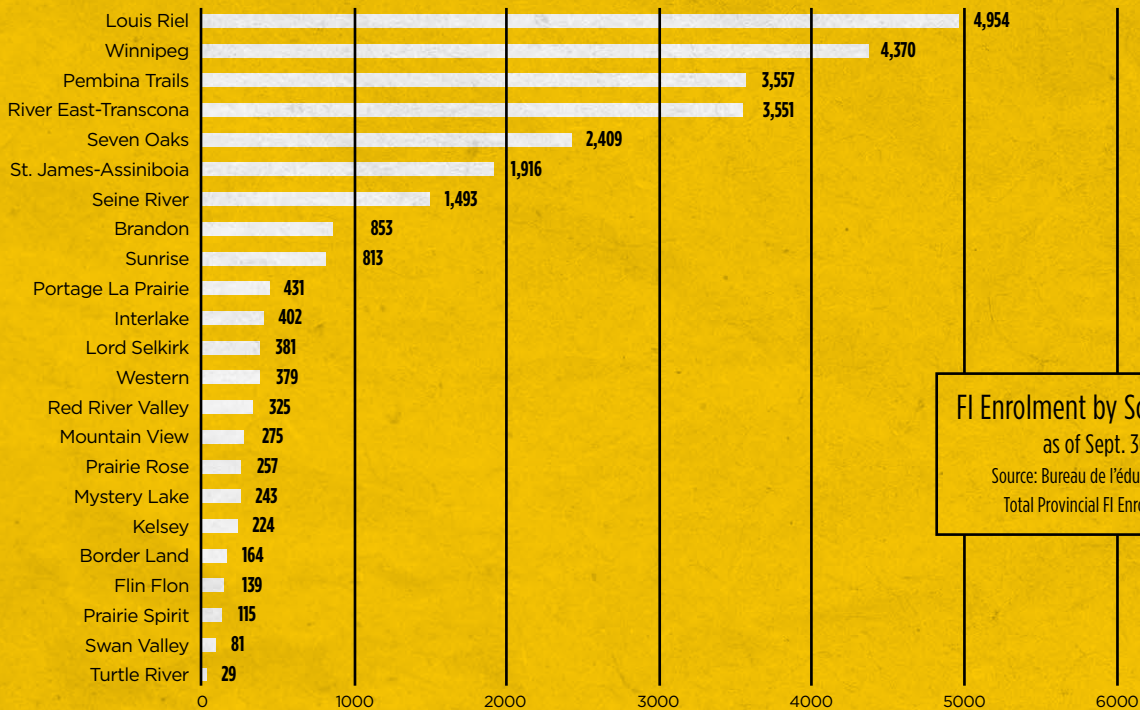
The vast majority of students enter the program in Kindergarten or Grade 1. A growing number, however, begin in Grade 4. The Middle French Immersion program is offered at École Julie-Riel and École Henri-Bergeron. Bussing is provided to students across the division to access the program.

Led by skilled and dedicated teachers, students focus on language acquisition in addition to their regular studies. The Grade 4 entry point is particularly popular among new Canadians who were unable to join the program at its traditional entry points owing to recent arrival or other factors. A closer look at the cultural identity of students enrolled in the program shows just how diverse it is [see pie chart on the next page]. After three years in the program, students join their peers who started in Kindergarten or Grade 1—their progress is so remarkable that it is impossible to tell who started first!

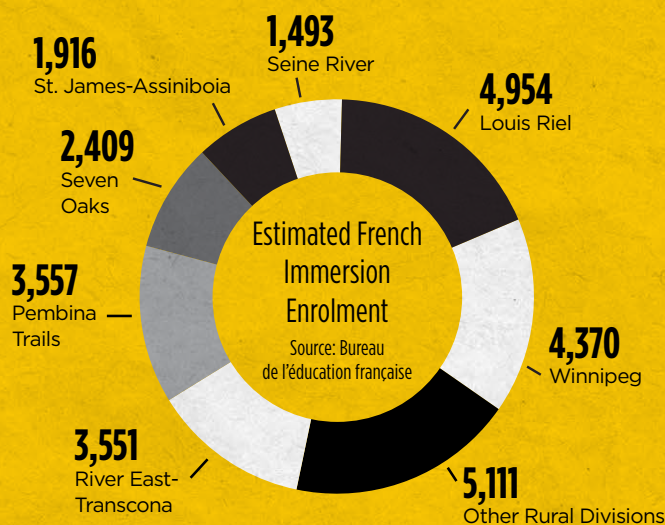
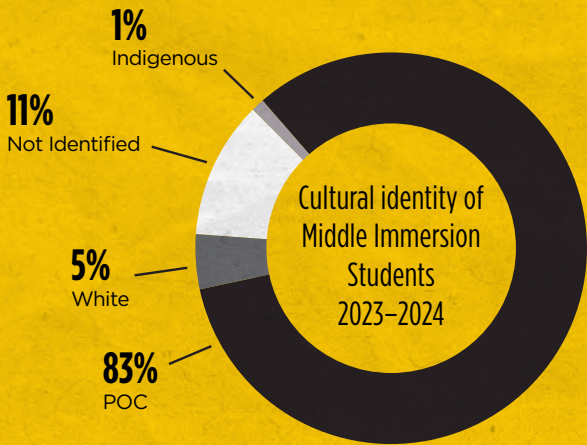
In May 2023, Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning unveiled its updated French Immersion policy. Among its recommendations are calls to increase equity and access to the program. LRSD is committed to doing both, as evidenced in the 2023-2027 Multi-Year Strategic Plan. The Division plans to expand the number of schools offering the Middle Immersion program and to introduce a new entry point in Grade 6 or 7. The Division is also examining how learners can successfully access the program at other grades.

LRSD is recognized as a leader in French Immersion education both provincially and nationally, with roughly 1/3 of all students enrolled in the program. All subjects, with the exception of English Language Arts (introduced in Grade 2), are taught *en français*. Students apply their learning in authentic settings, whether they are asking the school secretary for an ice pack, borrowing books from the library, or asking the custodian to get a ball down off the roof.





FI Enrolment by School Division
as of Sept. 30, 2021
Source: Bureau de l'éducation française;
Total Provincial FI Enrolment = 27361



LRSD offers French Immersion at 13 of its 40 schools. When École Sage Creek/Bonavista opens in 2025, the program will be offered exclusively in milieu settings, maximizing students learning potential.

While most students enter the program in Kindergarten or Grade 1, a growing number begin in Grade 4 through the Division's Middle Immersion Program.

Of 25 students who entered Middle Immersion in 2013-2014, 20 students graduated with a French Immersion diploma in 2022. The remaining five students moved out of LRSD before graduating—we hope they continued their studies *en français!*

Collège Jeanne-Sauvé and Collège Béliveau are the largest French Immersion high schools in Manitoba. Students have access to a full array of French-language course offerings and extracurricular activities.

To find out more about LRSD's French Immersion program, including how to enrol in Middle Immersion, visit lrsd.link/FrenchImmersion



Through the Lens of Inclusion:

Accessible Communication for all



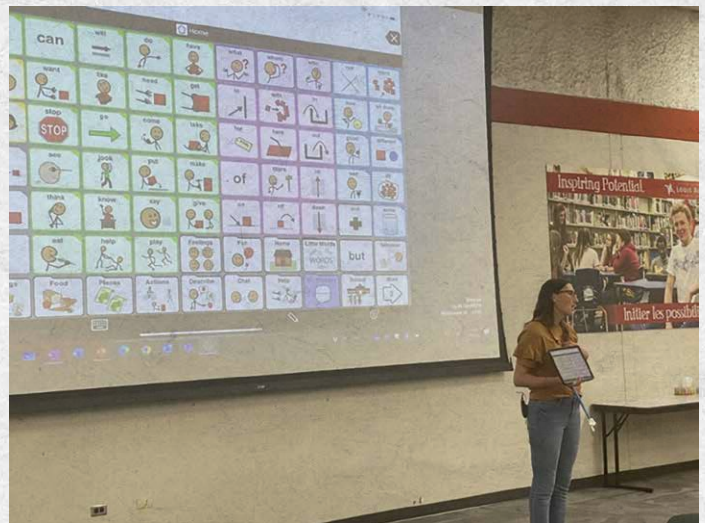
LRSD classroom teachers, student services teachers, educational assistants, and families engaged in new and ongoing learning throughout the 2022-23 school year to support students who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). AAC refers to communication devices, systems, strategies, and tools that replace or support oral speech. LRSD Speech-Language Pathologists provided these tools, programming, and training to support students who have difficulties communicating. The AAC learning that school staff and families engaged in this year lead us further on our journey to create a culture of inclusion and belonging.

PARENT PROLOQUO2GO TRAINING NIGHTS

LRSD families were offered three evening training sessions during the 2022-23 school year, led by Speech-Language Pathologist Lindsey Sharpe, to support their students who use an iPad with the speech-generating app Proloquo2Go to communicate. The sessions provided parents, family members, and respite workers the opportunity to better understand how non-speaking or minimally-speaking students could use Proloquo2Go to communicate at home and in the community. A parent attendee stated, "I appreciated learning about the importance of connection and modeling, and it was nice to know we are not alone on this journey." Training sessions will be offered once again during the 2023-24 school year.

PLAYGROUND COMMUNICATION BOARDS

Two Playground Communication Boards were installed at General Vanier and Shamrock Schools in spring 2023. The LRSD Playground Communication Board was created with a goal of providing accessible communication and social language opportunities for all students, families, and community members who use our playgrounds and fields. Communication boards are designed with inclusion in mind. They help children access some of the most common words that we use when communicating, called "core" words. Core words can be used to create many different sentences, and include pronouns, action words, questions, feelings, and locations.



This board has many core words as well as sentences related to the playground, games, and being with friends that students can point to. Communication partners can also point to the words on the board as they say them out loud, to model (or show) language that the student might want to use. This can help those who have difficulty speaking get their wants and needs met, as well as engage in play. LRSD parent Cheryl Lisowski was excited to see this board on the Shamrock playground for her son to use, stating "how wonderful and important it is to include everyone's voice on the playground!" A future goal is to have these boards installed on all LRSD Elementary School playgrounds, with boards available in both English and French.

NEW TECHNOLOGY BREAKING DOWN COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

This year LRSD Speech-Language Pathologists provided students with complex physical needs the opportunity to use eye-gaze communication systems, including a trial of the new TD Pilot by Tobii Dynavox – an iPadOS-based speech generating device controlled by the eyes. This technology empowers students to interact with peers, engage in new activities, and be an active participant in their learning. A non-speaking Shamrock student who uses a wheelchair for mobility was able to use an eye gaze device to say her friends' names and ask for toys while they engaged in play. The Speech-Language Pathology team strives to ensure every student in LRSD has a voice.



Creating Belonging in LRSD

For the 2022-2023 school year, LRSD put an enhanced focus on ensuring everyone feels welcomed, accepted, valued, healthy, and safe while at school and in the workplace. We got to see how being together in our communities impacts the wellness of our students and staff. One essential question led much of the work among LRSD staff – **how do we prioritize belonging?**

Putting this question at the center of our work also highlighted the inextricable link between mental health, well-being, and one’s sense of belonging in our school communities.

Fostering wellness, resilience, and flourishing in our community through prioritizing belonging allowed our school teams to reflect in meaningful ways on the statements that have served as the foundation of LRSD’s growth:

1. I know what well-being is.
2. I know what impacts (positively and negatively) my well-being and the well-being of those in my community.
3. I have strategies to improve my well-being and the well-being of others.

School teams engaged their students, staff, and communities in creating environments that are

inclusive and welcoming of all. Collaborating with clinicians, divisional support teachers, leadership teams, community members, and partner agencies, schools focused on those practices that help students see themselves, their communities, their values, and their hopes reflected at school.

The 2022-2023 school year was again full of exciting, challenging, and courageous conversations about what it takes to create safety and belonging for all in the service of wellness. School teams engaged student voices, fostered student leadership, and found innovative and exciting ways to envision and build the spaces and practices needed for all students to belong. The school teams at Minnetonka School, École George McDowell, and J. H. Bruns Collegiate are aspirational examples of how fostering a sense of belonging can improve the mental health and well-being of students and staff.

FOSTERING BELONGING AND IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH WITH INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM LIBRARIES AT MINNETONKA

The school team at Minnetonka took up a well-being initiative to foster a sense of belonging amongst their students using student voices and books that represented them and their friends. Reviewing data collected from students through the OurSCHOOL survey, students' sense of belonging emerged as a key area of need in the school. A barrier to building belonging was the content of the classroom learning resources. To rebuild belonging, the school team engaged the students in an audit of school resources and planning for class libraries that would reflect the true diversity of perspectives, identities, and experiences in their school. The audit and the book selection also allowed students to explore the diversity of their classmates, 64 per cent of whom identify as BIPOC, 40 per cent of whom are newcomers to Canada, and amongst whom 67 unique languages are spoken.

The student-led audit occurred as part of the school's well-being and belonging plan, led by Principal Jason Dubeau and Student Services Teacher Robyne Barbour-Dixon. It included building staff capacity, co-developing and teaching lessons that support belonging, and rebuilding classroom libraries. Initially, about 15 per cent of these libraries' content did not represent the diversity audit criteria. After the input from students, the renewed libraries now include approximately 65 per cent of content that represents the diversity of the school population. Using books to foster belonging, well-being, and social-emotional skills also enriched the engagement in literacy for many students. They now see themselves and their friends better reflected in the stories they read.

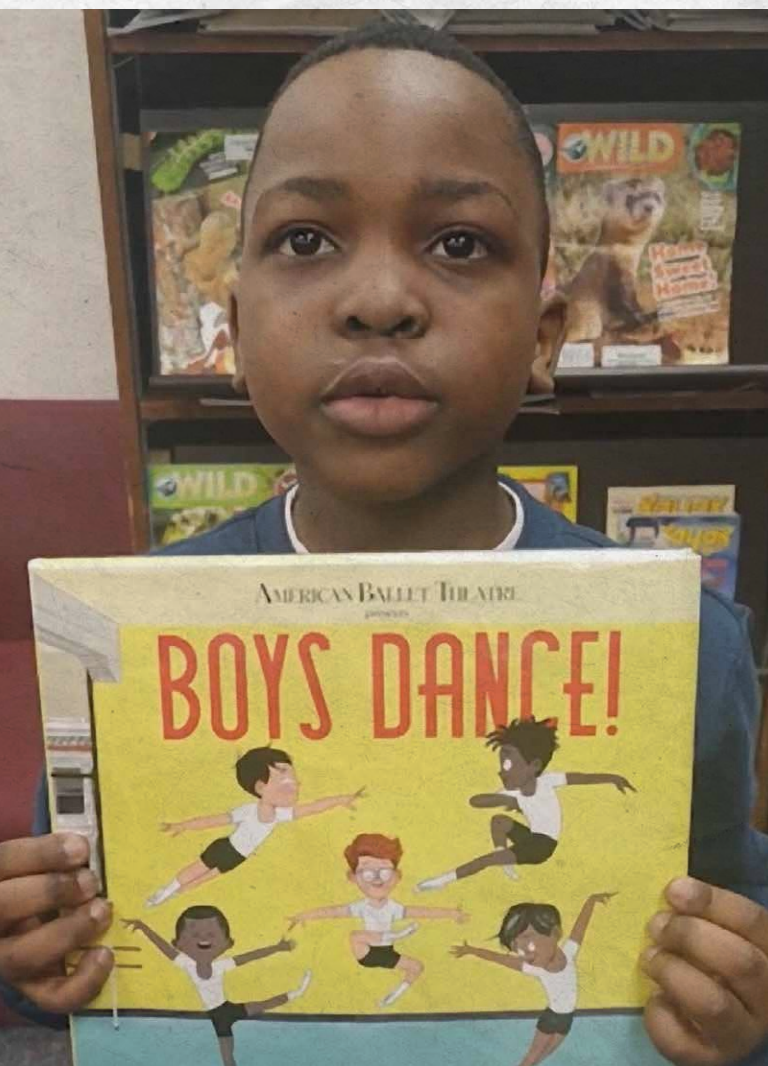
Many students from Minnetonka had a chance to share their experiences with the LRSD Trustees at a board meeting in May 2023, describing how their voices led the initiative and how they felt about the books they selected.

"We are picking books for our class library so it's more diverse and everyone doesn't look the same, and it's inclusive of the whole classroom," said Kima George, a Grade 2 student in a pre-recorded video.

Joel Omololu, a Grade 4 student, added this was important because, "the world belongs to everybody, not just one country or one person."

The students shared the reasons the books they selected held meaning for them, identifying seeing their faces, cultures, religions, interests, languages, and those of their friends reflected made them feel happier, more interested, and like they belonged.

The team at Minnetonka has been overwhelmed with positive responses from the students, reflecting the connection between their sense of belonging and their well-being. This student-led initiative exemplified the LRSD's focus on belonging while putting student voices at the center of our shared work of creating environments where everyone can thrive.



STRENGTHENING SOCIAL SKILLS AND BELONGING THROUGH A NEURODIVERSITY-AFFIRMING LENS AT ÉCOLE GEORGE-MCDOWELL

At École George-McDowell, the school team partnered with their school psychologist, Brianne Curtis, in creating meaningful, engaging opportunities for social development for all students. Working with student services teacher Marc Nault, Brianne created a weekly club that would foster important relational skills through a neurodiversity-affirming method. They used Dungeons and Dragons as a vehicle for learning about boundaries, cooperation, communication, natural consequences, and taking others' perspectives.

Neurodiversity refers to the range of differences in individual brain function and behavioural traits regarded as part of the normal variation in people. People differing in mental or neurological function from what is considered typical (Neurotypical) can be referred to as Neurodivergent, and this term is frequently used with reference to Autism, ADHD, and Dyslexia. The team recognized that more traditional ways of teaching social skills often focused on teaching about friendships and expected behaviours from a Neurotypical perspective that wasn't relevant to many students and was deficit focused. The team at École George-McDowell created this group to help students develop skills, connection, and belonging in authentic and inclusive ways that respect their diversity.

The school team worked with the students to establish basic rules for the game, centred on respect and cooperation. The group of 15-20 students across Grade 6 to 8 would agree to table rules for the game and take turns playing various roles in the dynamic, story-driven, imaginative campaigns. The adults assisted the students in solving problems, anticipating consequences, and fostering communication throughout the gameplay, setting the stage for important social skills development in a natural, engaging setting that the students looked forward to every week.

"I have witnessed growth and change in the students who participated in the D&D club," said Marc Nault. "They are very excited about continuing the club next year and look forward to sharing their wisdom about the game with the new students who join our group in the fall."

Brianne Curtis has seen how the group has allowed natural interactions and a sense of belonging.

"We have created a safe and open community for anyone that feels they need a space to be themselves," said Brianne. "There is no 'right way' to be in this space. Everyone who comes and plays this game naturally has fun and learns at the same time. There are still safe rules so everyone can be comfortable, but it is affirming for all without being forced. This is so important, especially for Neurodivergent students, so they can be themselves and don't feel the need to mask their individuality. This is not only important for inclusion but for our students overall mental well-being."

The results of this initiative to better meet the social development needs of a diverse student population were strikingly positive. All the participants in the group, many of whom were strangers previously, reported they felt a sense of belonging in the Dungeons and Dragons group. They also reported that they learned more about others' perspectives, improved their communication with peers, and learned about the natural consequences of their decisions. Of the participants, 85 per cent also reported they made friends or improved friendships as part of the group – an extraordinarily successful outcome from the team at École George-McDowell.

Through seeking out a more inclusive and affirming way of engaging students of all kinds in critical social skills development, the École George-McDowell team highlighted the importance of belonging to a child's well-being again. It demonstrated the broad reach of LRSD's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in creating success for all at school.



STUDENT LEADERSHIP WITH A FOCUS ON DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING - PRISM, DIVERSITY ALLIANCE, STUDENT LEADERSHIP, SHOW, LRSD STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL AT J. H. BRUNS COLLEGIATE

Student voice and leadership thrived at J. H. Bruns Collegiate this year. Students from several leadership groups had an opportunity to share with LRSD’s board of trustees how their voices and efforts fostered wellness by focusing on inclusion and belonging. Student leaders Aiden Anderson, Gloria Jaison, Lina Alfaouri, Mia Buttimer, Rahaf Ibrahim, and Zaina Abazid all shared their experiences taking part in groups focused on diversity, community, and coming back together after the disconnection of the COVID-19 pandemic.

These remarkable young leaders take part in several student groups. One of them is PRISM, a group that furthers voice and empowerment for 2SLGBTQIA+ people. Mia Buttimer, leader of the group with over 40 members, shared the power of promotions, celebrations, collaborations with school staff, and partnering with community agencies like the Sexual Education Resource Center in bringing representation, safety, and inclusivity to the diverse school community.

The leadership group also took the initiative to bring students together in fun and meaningful ways, organizing bake sales and basketball tournament fundraisers for causes such as Fort Garry Women’s Resource Center and Sakeenah Winnipeg. The school’s Diversity Alliance promotes culture and anti-racism. It also organized events, such as Culture Days, where students and staff wore their cultural garments and showcased different cultures. Students Helping Our World

(SHOW) also helped to organize interest groups focused on improving the world around them and spreading kindness, volunteering for organizations like Manitoba Harvest, and fundraising. Aiden, one of the members of the Student Leadership group, was especially proud of the Grade Wars event the group organized. After periods of being in cohorts and disconnection, the student leaders at J. H. Bruns felt the strength and bonds return to their community this year.

The commitment of the student leaders at J. H. Bruns to diversity, equity, inclusion, and spaces for all people and all voices has fostered greater belonging and wellness across the community.

“

When you feel like you belong, or you are part of something bigger than you, you’re encouraged to spread that positive feeling to others.

— Zaina Abazid

Rahaf added, “I believe as leaders, you have to break barriers....”

The student leaders at J. H. Bruns have modelled building wellness through belonging, removing barriers, elevating voices, and celebrating diversity in all its forms - a true gift to the LRSD community before many move on to new leadership adventures after graduation.

Community, Collaboration, and Culture: Highlights of an Eventful Year

While 2022 saw the modified return of divisional events, 2023 gave us a real look at what getting back to normal looks like. Here's a summary of some of the incredible events staff and students have participated in this school year.



CHORAL CELEBRATION

November saw (or heard) the return of one of our division's most cherished events: Choral Celebration. The voices of more than 400 students from across LRSD joined in harmony for the first time in three years on the Centennial Concert Hall Stage to an almost sold-out audience.

Choral Celebration is a learning opportunity for both students and teachers. LRSD brought in a talented group of guest conductors to work with the students. Albert Bergen conducted the Junior Choir, Avonlea Armstrong-Green conducted the Intermediates, and Carolyn Boyes conducted the Senior students for an evening full of incredible and moving performances.

LRSD ARTS FESTIVAL

2023 saw the return of the LRSD Arts Festival. Hundreds of students in the Individualized or Modified program joined us at the Legacy Centre to do a variety of hands-on workshops to brush up on their arts and creativity and learn new skills. Students learned and practiced crafts like Metis Beading, Graffiti Art, Improv, Songwriting, and African Drumming.

ARTS IN ACTION

Students from 34 schools submitted artwork to be displayed throughout the three Arts in Action galleries at St. Vital Centre.

The theme of "Human and Environment: An Artistic Exploration into Humans Interactions with the World" prompted students to interpret the theme in a variety of ways; some took the theme very literally and explored humans' relationships with the natural world. Others took the theme more subjectively and dove into humans and their different social, political, or even technological environments.



JOURNÉE THÉÂTRE

Nearly 500 students met at la Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain (CCFM) in May to put their French speaking skills to the test. Students and teachers put on plays; some were classics well known in French classrooms, and others were original spins on existing stories.

Journée théâtre is about more than just encouraging acting; some students got to make their mark as backstage hands. Students could be co-directors, work in costumes and décor, or assist lighting and sound technicians.

Yvan Lécuyer led students through performances, exciting them for the other groups and energizing and engaging them between.

FOLK DANCE IN THE PARK

LRS D officially marked the 31st year of Folk Dance in the Park on May 25 and 26, and it was one for the history books. Close to 4,500 students and hundreds of parents gathered at St. Vital Park over two days to celebrate a diversity of cultures through dance.

LRS D tries to diversify dances as much as possible, so the repertoire is reflective of the diverse cultures within our school community. Dances are also organized by difficulty to allow students at different levels to participate. Music teachers in the St. Vital School Division originally created this event to provide a fun learning experience for students all based on different dances and traditions.

RETIREMENT AND YEARS OF SERVICE

Every year we part ways with an incredible group of staff as they retire and move to the next chapter of their lives. This year, we saw 72 retiring staff. We celebrated half of them at a gala the evening of May 25 where guests joined in the Fort Garry Hotel's stunning Provencher Ballroom.

256 staff celebrated a year of service milestone this year; all their years of service combined brings us to 4,365 years of devotion to supporting students' learning and well-becoming.

BEGINNER BAND CELEBRATION

100 first-year band students from eight schools across the Louis Riel School Division joined together for the first Beginner Band Celebration since 2019 on June 7.

The event is not just a celebration of the band programs in our schools, but also a show of how far students have progressed in band since the beginning of the year. Students invited to the Beginner Band Celebration learn four brand new songs with the help of a guest conductor from outside the division. This year students and teachers got to learn from Vanessa Nowostawski, band director in the River East Transcona School Division.

JULES LAVALLEE MEMORIAL GRADUATION POW WOW

Approximately 210 students from across the Louis Riel School Division gathered with friends, family, and community at Dakota Collegiate in June to celebrate their graduation at the Jules Lavallee Memorial Pow Wow.

Trustees and Senior Leadership presented the graduates with a white stole. Any student that wanted to be recognized at the Powwow were invited to participate.





Cooking Up a Storm!



Kitchen Brigades is an extracurricular program offering workshops on basic cooking skills and healthy eating habits. Seventy-nine students from five Louis Riel School Division schools brushed up on their cooking skills in this year's program.

Kitchen Brigades teaches students fundamental skills for the kitchen:

- Adopting healthy eating habits
- Developing food autonomy through the teaching of basic culinary techniques
- Building team spirit, leadership, and creativity
- Transmitting the pleasure of cooking, eating together, and discovering new foods

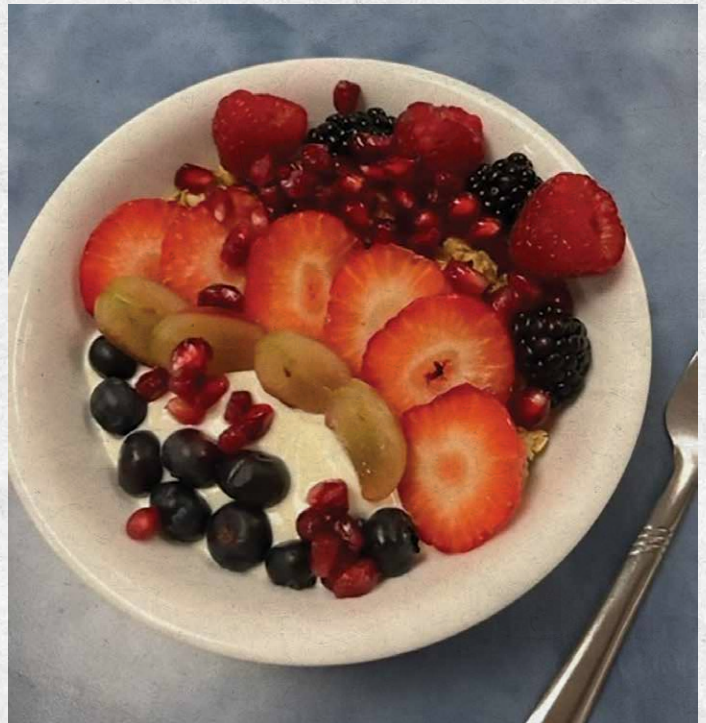
Dakota Collegiate had 22 students participate in learning skills in the kitchen and sharing new experiences.

"It's awesome to try new foods at school that we haven't tried before," said Chloe, a Grade 11 student.

Each recipe and workshop focuses on adding whole grains, plant-based proteins, fruits, and vegetables to increase the nutrient density of the dish. Students are also shown how to minimize food waste and ways they can make recipes more affordable.



Learning to cook is a survival skill. We are learning lots of new dishes to make at home, what food does for our health, and how to improvise and season our food.
— Lucy, a Grade 10 student.



Recently, the students completed a challenge to prepare and donate 20 Mexican casseroles to a community organization of their choosing. They chose the Victor Mager Community Connector program.

“It’s great bonding with friends and making new ones,” said Olenka, a Grade 9 student.

In May, the students participated in Battle of the Brigades. The battle gives students the opportunity to invent a new recipe based on the contents inside a surprise basket. The baskets typically include protein and vegetables, and then the students can access a pantry full of herbs, spices, grains, seasonings, and dairy.

Dakota’s surprise basket held chicken breast, brown rice, and potatoes (students chose one or the other), broccoli, and carrots. The student chefs had 60 minutes on the clock to plan, prepare, and plate their meal for a panel of judges. Once they decided what they would be making, it was a first come basis for optional ingredients that included avocados, broth, cheese, green onions, lemons, pasta, peppers, tomatoes, tomato sauce, and an assortment of herbs and spices.

The judges rated the final plates based on:

- Plate presentation
- Flavour
- Balanced plate
($\frac{1}{2}$ vegetables, $\frac{1}{4}$ protein, and $\frac{1}{4}$ grains)
- Team organization of tasks
- Cooking techniques



Language is Alive

The Indigenous language program was introduced to Louis Riel School Division classrooms during the 2016 school year, starting with one language speaker in four classrooms. In the 2017-2018 school year, Hilda Kent and Linda Allen joined the team and brought the Ojibwe program to 33 Kindergarten and nine Grade 1 classes. Now there are eight women on the Indigenous Language team and each program is in 25 out of the 30 elementary schools in 50 Kindergarten and 65 Grade 1/2 classes. Each person on the team teaches around 18 classes.

Kelsey Lenaghan, Ojibwe Teacher and Program Developer, joined the team in 2018.

“I didn’t grow up speaking the language,” said Kelsey. “My mom would say to my sisters and I, ‘Why would I teach you a language I was punished for speaking.’ So, we grew up speaking English.”

Kelsey started her language learning journey eight years ago.

“As a small child, seeing my family talk and not being able to understand created a desire of wanting to know,” she said. “Seeing the job posting to teach the language was a dream. It is healing knowing my mom and granny couldn’t speak the language and I get to bring it full circle.”

For most of the women on the Indigenous Language team it has been an opportunity for them to learn more of the language as they teach.



It opens up opportunities for Indigenous staff to learn from each other. Our vocabularies are growing.
— Kelsey Lenaghan

When the program first started, they used a nature-based approach to learning. When Kelsey took over the program development, she and the team restructured the learning approach to follow the Anishinaabe 13 moons and what is happening on the land.

“Each new moon represents a month following the 28-day period,” said Kelsey. “We teach what is happening on the land by tuning into what the plants and animals are doing during that moon cycle. We teach language and traditional Indigenous practices by using creative and hands-on activities on the land and within the classroom.”

In 2022, Courtney Kirkness joined the Indigenous Language team bringing Cree with her. Courtney is currently translating the program and teaching it to Kindergarten to Grade 2 students in four schools. Eventually she will be writing Cree units.

The Kindergarten to Grade 2 students spend 60 minutes a school cycle learning Ojibwe and Cree words and concepts.

A big part of the elementary school program is having the teachers and educational assistants in the learning circle participating with their students.

“Teachers are implementing language even when we are not there,” said Kelsey.

The Indigenous language program is one step towards combating racism and giving Indigenous students representation.

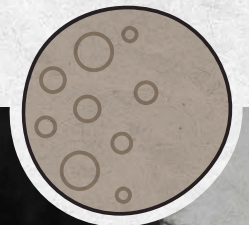
“It is our goal to get this program in all 30 elementary schools,” said Kelsey. “We are creating safe spaces for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to learn, celebrate, and use language.”

In 2022, Kelsey and Rosemary Bird, an Indigenous Support Instructor and Language Carrier, started a Grade 9-12 Indigenous language class.

“We have one class of around 15 to 20 students at Dakota Collegiate,” said Kelsey. “Most of the kids call us Auntie.”

The high school students learn basic introductions, family terms, and counting, along with participating in cultural traditions such as smudging, visiting a sweat lodge, and researching Indigenous communities.

“The kids are medicine,” said Kelsey.





Building Community at Culture Camp

The Indigenous Youth Leadership Program (IYLP) brings together a community of Indigenous students from across the Louis Riel School Division. It has traditional Indigenous culture at its core. Once a month, they meet to build relationships, foster a sense of belonging and collective voice, and engage in authentic cultural, language, and land-based learning opportunities.

The IYLP provides mentoring and guidance to adults and students across the division. The group has been meeting monthly since 2014; this year, their meetings culminated in the first ever Culture Camp.

“We want students to connect with the land, spend time with elders and develop deep relationships across our community of schools. Hence, the Culture Camp dream was born,”

said Bobbie-Jo Leclair, Divisional Vice-Principal of Indigenous Education, Intercultural Understandings and Transformation.

This year, that dream became a reality. In October, more than 30 IYLP students, with representation from each of LRSD’s high schools, came together in Fisher River Cree Nation to learn from the land, elders, and each other. LRSD’s Indigenous Education Team, knowledge keepers, language speakers, and the Fisher River community all supported this inaugural Culture Camp.

“Elders are like flashlights,” said Amélie Tétrault, a Grade 11 student at Collège Jeanne-Sauvé. “They help you see things that were always there; it was just too dark to make out the shapes and forms fully on my own.”

Chickadee Richard, May and Pierre Cochrane, and Wilfred and Connie Buck taught students different traditional Indigenous skills like pickerel filleting, porcupine quill harvesting, eagle feather harvesting, and sweat lodge building.

“The skills and knowledge acquired allowed the students to feel pride in being Indigenous but, more importantly, established belonging and community,” said Bobbie-Jo.

Students also learned the significance of a feast plate, how to set up a tipi, and build a traditional fire. They spent time in the bush gathering grey and red willow and birch bark to make rattles.

“For me, this experience makes me believe in pre-colonial education,” said Amélie. “Community was lost, but we’re finally gaining it back.”



Bridging the Gap: The Community-based Aboriginal Teacher Education Program



The Community-based Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (CATEP) is a joint venture between The University of Winnipeg Faculty of Education, Manitoba Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade, and partner school divisions.

This March, Brandy Racette, an Educational Assistant (EA) in the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD), graduated from the program.

“The education part of the degree was easier,” said Brandy. “Getting my BA, the math courses and learning to write a proper essay was a learning curve. But having that experience helped us in the classroom setting.”

CATEP was developed for Indigenous people interested in the teaching profession. The program gives Indigenous educational assistants the opportunity to get their integrated Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education degree while working full-time in an LRSD school.

“I was working in early childcare and the money was terrible,” said Brandy. “My friend suggested

I talk to her husband about becoming an EA and doing CATEP and I never looked back.” Brandy has been with the division since 2017.

The program addresses the under-representation of Indigenous people in the teaching profession by making the process to get a teaching degree more accessible. It allows for a balance between the need to work and desire to get an education.



We all have common areas of experience. We are a little older, we all have been EAs, and we can share and support each other in that way.

— Brandy Racette

From September to April, employees work in their respective schools while attending classes part-time in the evenings.

From May to July, they are released from their schools to attend university and student teach full-time.

“I couldn’t have done school any other way,” said Brandy. “I have to work and take care of my household. Being in the school environment as an employee and getting an academic education, I was able to bounce ideas off teachers and other EAs. CATEP is a unique experience different from what any other university student experiences going to daytime classes.”

CATEP takes an average of six years to complete. Graduates from the program have a major in English for Early and Middle Years, and the course content emphasizes Indigenous perspectives.

In June, Brandy accepted a Grade 2 and 3 teaching position at Marion School.

“I’m looking forward to building relationships with my students and being able to customize and develop a curriculum and classroom culture that reflects all of us,” said Brandy. “I will take the time to learn from the EAs and treat them with respect. I get to create my own classroom.”



Powwow Club Returns



The Louis Riel School Division was excited to bring back Powwow Club after an extended hiatus due to COVID.





Before the official LRSD Powwow Club was formed in 2016, Hastings School had a group of students engaged in Powwow dance. The divisional Powwow Club took place at the René Deleurme Centre inside Lavallee School from two to four times a month. Several schools were represented in this group of Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth learning how to do something that once was outlawed in Canada. The LRSD Powwow Club grew exponentially in 2019, with more than 80 students participating.

“Students from all schools in LRSD are invited to participate and no prior experience is required,” said Corey Kapilik, Divisional Principal of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism.

This year Nelson McIntyre Collegiate hosted 75 students for the return of Powwow Club.

The hour-and-a-half gathering includes a light snack, sharing circle, dancing, drumming, and sewing traditional regalia. Drumming was a new addition this year in hopes of including a larger number of high school students.



The Powwow Club is one way our community comes together to support our Indigenous students. For many years, aunties, kokums, and other community members have helped design and sew traditional regalia for the Powwow Club.

“Powwow Club has been an excellent opportunity for students, families, and staff to come together as an inclusive community while celebrating and learning about Indigenous culture,” said Corey.

In June, Powwow Club culminates their learning and honours graduates by participating in the Graduation Powwow.



Louis Riel School Division Creates Staff Affinity Space

This year, one of the main focuses of the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) was asking the question, “How do we prioritize belonging?” While many focused on how to prioritize belonging in the classrooms and amongst the students, on October 18, 2022, the division rolled out Affinity Space meetings for its employees.

Under the leadership of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Anti-Racism Education Team, Affinity Space was created to reflect LRSD’s commitment in creating opportunities for meaningful dialogue around the barriers we must address and the successful practices we are already engaged in. One strategy that is often used in workplaces to accomplish this is the use of “Employee Resource Groups” or “Affinity Spaces” for employees from underrepresented groups.

WHAT IS AN AFFINITY GROUP?

Typically, an Affinity Space is a group of people who have a common interest or goal or acting together for a specific purpose. In this instance, the affinity group LRSD created was for employees from equity seeking groups who are historically underrepresented within the workforce of the school system (Indigenous, Black and other racialized people, people with disabilities, people from the 2SLGBTQIA+ community). People who chose to participate belonged to or identified with these groups.

WHAT DID THE AFFINITY GROUP DO?

The intent of the group was to support our work as a division in the areas of diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism. It was an invitation for people from minoritized and marginalized groups from all employee groups in LRSD to come together in a safe and confidential environment to share their experiences and provide feedback on how we, as an organization, might better respond to the needs of these groups. Typically, these groups tend to appear naturally within organizations out of a desire to create connections with those who might share similarities and understand identity. Structuring these groups allowed us to continue to be intentional in the work that we are doing as a division. Some discussions spoke to issues impacting their identities and has helped in the continued development of policy and practice.





WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF HAVING AFFINITY GROUPS AT WORK?

Ultimately, Affinity Groups work to create more inclusive spaces through connection, networking, and dialogue. These spaces can be empowering in that they allow for the sharing of experiences, peer-to-peer connection, informal mentorship opportunities, and an increased sense of belonging.



After just one meeting, it was more important than I initially thought it would be for me. This was the first time I could safely talk about the challenges I've experienced at work being from a minoritized group. It was very emotional, in a good way. Thank you very much for allowing me voice in a place that I have worked at for a long time.

— Participant

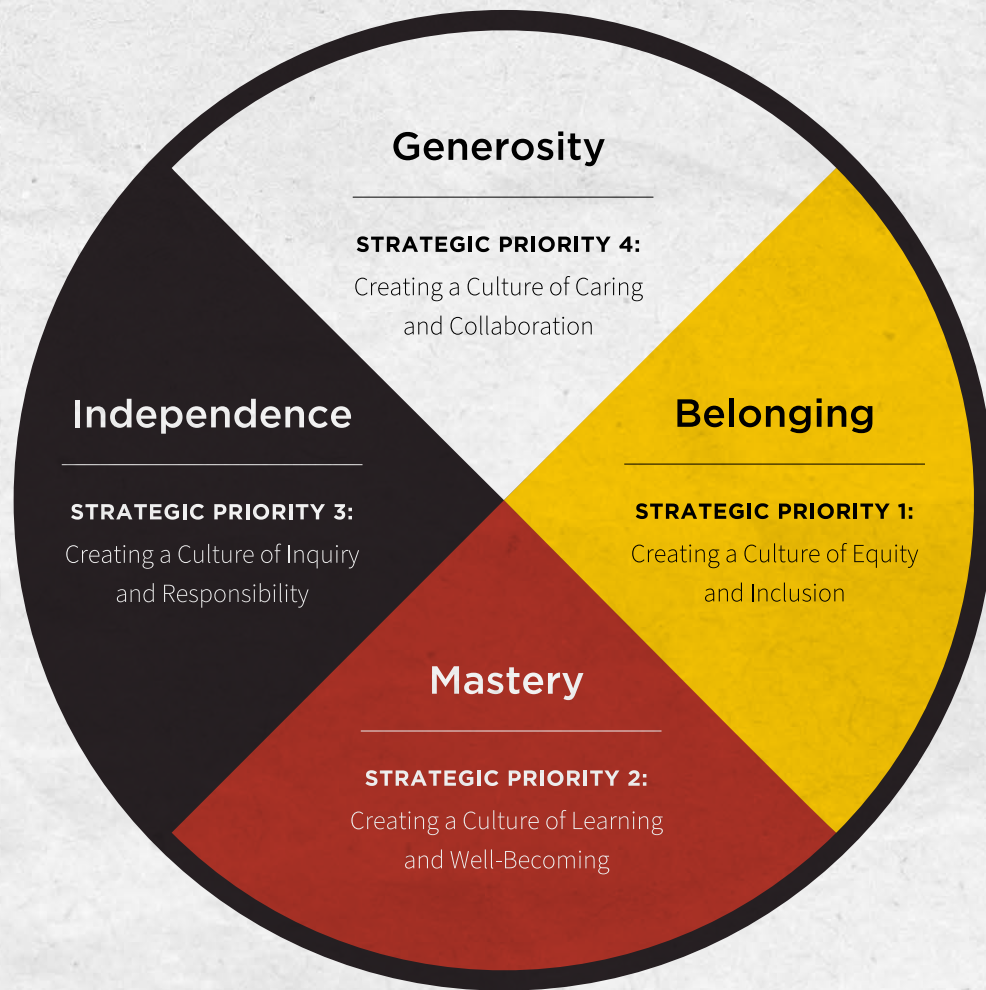
Another participant shared:

“For me, Affinity Space meetings gave me a safe space to reflect and wonder aloud about my impact as a racialized educator. At my first meeting, I was welcomed with kindness. It was a place to connect with colleagues that I would never otherwise have had the chance to meet, and it allowed me to see myself in their experiences. I grew personally through their sharing of the challenges that they face in their workplaces. Although the equity groups we each represented were different, we shared the common experience of seeking belonging and understanding.”

With the feedback and success of the first meeting, Affinity Space continued monthly. Staff from all employee groups, whether they were casual, term, or permanent, were able to participate. A shared agreement around confidentiality and professionalism was co-created by participants and adhered to. The meetings primarily took place online, but as the community grew and developed, there was a desire to meet in person. Through the support of a local business owned by a minoritized member of the community, the last two meetings of the year were held in-person, which was appreciated by the participants. There was also a guest speaker brought in to share their personal experiences around equity and racism in their workplaces.

In adhering to *Policy ACH - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* and *Policy AD - Educational Philosophy: Divisional Vision, Mission, Values & Motto, Appendix A*, along with lessons learned on how we can improve this space and from overwhelming feedback, Affinity Space will resume next school year, as we are dedicated to creating opportunities for all members of the LRSD community to share, learn, work, and develop in an environment that is safe, positive, healthy, accessible, and inclusive.





Multi-Year Strategic Plan

The 2022-2023 Annual Report to the Community (ARC) is the culmination of a four-year strategic plan. In 2018-2019, the LRSD community engaged in a series of conversations about visioning for our future. The themes that emerged informed our renewed Vision, Mission, and Motto. They also shaped four strategic priorities that framed the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) for 2019-2023.

In September 2022, we asked the following overarching question to give direction to our collective journey for the year ahead: How do we prioritize belonging? Many of the stories in this year's edition of the ARC offered answers to this question. The question also framed the creation of our new MYSP for 2023-2027 which will guide us as we embark on the next phase of our collective journey. To learn more about LRSD's strategic priorities and actions for the next four years, visit: lrsd.link/MYSP.



“

There is no power for change
greater than a community
discovering what it cares about.

— Margaret J. Wheatley



DIVISION SCOLAIRE
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SCHOOL DIVISION

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