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# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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

We recognize and honour Shoal Lake 40 First Nation, the source of Winnipeg's life-sustaining drinking water, as well as the Treaty Territories that generate and provide the electricity that powers daily activity throughout the province and beyond.

The ongoing development of LRSD's land acknowledgement is guided by our Indigenous Council of Grandparents, 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

Students and staff in the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) continue to show what's possible when we learn in relationship with the land, one another, and our shared histories. Every day, we live our motto—Thriving Learners, Flourishing Communities—through care, connection, and a steadfast commitment to equity and inclusion.

This year's report highlights stories that reflect the strength of our Multi-Year Strategic Plan and the values of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity.

Our renewed focus on land-based learning is reflected in a powerful Star-blanket project at the René Deleurme Centre. Newcomers, Indigenous, and non-Indigenous community members gathered each week to sew a blanket in honour of residential school survivors and the children who never came home, offering a living symbol of Truth and Reconciliation.

We were also fortunate to learn from Dr. Alex Wilson, whose workshops deepened our understanding of Two-Spirit identity and the knowledge held by the land. Her teachings invited us to think differently about identity, space, and education.

Throughout LRSD, students demonstrated leadership in creative and meaningful ways—whether through AI literacy, music programs, inclusive school clubs, or events like the

International Day of Pink and a studentled market celebrating Black history and culture.

Our first full year of Full-Day, Every-Day Kindergarten across all early years schools marks an important milestone, reflecting our shared commitment to equity from the earliest years.

As the year draws to a close, we offer heartfelt congratulations to the graduating class of 2025, extend deep thanks to our retiring staff, and offer warm wishes for a joyful and restful summer.

Thank you for helping make LRSD a thriving, caring, and inclusive community where everyone belongs.

**Chris Sigurdson** 

Chair

" If we are to achieve reconciliation, we must first recognize the value and strength of Indigenous knowledge and ways of learning."

- Murray Sinclair

## YOUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

### 2022-2026

The Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) 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



**Cindy Turner** (204) 294-3047



Ian Walker Interim Vice-Chair (204) 781-0438

WARD 2



Chris Sigurdson Chair (204) 230-4601



**Irene Nordheim** (204) 290-3739

WARD 3



**Sandy Nemeth** (204) 230-6475



Darlene Gerrior
In Memory



Ryan Palmquist (204) 290-9976

WARD 4



Chipalo Simunyola (204) 688-7479



Pamela Kolochuk (204) 297-5339

## MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Each year, the Annual Report to the Community (ARC) offers us a moment to pause, reflect, and share the story of learning in the Louis Riel School Division. And each year, the challenge remains: how do we choose which stories to tell?

Across our 40 schools and workplaces, thousands of moments unfold daily—moments of discovery, connection, creativity, and care. This report captures just a few of those moments, organized around the strategic priorities that guide our work: Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity. These values form the arc of the stories in the report, helping us highlight not only what we've accomplished, but how we've grown together.

This year, we've taken a new step in how we share these stories. For the first time, the ARC is available in a fully digital format, allowing readers to explore deeper layers of content, hear directly from students, staff, and families and engage with interactive features that bring our learning community to life. The printed report offers a curated overview—but the digital edition invites you to journey further.

To our students: we acknowledge your curiosity, your creativity, and your initiative. You continue to show us what it means to thrive as learners and contribute to a flourishing community.

To our staff: thank you for your unwavering commitment to inclusive, innovative, and compassionate education.

To our families and community partners: thank you for your trust, your collaboration, and your belief in the power of public education.

As we look ahead, we remain grounded in our shared purpose and inspired by the possibilities that lie before us. The stories in this report are just the beginning.

Here's to another year of thriving learners and flourishing communities.

Warm regards,

#### **Christian Michalik**

Superintendent & CEO Louis Riel School Division

## SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Senior Leadership
Team (SLT) supports and
works alongside more
than 2,400 staff, serving
more than 17,700 learners
across 40 schools.

#### **VISION**

The SLT's vision for LRSD is for every person to be 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



Ron Cadez
Assistant Superintendent,
Student, Clinical, & Instructional Services
Collège Jeanne-Sauvé and
J.H. Bruns Collegiate Family of Schools



Jamie Rudnicki Secretary-Treasurer & CFO



Jeff Anderson
Assistant Superintendent,
Policy, Planning, & Research
Collège Béliveau and
Windsor Park Collegiate Family of Schools



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



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

## LRSD BY THE NUMBERS



STUDENTS, SCHOOLS, & STAFF

17,782 total students\*

40 Schools:

26 English

French Immersion

Technical & Vocational

2,426 total staff\*

**1,330** teachers

(includes principals and vice-principals)

1,096 non-teaching staff

\*Numbers pulled on June 30, 2025

### LOUIS RIEL ARTS & TECHNOLOGY CENTRE

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

Certificate Programs

214 Certificate Program Recipients

165 participants in work experience opportunities

105 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 summer programming with a focus on equity and inclusion.

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

- More than 37,192 pounds of food to community and schools
- 1,250 cost-shared Fresh Food Boxes, which community members purchased over 25 pick-up weeks.

#### **Through the LRSD Zone Settlement program:**

- More than 530 new client referrals were received for settlement service via community partner organizations
- More than 800 clients participated in programs and information sessions (including English Conversation, Parenting, Sewing, and Youth Wellness)
- The settlement team provided service in 11 languages
- 914 clients received settlement services, and the top three source countries were Syria, Ukraine, and Nigeria.

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 2024-2025 school year, this included:

- 1,816 Comprehensive eye exams
- 388 Prescription eyeglasses
- 20 Mobile Vision Care Clinics
   (19 schools + 1 community clinic)

#### **Community Clinics:**

- 1 Flu Vaccination clinic with a total of 81 vaccinations
- 1 Tax Filing clinic with a total of 47 taxes filed

#### **Indigenous Cultural Programming:**

- 37 Beading & Breakfast sessions
- 31 Traditional Teaching sessions with Knowledge Carrier Eric Flett for caregivers

- 10 Full Moon Ceremonies, 2 Pipe Ceremonies, and 1 Letting Go Ceremony
- 3 Medicine Picking Outings for caregivers and youth

#### **Parent Mentorship Programming:**

 10-week program, 11 adult participants volunteering in classrooms and receiving weekly professional development sessions

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 2025, there were:

- 5 sites, 3 English and 2 French Immersion
- 377 children from 19 schools (13 English and 6 French Immersion)

### RDC also hosted conversations to guide its work:

• 1 formal Community Conversation

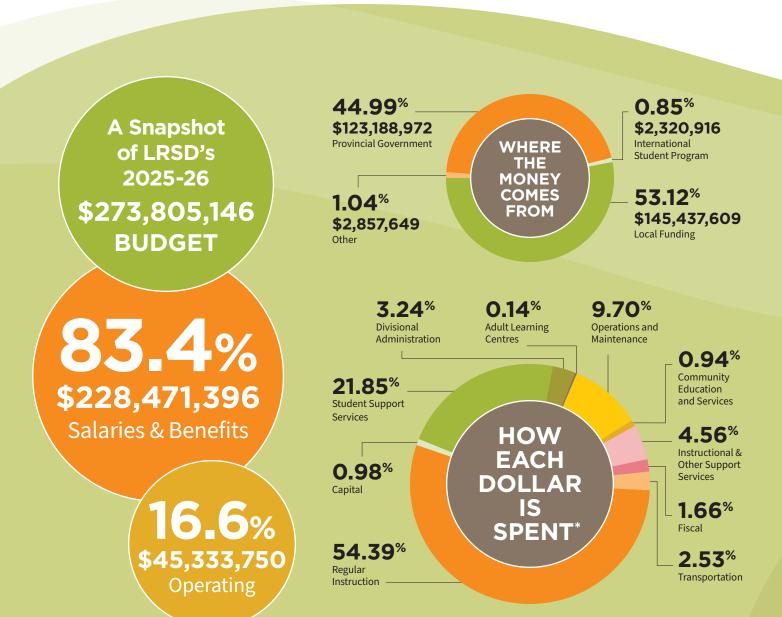
### In collaboration with the RDC Commissary Kitchen:

Prepared and distributed
 79 hampers for Ramadan.



## DOLLARS &CENTS

At a special meeting on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) Board of Trustees approved a **\$273,805,146** budget for the **2025-26 school year.** 



Since the release of the draft budget, LRSD has continued to refine the costs relative to projected enrolment, making strategic adjustments, including shifting dollars from operational expenditures to staffing to better support students and classrooms.

"This budget is about making strategic investments that directly benefit our students," said Chris Sigurdson, Chair of the LRSD Board of Trustees. "We are committed to ensuring our schools remain well-equipped to support every learner's success."

To address enrolment growth, increased costs from recent collective agreements, and inflation, the budget includes a 6.43 per cent mill rate increase for property owners within the division.

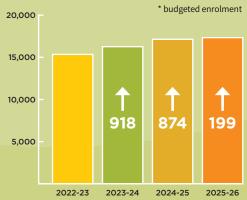
"With this budget, we are taking a balanced approach to meet the needs of our growing student population and manage rising costs," said Jamie Rudnicki, Secretary-Treasurer. "Our goal is to ensure that every dollar spent directly benefits students and supports the long-term sustainability of our division." The budget makes key investments to support student learning including:

- An increase of 45.67 FTE teachers, 18.03 FTE educational assistants, 12.78 FTE support staff, and 4.45 FTE clinicians.
- An allocation of \$100,000 for a Grades 3-4 water safety pilot program, informing a phased rollout.
- A six year plan to retrofit 10 schools with air conditioning, starting with a \$630,000 investment in 2025-26.
- A \$250,000 investment in cybersecurity enhancements.

Through these strategic investments, LRSD aims to advance its mission of fostering an inclusive and engaging educational experience for all students.

"Our Multi-Year Strategic Plan continues to guide our decisions," said Christian Michalik, Superintendent. "This budget advances our 25 strategic actions and ensures we are enhancing supports for multilingual learners, mental health, and flexible learning spaces, as well as maintaining reasonable class sizes."

### YEAR OVER YEAR ENROLMENT GROWTH



### ONE TIME & ADDITIONAL INVESTMENTS

New K-8 School (One Time)

Air Conditioning
Retrofit for 10 Schools (Year 1 of a 6 Year Plan)

Infrastructure Increases \$480,000
Cyber Security \$250,000
Community Schools
Network Hub \$100,000
Water Safety & Skills
Pilot Progam \$100,000

### WHAT DOES THIS BUDGET MEAN FOR PROPERTY OWNERS?

Based on an average home in LRSD valued at:

\$422,500

Results in a property tax increase of:

6.43%

or \$195 a year (\$16.08 a month or \$0.53 a day)

> 2025-26 ADDITIONAL STAFF FTE

> > 45.67 Teachers

18.03 Educational Assistants

12.78 Support Staff

4.45 Clinicians

### DIVISIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Divisional administration is made up of the following:

2.70%
Board Office
Administration

0.54%
International Student
Program
Administration

TOTAL STAFF 2.420 ETE\*

1,157



693 Educational Assistants



337 Non-Teaching Support Staff



Principals & Vice-Principals



76
School & Classroom
Support Team
Includes Clinical Instructional.



62
Board Office Staff



Trustees



International Program



## BRICKS & MORTAR

Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) invests in spaces where learners thrive and communities can flourish. Funding for capital investments is a combination of mostly provincial and local investments. Additionally, we receive support from the City of Winnipeg and parent advisory councils for playground improvements.



#### **LOCAL INVESTMENTS IN 2024-25**

#### **Archwood School**

- Installed Water Bottle Filling Station \$4,850
- Added a Meal Prep Island to the Community Kitchen \$2,100

#### Collège Jeanne-Sauvé

- Installed New Eye Wash Stations \$9,292
- Repaired Exterior Level Landing \$27,871

### Dakota Collegiate, Hastings School, and Nelson McIntyre Collegiate

Installed new Public Address System \$63,233

#### **Dakota Collegiate**

- Replaced Interior Door \$4,800

#### École Guyot

- Replaced Classroom Flooring \$6,850

#### École George-McDowell

- Replaced Windows \$91,643

#### École Howden

- Added Student Services Office \$35,663
- Installed Water Bottle Filling Station \$4,850

#### École Marie-Anne-Gaboury

- Renovated Classroom \$8,225
- Replaced Washroom Flooring \$8,775

#### École Provencher

- Installed Window Safety Bars \$44,474

#### École Sage Creek School

- Installed Classroom Demising Wall \$13,625

#### École St. Germain

- Installed Water Bottle Filling Station \$4,850
- Installed Acoustic Wall Panels in Gymnasium \$18,364
- Replaced Asphalt Parking Lot Pathway to School \$21,168

#### École Van Belleghem

- Installed Accessible Door Opener and Barrier Free Ramp at Exit #6 \$30,125
- Replaced Exterior Door and Frame for Exit #7 and 10 \$14,948

#### **Frontenac School**

- Replaced Window \$6,016
- Resurfaced Exterior Stairs and Ramp \$14,064
- Renovated the Universal Nutrition Program Kitchen

#### \$157,346

#### **General Vanier School**

- Resurfaced Barrier Free Ramps \$11,166
- Installed Doors at Three Main Floor Stairwells \$53,934

#### **Hastings School**

 Replaced South Windows (Phase One) and Installed Air Conditioning Unit \$53,934

#### **H.S. Paul School**

- Installed Water Bottle Filling Station \$4,850

#### **Island Lakes Community School**

- Installed Acoustic Wall Panels in Classroom \$10,778

#### **Lavallee School**

- Expanded the Parking Lot \$103,950
- Renovated the Music Room \$50,053
- Added Emergency Lighting in Classrooms \$15,000

#### **Marion School**

- Installed Air Conditioning \$276,600
- Renovated the Universal Nutrition
   Program Kitchen \$165,374

#### Niakwa Place School

Repaired Entrance and Asphalt Play Area \$14,021

#### **Nordale School**

- Installed new Bell System \$14,954
- Replaced West Entrance Exterior Doors and Frame \$26,267

#### **Shamrock School**

- Installed Water Bottle Filling Station \$4,850

#### **Windsor Park Collegiate**

- Replaced Gymnasium Entrance \$8,534

#### **PROVINCIAL INVESTMENTS IN 2024-2025**

Island Lakes Community School (ILCS) Phase Two: Relocation of École St. Germain Modular Classrooms to ILCS \$554,450

## SHOUTOUT<sub>TO</sub> STAFF&STUDENTS

With 40 schools and more than 17,700 students, there's a lot to celebrate in the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD). Here are just a few of the highlights and achievements from the 2023-2024 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. At least one student from each LRSD high school received the award:

Cameron Sontag Collège Béliveau

**Raeesa Hoque** Collège Jeanne-Sauvé **Jordyn Davis**Dakota Collegiate Institute

Hyun (Nahyun) Kim Glenlawn Collegiate Institute **Anison Cranwill**J.H. Bruns Collegiate

**Julia Anderson-Boyko**Nelson McIntyre Collegiate

**Yoyo Xu**Windsor Park Collegiate



#### **Booked for Greatness**

Elena Stangherlin was recognized as the 2025
Distinguished Service Award Winner by the Manitoba
School Library Association (MSLA). This annual
provincial award recognizes the efforts of individuals
who have made outstanding contributions in support
of effective school libraries in Manitoba. Elena was
honoured for her ongoing service, creativity, and
commitment to supporting school library programs.

#### Choir Hits a High Note Nationally

The Dakota Collegiate Senior Choir earned a Silver Award in the Choral Music division at MusicFest Canada, held in Toronto. Choir member Niamh Ukrainec also received an individual Honour Award for her outstanding contribution to the ensemble's success.





#### **Full-Court Recognition**

Dean Favoni, Dakota Collegiate's varsity boys' basketball coach for over 30 years, won Coach of the Year at the Basketball Manitoba Annual Awards. Dean's exceptional commitment, knowledge, and passion for basketball are remarkable. His pursuit of excellence on the court is paralleled by his advocacy, leadership, and genuine care for his athletes off the court. Dean's influence goes far beyond the scoreboard—he shapes character, fosters community, and inspires everyone fortunate enough to learn from him.

#### **Jules Lavallee Memorial Bursary**

Kiera Flett and Jordyn Hastings, graduating students from Nelson McIntyre and Glenlawn Collegiates, both received the Jules Lavallee Memorial Bursary at the 2025 Graduation Powwow. This award recognizes a graduating Indigenous student who has developed/used/shared their gifts to fulfil goals and aspirations in relation to themselves, their families, and communities.

#### **King Charles III Coronation Medal**

Trustee Irene Nordheim was awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal. She was honoured for a lifetime of service in education, from teaching to administration to shaping policy as a school trustee. Her efforts to ensure access, equity, and inclusive learning environments have positively impacted generations of Manitobans.

#### **MSBA Student Citizenship Awards**

These prestigious awards recognize students across Manitoba who exemplify exceptional citizenship, leadership, and community service. This year, Abigail Ochoa from Collège Béliveau and the Black and Gold Society from Dakota Collegiate were honoured for their inspiring contributions.

#### Minnetonka's Secret Garden

All the work Minnetonka School put into their courtyard garden caught the attention of Plant a Seed & See What Grows Foundation, a registered national charitable organization that helps create and sustain school gardens. The organization in partnership with Farm to Cafeteria Canada presented the school with a cheque for \$2,000 to go toward growing their already beautiful garden.

#### **Winning More than Games**

Bryan Kornberger, teacher at Glenlawn Collegiate, received the King Charles III Coronation Medal for his service in education, from classroom teaching to coaching basketball. Adding to this well-deserved recognition, the Manitoba High School Athletic Association inducted Bryan to the MHSAA Hall of Fame.

## BELONG

## LEARNING FROM DR. ALEX WILSON

On Oct. 16 and 17, Dr. Alex Wilson, an acclaimed educator, scholar, and researcher from Opaskwayak Cree Nation, spent the morning with leadership, sharing powerful teachings on Queering Indigenous Land-Based Education. This approach disrupts colonial, hierarchical ways of thinking and invites us to deepen our relationships not just with people, but also with ideas, concepts, and the land itself.

Dr. Wilson's commitment to building and sharing knowledge about land-based learning and two-spirit identity, history, and teachings has influenced educational policy at regional, national, and international levels. As the first Canadian First Nations woman to receive a doctorate from Harvard, her experience as a teaching fellow in Harvard's first interdisciplinary course on First Peoples and governance led to the formation of two courses that now serve as a foundation for training curriculum in communities throughout Canada and the United States. She currently codevelops and oversees the Indigenous land-based education graduate program at the University of Saskatchewan, where she is a leader in land-based pedagogy and research methodology.

Using the cultural iceberg metaphor, Dr. Wilson illustrated how only a small, visible fraction of culture is usually recognized, while the much larger, hidden base holds Indigenous ways of Knowing and Being. She explained how colonization has fractured this iceberg, creating a disconnect that Indigenous land-based education can help to heal. Without this reconnection, the visible "tip" of the iceberg risks being romanticized and tokenized.

Through stories and examples, Dr. Wilson showed how colonial systems shape our relationships with land, animals, and even each other—from commodifying sacred spaces to enforcing gender binaries. She introduced the idea of epistemicide, the severing of land-based knowledge. She challenged leaders to move beyond multiculturalism toward anti-oppression, questioning how dominant ideologies shape the policies and practices we take for granted.

Dr. Wilson also highlighted how colonialism reaches beyond human relationships, impacting all living beings—from the naming of animals to the commodification of land. As one example, she pointed to Ducks Unlimited's control over water levels in the Saskatchewan Delta, which has disrupted ecosystems under the guise of conservation.





On Dec. 9, the René Deleurme Centre (RDC) hosted a heartwarming community ceremony to unveil a Starblanket—a vibrant symbol of healing, unity, and ongoing commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.

"Staff and I met to brainstorm ideas and we all agreed creating the Starblanket would be a good opportunity to do something meaningful with the communities we serve at RDC—newcomer, Indigenous, and non-Indigenous," said Misty Belcourt, RDC's Manager of Community & Settlement Services. "People are already here, sharing space, but this project gave us a chance to do that with intention."

The Starblanket project was full of unexpected moments that brought deeper meaning to the work and revealed hidden strengths in the community.

"The initial plan was to hire two women who knew how to sew and help with the blanket, but that fell through unexpectedly," said Misty. "We weren't sure what we were going to do—but then some of our Indigenous community members stepped forward and said, 'We know how to sew.' One of them added, 'I know how to make Starblankets."

That person, Jasmine McIvor, not only stepped into a key role in making the Starblanket but also brought a personal connection to the project.

"She ended up taking on a pretty big role in the creation of the blanket," said Misty. "Some of her family members are residential school survivors, so the project held deep personal meaning for her. It was important to her—and to all of us—that everything was done in a good way, with guidance from our knowledge carrier, Eric Flett."

As part of the Starblanket project, RDC wanted the design process to be inclusive and rooted in community participation. The team began by bringing everyone together to share the intent behind the initiative.

"We talked about the purpose of the project, which was to honour residential school survivors and acknowledge the children who didn't make it home," Misty explained. "We wanted to make sure everyone understood the meaning behind what we were creating."

## A STORY THE MAKING OF RDC'S STARBLANKET



To ensure the final design reflected the community's voice, the team launched a design contest. Community members were given worksheets featuring a blank Starblanket template and invited to colour in their vision of what it could look like.

Once the designs were submitted, they were put on display, and everyone had the opportunity to vote for their favourite using paper bags as ballot boxes. The winning design was created by Noreen Spence, who shared the symbolism behind her work.

"Noreen included the colours of the four directions, which symbolize inclusivity and represent people from all walks of life—Indigenous, African, Asian, and European communities," said Misty. "She also added blue to represent water, which stands for life, sacredness, and women. And, of course, she included orange to honour Orange Shirt Day and commemorate the children who didn't make it home from residential schools."

But its creation was a community effort. Each Monday, members from RDC's newcomer, Indigenous, and non-Indigenous communities came together to cut fabric, iron seams, and sew pieces of the blanket, stitch by stitch, into something greater than the sum of its parts.

"There were shared stories of colonization between Indigenous and newcomer communities," Misty explained. "Some of the newcomers would hear about the history of residential schools and colonization in Canada and immediately connect with it. They'd say, 'In my country, this is what colonization looked like."

This storytelling became a cultural bridge, helping foster empathy, understanding, and a sense of shared experience among participants.

"For a lot of the newcomers, it was their first time learning about the meaning behind Starblankets, the medicines sewn into them, and cleansing ceremonies," said Misty. "They learned about the significance of tobacco, sage, cedar, sweetgrass—and, of course, the history of residential schools."

One moment that stood out for Misty was hearing from a newcomer parent who shared how the project helped her better understand the significance of Orange Shirt Day.

"She said, 'Now I know how to answer my daughter. I can tell her the meaning behind Orange Shirt Day," Misty recalled. "That stuck with me. It reminded me that while I take that knowledge for granted, some of the days we recognize in schools or across the country don't always resonate with people who are new to Canada. They may not understand the meaning behind them right away, and this project helped bridge that gap."

The Province of Manitoba provided funding for the project through the Orange Shirt Day Fund.

"It's important to remember this funding is meant to commemorate Orange Shirt Day, so involving Indigenous voices is essential," Misty noted. "Listening to students and the broader community can also help bring their ideas to life, and that kind of involvement often leads to greater participation."

She also emphasized the importance of grounding projects like this in education and research.

"Reference the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action," she advised. "Take time to learn about the history of Orange Shirt Day in Canada. That knowledge helps make the work more meaningful."

The Starblanket is now permanently displayed in the centre. It honours residential school survivors and commemorates the children who did not make it home from residential schools. It also stands as a visible and lasting symbol of RDC's commitment to the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

Misty sees this work continuing both at RDC and at RDC North.

"The Starblanket is a visible symbol," Misty said. "I think it will have long-lasting impacts on the many people who come through the René Deleurme Centre. We want to continue this work—it's about bringing people together to learn, grow, and bridge cultures."

A big thank you goes out to Allison Drummond (School and Family Connector), Tammy Bruce (Indigenous Community Liaison), Eric Flett (Knowledge Carrier), and Yana Zheleva (Settlement Program Assistant) for their leadership and organization of this project.

## RESOURCE ALLOCATION PLANNING IN LRSD: A FRAMEWORK FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION

The Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) is committed to using reliable data to guide equitable decision-making and foster inclusive practices. A key area of focus has been documenting the support provided to students and the specific needs those supports are designed to address. Traditionally, student support has often been viewed through subjective lenses, shaped by individual experience or school context. To bring more consistency and objectivity to this work, LRSD began developing a division-wide framework in the 2023–2024 school year.

A working group of nearly 40 staff members—including school and divisional administrators, student services teachers, and clinicians—was assembled to co-create a shared approach for describing and allocating student support. Over the course of a year, the group reviewed internal practices and analyzed support models from other jurisdictions. After extensive consultation, the model from the Surrey School District in British Columbia was selected as a foundation because of its strong alignment with LRSD's priorities and values.

Using this as a starting point, the LRSD team developed a locally adapted framework, dividing into smaller groups to design each section. Once the draft was complete, feedback was gathered from school leaders, clinicians, and student services staff across the division, which helped shape the final version of the model.

To support implementation, LRSD's Information Systems team developed a digital planning tool aligned with the framework. This tool guides school teams through the planning process and allows them to efficiently input student support data into a centralized system. The data is then visualized through Power BI dashboards, which generate reports at both the school and divisional levels. These reports offer a clearer understanding of student needs across LRSD and inform how resources are allocated to schools.

The framework emphasizes equitable resource distribution based on proximity to the student and type of need, with a strong focus on promoting student independence. It helps clarify whether supports are related to health, access, or instruction and ensures they are applied purposefully to foster long-term autonomy. The tool is already helping to shift conversations from how much support a student receives to how supports are targeted and aligned with student growth goals.

This framework also helps deepen understanding of student strengths and needs across all school communities. It directly supports several key actions in LRSD's Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP), including:

**Strategic Action 2.2:** Developing and implementing a neurodiversity framework that recognizes and responds to the diverse learning profiles of students.

**Strategic Action 2.3:** Implementing universal early screening and a proactive approach to instruction to support early intervention in both literacy and numeracy.

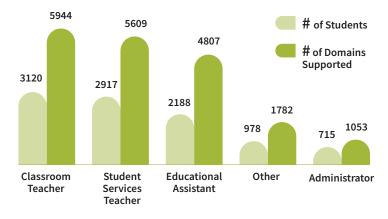
**Strategic Action 2.4:** Establishing therapeutic learning spaces that respond to the emotional and behavioural needs of students.

**Strategic Action 2.5:** Increasing flexibility and accessibility to French Immersion programming by understanding student needs earlier and more clearly.

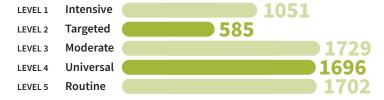
**Strategic Action 3.4:** Supporting multilingual learners by building on students' first languages and leveraging their linguistic assets.

By supporting evidence-informed conversations and strengthening collaboration, the LRSD Resource Allocation Planning Framework offers a transparent and sustainable way to align supports with actual student needs. Rooted in LRSD's commitment to equity, inclusion, and student well-being, this tool enables schools to continue evolving their practices while ensuring every student has access to the supports they need to grow in confidence, independence, and success.

#### How many students is each employee group supporting, and in how many domains?



#### What is the breakdown of proximity levels required across all domains?



### To what degree are various employees supporting student-specific needs? (Values are the # of domains supported per employee group.)

Domain	Administrator	Classroom Teacher	Educational Assistant	Student Services Teacher	Other	Total
Priority 1 – Health Care	91	208	175	208	90	772
Priority 2 – ADLs	57	251	324	287	119	1038
Priority 2 – Communication	85	717	642	669	479	2592
Priority 2 – Instrumental ADLs	70	398	487	478	182	1615
Priority 2 – Regulation	601	1968	1441	1878	514	6402
Priority 3 – Instructional Support	149	2402	1738	2089	398	6776
Total	1053	5944	4807	5609	1782	19195

## INCLUSION IN LRSD'S FRENCH IMMERSION SCHOOLS

The Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) is committed to creating inclusive learning environments where all students are welcomed, supported, and able to thrive. This commitment extends to ensuring that French Immersion (FI) programming is accessible to all learners, regardless of learning profiles, diagnoses, or needs. At the heart of this commitment is a belief in equity and well-being for every student.

#### **Inclusion in Practice**

Research consistently shows that learning more than one language offers cognitive and academic advantages.

Bilingualism does not increase the risk of language difficulties, even for students with identified learning needs. To further support this inclusive vision, LRSD has partnered with Dr. Caroline Erdos, a speech-language pathologist from Montreal who is recognized nationally as an expert in French Immersion and diverse learner profiles.

In April, Dr. Erdos visited LRSD to work with FI principals, Student Services teams, and classroom teachers. Her presentations focused on how to support all students in French Immersion and addressed common myths about the program's suitability for learners with additional needs. Using peer-reviewed research, she clearly distinguished evidence from misconception, offering practical guidance for schools.

Despite these findings, many families are still often discouraged from choosing FI by outside professionals who may not be familiar with the research or the realities in schools. LRSD has long maintained that FI programming is for all learners, and today that vision is clearly visible across our 13 FI schools. An example of this diversity would be the increasing number of students who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) devices currently enrolled in French Immersion.

Just a few years ago, there were almost none. Today, approximately 10 per cent of AAC-supported students in LRSD are in FI. These devices, which support students with communication barriers, are programmed to work in both French and English in our FI classrooms, helping students participate meaningfully in all aspects of school life and especially the language acquisition that is at the heart of FI. This approach reflects LRSD's work under MYSP Strategic Action 2.2, which highlights the importance of embracing neurodiversity and ensuring that all learners can access programming that reflects their needs and strengths.

### Addressing Reading Challenges with Evidence-Based Practices

Another common myth is that students who face challenges in reading would be better served in a single-language program. In fact, LRSD has been a leader in Manitoba in adopting evidence-based early literacy screening and instructional practices that benefit all learners. Strategic Action 2.3 of the MYSP emphasizes universal screening and a proactive, preventive approach to supporting students. In both English and FI classrooms, these practices are used to identify at-risk students early and provide timely, targeted support. Even though high-quality French resources for early literacy are more limited, LRSD has worked with Dr. Erdos, her mentor Dr. Fred Genesee of McGill University, and a University of Toronto research team specializing in second-language literacy to develop tools tailored to the French Immersion context. These tools help ensure that students in both programming options benefit from parallel levels of support.

According to the research presented by Dr. Erdos, French Immersion classrooms offer several features that benefit students with additional needs. These include highly interactive and multimodal instruction, with all students learning vocabulary and language structures from the ground up. Teachers must provide very explicit instruction, and students are supported in transferring skills between languages. Research consistently shows that learners with additional needs in bilingual programming perform as well or better than similar learners in single-language programming.

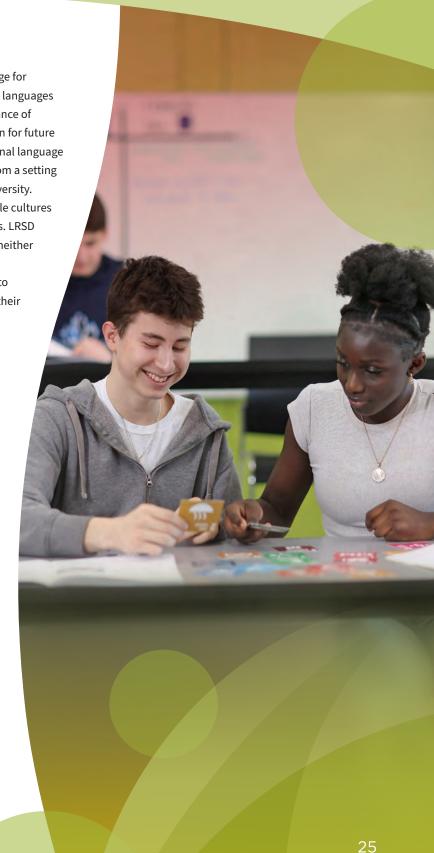
#### **Supporting Multilingual Learners**

French Immersion programming also offers a powerful advantage for multilingual learners—students who already speak one or more languages at home. Strategic Action 3.4 of the MYSP highlights the importance of valuing and building on students' first languages as a foundation for future learning. In FI classrooms, where the focus is already on additional language acquisition and intercultural understanding, learners benefit from a setting that naturally supports and celebrates linguistic and cultural diversity. These classrooms provide an ideal environment to bring multiple cultures into the learning space, enriching the experience for all students. LRSD actively encourages newcomer families—and those who speak neither English nor French at home—to consider French Immersion as a pathway to success. Many of our multilingual FI students go on to develop proficiency in three or more languages, strengthening their academic skills, self-confidence, and sense of belonging in the school community.

### Moving Forward: Equity, Inclusion, and Well-Being for All

Recognizing that not all students are able to access French Immersion at the kindergarten level, Strategic Action 2.5 of the MYSP focuses on removing barriers and expanding entry points to FI programming. In addition to the traditional kindergarten entry, students may now join in Grade 4, and a new Grade 6 entry point will be offered starting in the 2025–2026 school year. These additional entry points help ensure that more students can benefit from the rich and inclusive experience offered through FI.

By continuing to work with experts, apply research-based strategies, and expand access, LRSD is committed to offering French Immersion programming that welcomes and supports all learners. This work reflects our division's broader goal of equity, inclusion, and well-being for every student —in every classroom, every day.



# SPECIAL OLYMPICS LUNCH CLUB

Oh no! The basketball hoops were raised to the gym ceiling, but the kids participating in École Sage Creek School's Special Olympics Lunch Club program needed them down to practice their basketball skills.

"We need to power them up, so they can come down," phys ed teacher and program volunteer Neil Crockford said to the students. "You know how we do that? Jumping jacks!"

Neil hopped up, and the kids followed suit, doing their jumping jacks with wide smiles as — lo and behold — the hoops began lowering into place.

There are so many great things about the Special Olympics Lunch Club program at École Sage Creek School, but let's start with this: it's a whole bunch of fun.

The program ran each month on early dismissal days, the third Tuesday of the month, and began with something of a picnic.

On one Tuesday in January, students and staff plopped down at tables set up in the gym to have a bite to eat together before the play began. A few students were so excited to play, they managed just a few bites before running to grab basketballs and run around the court.

"It's all about accessibility and inclusion," vice-principal Lisa Albrecht, who led the program at École Sage Creek School, said.

The program is open to students of varying abilities who may face barriers to accessing sport otherwise.



Some, for example, may find the hectic environment of a regularly scheduled gym class overstimulating. Some may have mobility limitations or any range of disabilities, for which a little extra space can make all the difference in providing the kind of sports experience all students deserve.

"It's much quieter when there's about 20 kids participating," Lisa said.

Educational assistants join to support the students, and staff from many areas — student services, administration, teaching staff — choose to join in on the fun.

On May 27, parents joined the lunch club for an event at which participants received medals and certificates to commemorate all the effort they put into their skill development and play.

"It's all about accessibility and inclusion,"

Lisa Albrecht - Vice-Principal

"Students enjoy going back to class and sharing what they've experienced, and they're very proud of it. They're excited to show off the skills they're learning," Lisa said.

The program didn't always run out of the École Sage Creek School gym. Grant Park High School hosted their track and field days, for example. In those cases, the kids got onto a bus and Lisa trailed behind with a truck full of equipment, mobility gear, and whatever else is needed.

Neil, our jumping jack catalyst, lauded Lisa's work.

"Lisa was instrumental in spearheading this program at our school. She approached our phys ed team with the idea of a Special Olympics Lunch Club, and she was so passionate about creating these opportunities for our students. It took us no time at all to jump on board with her vision to help develop our program at École Sage Creek School," he said.

For his own part, he said he and his coworkers reveled in seeing the smiles on the kids' faces each month.

Lisa returned the appreciation for all three gym teachers who volunteer, as well as the student services team and all the others who work hard to ensure that all students have the opportunity to access and share in the fun of sport.



## INDEPEND

## PROPEL'S FRENCH EXPANSION BLOOMS

An award-winning, student-interest driven program that began at Nelson McIntyre Collegiate is now gaining momentum in two French Immersion high schools in the Louis Riel School Division.

The Propel Program creates an interdisciplinary, project-based learning environment for students and has recently expanded to Collège Béliveau and Collège Jeanne-Sauvé (CJS). The program allows students to earn multiple credits while pursuing individualized areas of interest.

Patrick Hansen, who has taught Propel at Nelson McIntyre since its launch in 2015, played a key role in mentoring the new French-language cohorts. "My role was trying to help as we branched out into the two immersion schools, working with Josée and Ben to help them build their programs," he said.

The program's expansion into French Immersion began in the 2023/24 school year. Josée Trudeau, Propel teacher at Collège Béliveau, said launching the program came with challenges but the program seems to be catching on.

"It was a bit tough to get momentum. I found it hard to sell the program at the start because I didn't have the hard materials to show the kids," she said. "We started with four students our first year. This year, we gained another two. But now next year, there has been a huge increase in interest, and our school is able to offer it both semesters."

Trudeau said Collège Béliveau expects to welcome about 20 students into the program next year.

At CJS, Propel teacher Ben Albrecht said the program began with 12 students and has maintained steady enrolment. "It was hard to sort of explain to them exactly what it was going to be," he said. "But feedback has been overwhelmingly positive."

Students in Propel engage in real-world learning through self-directed projects that span a wide range of interests—from robotics and music production to architecture and entrepreneurship. "We had a student try and start a juice company," said Albrecht. "It was pretty neat."

The program emphasizes process over product, encouraging students to explore, iterate, and reflect. "Fail forward," said Albrecht, describing a core philosophy of the program.



ENCE

"Even if they aren't able to complete what it is they're trying to do, nothing that they're doing is a waste of time."

Hansen echoed that sentiment. "This is about growth and not about having one big, shiny thing at the end," he said. "It's been really nice keeping up with students over the years and seeing how many of them have gone into the fields that they've been studying in Propel."

Trudeau noted that beyond academics, the program fosters strong relationships. "A big draw was the community and just the way that they were able to build these super strong bonds and relationships with their fellow classmates and myself," she said.

The Propel Program was originally developed by a design team led by Irene Nordheim. Hansen and co-founder Matt Patrician launched the program in 2015 and were later recognized with the Premier's Award for Excellence in Education for their contributions.

Looking ahead, both Trudeau and Albrecht hope to see the program continue to grow. "I'm hoping to maintain that momentum," said Trudeau. "The students are on board, the parents are in—they see the value."

Albrecht added that he's open to mentoring others around the division, should they look to bring the program to their schools. "I am more than willing to do what Patrick has done for Josée and myself," he said.

Trudeau expressed gratitude for the division's support. "I'm grateful and privileged to be included in this kind of opportunity," she said. "It is valuable to also offer Propel in French Immersion schools, so that those students can continue learning in French."



## ARCHWOOD SCHOOL ENHANCES MUSIC PROGRAM WITH MODERN INSTRUMENTS

Archwood School in the Louis Riel School Division hit a high note in music education with the introduction of a new pre-band program. Led by music teacher Stephanie Superle, the program uses modern plastic instruments that mimic traditional flutes and clarinets, providing young students with an engaging and accessible entry into the world of music.

Stephanie Superle, who joined the division two years ago, has a background as a flute player.

Recognizing the potential of these new instruments, Stephanie advocated for their adoption at Archwood School. "I've been using the flutes for over 10 years. So, I knew their potential," she said. "Now with instruments like this, we can start so much younger."

The program has changed the music curriculum for grades three to six, offering students the opportunity to learn on these innovative flutes and clarinets. Previously, students had limited access to wind instruments, often starting with recorders or percussion. Now, every student in these grades has the chance to develop their musical skills with these modern tools.

The response from students has been overwhelmingly positive. "The day that I told them we have our instruments, there were screaming and cheers," Stephanie said.

And by the second-to-last day of school students' enthusiasm had only grown. Grade six student Lexie said, "I love the clarinet very much!"



Another grade six student, Elsie, said she played both the flute and clarinet and said she enjoyed the challenge of learning the instruments. "Once you get to know how to play them, it's easier and it's fun."

Of course, it always helps to have a teacher like Stephanie leading the way.

"Ms. Superle is a really good teacher," said grade six student Tolu. "She explained everything to us very well."

"She is a very amazing teacher," said grade four student Angel. "If we're squeaky, she just says it's okay and start over again. She makes music fun and easy to learn."

Superle's vision for the future includes expanding the program to younger grades and incorporating additional instruments, such as a euphonium-like brass instrument. "My dream is to have bands start in grade five. Because they can. It's not just that they're older, but their bodies can hold instruments. In terms of size, body wise, a grade one student couldn't hold a trumpet. But they could hold one of these."

The pre-band program at Archwood School is a shining example of how innovative teaching methods and modern tools can inspire and engage young learners. We look forward to seeing its continued growth and impact on students' musical journeys, and grade six student Kailynn hopes to see that growth, too: "Schools around the world should have the opportunity to play these instruments!"



## INVESTING IN ALLITERACY

This past school year, the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) made a significant and strategic investment in exploring artificial intelligence (AI) in education. From classroom pilots to leadership staff learning, LRSD has taken intentional steps to ensure staff and students can engage with this powerful technology in safe, ethical, and meaningful ways.

#### Why AI? Why Now?

The emergence of generative AI—technologies like ChatGPT, DALL·E, and HeyGen—has shifted the landscape of learning and working. These tools can write, code, generate images, analyze data, and support communication in multiple languages. As AI tools become increasingly integrated into daily life, education systems must adapt to prepare students for a future that is already unfolding.

In LRSD, this meant asking: How can we teach students to critically engage with AI? How do we ensure staff feel confident and competent in navigating AI platforms? How can we model ethical and responsible use of these tools while maintaining the integrity of learning?

#### **A Learning Division**

In response to these questions, LRSD partnered with Dell Technologies. Through this partnership, LRSD's leadership team engaged in a day of capacity-building and learning.

These leaders learned practical frameworks such as RACE (Role, Action, Context, Execute), EDIT (Evaluate, Determine, Identify bias, Transform), and PREPARE (Prompt, Role, Explicit, Parameters, Ask, Rate, Emotion), all designed to help students and staff approach AI with clarity, purpose, and critical thinking. These sessions reinforced that while AI can generate content, human judgement, empathy, and creativity are still essential.

During the staff learning, Brad Fallis, Teacher-Librarian at Darwin and Victor H.L. Wyatt Schools, and Matt Stelmack, Teacher at Nelson McIntyre Collegiate (NMC), shared their experiences using AI in the classroom.

In Grade 7 and 8 classrooms at Darwin School, Brad collaborated with classroom teachers to explore the ethical implications of Al.

"The main takeaway I wanted students to leave with is that AI isn't inherently bad—they shouldn't be scared of it or told to avoid it altogether," said Brad. "It's about how they use it and what they are using it for. They need to be thoughtful and intentional."

Students engaged in a research project using Copilot and ChatGPT to compare search results, analyze information quality, and examine bias.

"We found that while AI gave students quick and readable access to information, it raised questions about trustworthiness and true sources," Brad explained. One challenge was that while the staff version of Copilot included citations, students couldn't always access those, leading to further investigation.

Brad emphasized that AI shouldn't be used to do the work for students, but can serve as a powerful assistant. Students experimented with AI in four ways: generating text, serving as research and study assistants, and summarizing complex material.

"We focused on writing strong prompts and modifying them to improve what Copilot would give back," Brad said.

These AI explorations were tied to earlier digital citizenship lessons, which included learning how to analyze media messages and distinguish between real and fake content. Teachers involved in the project appreciated the collaborative approach and recognized the value of teaching responsible AI use from the outset.

In his classroom, Matt integrates AI tools to support creativity, equity, and student engagement.

"We integrate AI to help students brainstorm ideas, generate writing prompts, receive personalized feedback, and revise their work more independently," said Matt.

Using AI has allowed NMC students differentiated learning by offering reading support, summarization tools, and alternative formats like audio or visual explanations.

"We hope to model responsible AI use by discussing digital citizenship and ethical considerations, ensuring students see AI as a learning partner, rather than a shortcut," said Matt.

Through guided exploration, students at NMC are developing real-world skills—like critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving—while building confidence in using AI as a personalized learning tool.

Al is not replacing teaching—but reimagining it. The leadership team experimented with generative Al as a thinking partner: for brainstorming, planning, giving feedback, and creating engaging learning experiences. A central message was emphasized throughout: "The better the prompt, the better the response."

This emphasis on prompting as a literacy skill mirrors what we teach students in traditional research: ask better questions, evaluate your sources, and refine your ideas. AI, when used responsibly, becomes another lens through which to view and deepen learning.

### Real-World Skills for an Al-Infused Future

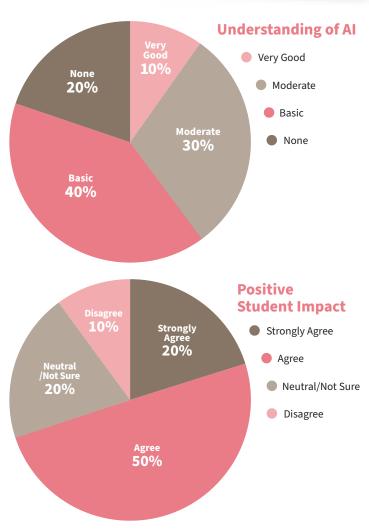
Research from Dell Technologies suggests that 85 per cent of the jobs that will exist in 2030 haven't been invented yet. The most valued skills will include contextual intelligence, in-themoment learning, and automation literacy. LRSD's investment in AI learning this year aligns with this reality.

#### **Looking Ahead**

As we look to the future, LRSD will continue its exploration of AI through professional learning, curriculum development, and system-level planning. Key focus areas will include:

- Developing AI literacy benchmarks for students and staff;
- Co-creating guidelines for AI use in classrooms in the fall that protect privacy and promote integrity;
- Continuing partnerships with national organizations and local post-secondary institutions to align with emerging research and practice.





Above all, LRSD remains committed to its vision of thriving learners and flourishing communities. This year's investment in AI was not about chasing trends—it was about anchoring future readiness in curiosity, collaboration, and care.



# International DAY of PINK

**Event Inspires LRSD Community** 

On April 7, the Louis Riel School Division commemorated the International Day of Pink, a day dedicated to standing against discrimination and fostering inclusion, with an event at Dakota Collegiate.



The event kicked off with words and a land acknowledgement from the Honourable Anita Neville, Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba. She recognized the 35th anniversary of the term Two Spirit, the tenth anniversary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report, and the fifth anniversary of the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People.

Speaker Todd Ross, a survivor of the LGBT Purge in Canada during the 1980s and -90s, then detailed his time in military and the challenges he faced as a 2SLGBTQIA+ person — challenges that culminated in a military police investigation that led to his discharge. He delivered a powerful presentation on his personal journey and the broader historical context of discrimination faced by 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals in the military, as well as highlighting his ongoing work to address historical injustices 2SLGBTQIA+ people in the military have faced.

The event also featured introductions from Day of Pink volunteers from Air Canada and Scotiabank who spoke about the importance of solidarity and allyship in creating inclusive environments. David Zyla, representing Scotiabank, shared a little of his personal story, encouraging students to embrace their authentic selves and pursue their dreams.

GSA student leader Gracie helped close out the event with a speech, including a heartfelt thank you to Todd for his work and candor, and with the presentation of gifts to all presenters.

"These events are always about representation," said Benson Shapiro, Dakota Collegiate student services teacher who helped organize the event. "It's about providing visible reference for kids to understand where their lives could go, and why they have the freedom to come out."

Assistant Superintendent Darcy Cormack said events like this are critical to creating an inclusive school community.



"Celebrating the Day of Pink is critical for supporting individuals, as these events foster a sense of belonging and community. They empower individuals to embrace their identities in a safe and inclusive way, allow for representation and the space for advocacy for equality and acceptance."

Darcy Cormack - Assistant Superintendent

The International Day of Pink is a powerful and inspiring day that celebrates diversity and promotes inclusion. It reminds us of the importance of solidarity and allyship. Louis Riel School Division would like to thank all the speakers who took the time to make this important event a reality, as well as the staff and students who attended.

## STUDENT-LED NIGHT MARKET CELEBRATES BLACK HISTORY



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What started as a brainstorming session to mark Black History Month at Collège Jeanne-Sauvé (CJS) quickly transformed into a vibrant, student-led night market that celebrated Black labour and entrepreneurship.

Inspired by the theme "Black Labour," students wanted to do more than host typical school events.

"We thought, why not support local Black-owned businesses in our community?" explained Kataali Stoller, a Grade 11 student at CJS. "And from there, the night market idea was born."

The planning process started as early as November. Supported by teacher Carolyne Marchildon and Educational Assistant Rhonda Timmerman, the vision began to take shape. The goal was to organize an evening event that would spotlight Blackowned businesses and artisans in Winnipeg, foster a deeper understanding of Black labour and entrepreneurship, and invite the entire school community to engage and connect.

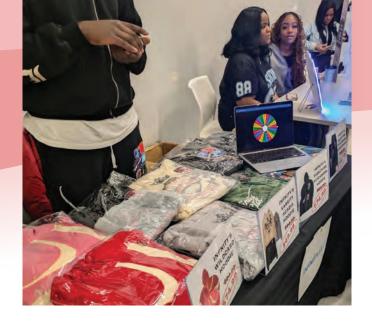
"We reached out to vendors, promoted the event, created posters and social media posts, and coordinated logistics," said Kathryn Sacher, a Grade 11 student at CJS. "It was a lot of work over several months, but every step brought us closer to seeing it come to life."

The night of the event exceeded everyone's expectations.

Vendors set up tables featuring a wide range of products, from handmade items to custom clothing. Guests mingled, browsed, and chatted with entrepreneurs. The buzz in the building was undeniable.

Two special guests—Peg City Lovely (Natalie Bell), a local influencer, and the chair of Black History Manitoba (Nadia Thompson)—joined the event and spent time speaking with students.

"That moment was surreal," said Kataali. "We were just standing there talking with them, and it hit me—we actually did this."



Carolyne witnessed the surprise of one vendor at the evening's success. "He was a family friend of one of our students and had agreed to come mostly for the exposure. He figured he might sell one or two sweaters, but by the end of the night, he'd sold over 15 and had to run back to his car for more stock. He was stunned. And so grateful."

That sense of appreciation from vendors was echoed by many. "I remember helping them pack up, and so many of them kept thanking us," said Edom Getachew, a Grade 12 student at CJS. "Some said they couldn't believe high school students had pulled this off. Others asked us to make sure we emailed them next year. It made me feel proud—not just of the event, but of what it meant to people."

Carolyne also noticed that the night brought more than economic benefits—it brought people together. "There was this overwhelming feeling of community and belonging. Students, parents, teachers—everyone was smiling, everyone was engaged. It reminded me that just showing up matters."

Rhonda shared a meaningful moment when she noticed some younger students in attendance. "There were some Grade 9s there—students who are still new to our school and maybe not always super involved. Seeing them come out to support, to be part of it—that stood out to me. That sense of inclusion and community is what we're always hoping to create in schools."

Kathryn is optimistic but realistic about this becoming an annual event. "We'd love to do it again, but we also have to be mindful of everything else happening during the year. Other events didn't receive as much attention due to the market. So, we'll need to see how everything lines up—but it's something we want to build on."

When asked what advice they would give to students in other schools considering a similar project, the trio didn't hesitate to respond.

"Start early," said Kataali. "You never know how much time you'll need. We were lucky to have started in November, but we still had a lot to do."

"Find people who align with your values," added Kathryn. "Our team worked so well together because we shared the same work ethic and goals."

Edom agreed. "It made decision-making easier. If we hadn't been so like-minded, I think planning would have been a lot harder. The three of us leaned on each other to make it all happen—and that trust and shared motivation made all the difference."

In every sense, the night market was about honouring Black excellence—not just in history, but in the present. And it was about community—building it, celebrating it, and feeling proud to be part of it. It wasn't just a night market. It was a movement.





# GENERO

# THE FIRST YEAR OF FULL-DAY, EVERY-DAY KINDERGARTEN

In September 2024, something big happened for some of the littlest learners in the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD). For the first time ever, Kindergarten became a full-day, everyday adventure across the entire division.

Gone were the half-days that flew by in the blink of an eye. In their place? Full days filled with stories, songs, playing, discovery, and learning.

As we wrap up the first year of universal Full-Day, Every-Day Kindergarten (FDK), we're celebrating the milestones, listening to feedback, and continuing to build a program that supports every child, every day.

#### **A Full Day of Possibility**

Why move to FDK? Research — and common sense — tells us that young children thrive when they have more time to explore, play, and connect. Half-days can feel rushed. With full days there's more room for deeper learning, longer play periods, and stronger relationships.

And our Kindergarten teachers were ready to make the most of it.

#### **Families Give It a Gold Star**

A big question at the start of the year was, "How will kids adjust to such a long day?" The answer: beautifully.

In fact, 73 per cent of families stated that their child had "adjusted quickly with no issues," while another 20 per cent reported that it "took some time but is now comfortable." Teachers agreed — 70 per cent said, "most students adjusted within the first couple of months," while 28 per cent reported that "most students adjusted by mid-way through the school year."

The transition was especially smooth for kids who had been in full-day daycare, but even those new to full days found their rhythm. Once they did? The growth was undeniable.

In a survey of over 370 parents and guardians, 98 per cent said they saw "some" or "much" growth in their child's academic, emotional, social, and physical development. Many mentioned that their kids were more independent, more talkative, and even more fluent in French.

#### **More Time, Less Stress** (for Parents, Too!)

FDK didn't just help students — it helped families, too. Sixty-eight per cent (254) of families said FDK made their daily routine easier. Instead of juggling mid-day pickups or patching together childcare, families could count on a consistent school day that is lined up with work schedules.

Of course, it is not one-size-fits-all. A few families said the longer days were tiring for their child, or that they missed having more unstructured time.

#### Teachers: Inspired, But Also Tired

While educators saw many positives, they didn't shy away from sharing where things could improve. Many teachers described FDK as rewarding but intense — especially in classrooms with 20+ students and a wide range of needs.

Teachers spoke about seeing more students come into Kindergarten with complex needs, including speech delays, emotional regulation challenges, and limited prior school experience. They expressed a strong need for additional supports, especially Educational Assistants (EAs) during the busiest times of day.

#### **Building on a Bright Beginning**

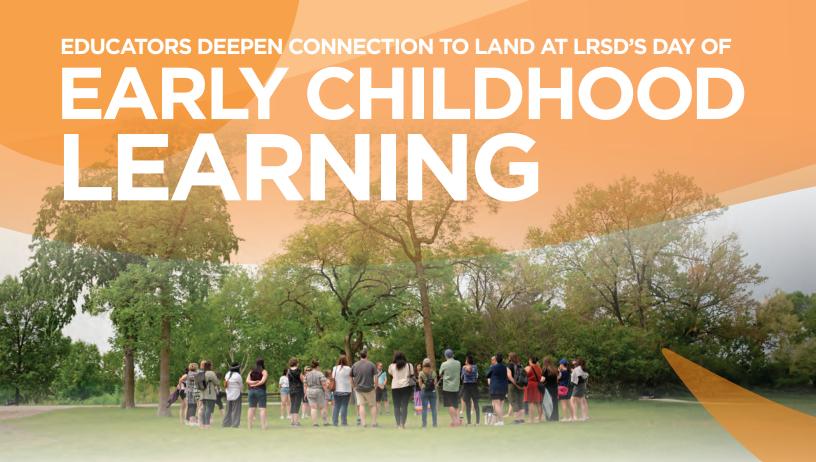
The first year of Full-Day, Every-Day Kindergarten laid a strong foundation — and the feedback we received will help shape the future of the program. A Power BI report summarizing the feedback is available here: https://lrsd.link/DataHub.

The introduction of FDK across LRSD is more than just adding hours to the day. It's about giving kids the time and space they need to thrive — academically, socially, emotionally, and creatively.

It's about honouring the wonder of early childhood and believing that the first steps in a child's educational journey deserve just as much care and attention as any other milestone.

As we look to the future, we do so with joy, curiosity, and an unshakable belief in our youngest learners — who, after one full year of FDK, have proven just how much they can accomplish when given the time to shine.





More than 200 early childhood educators, school staff, and community partners gathered on May 29, 2025, for A Day of Early Childhood Learning Together 2025, a professional development event hosted by the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) with a focus on Indigenous land-based education.

Held across St. Vital Park and the Legacy Centre at the Norberry Board Office, the day-long event was organized by LRSD's School and Classroom Support Team and featured immersive outdoor sessions designed to help educators build personal relationships with the land before bringing those teachings into their classrooms, aligning with Strategic Action 4.5 in LRSD's Multi-Year Strategic Plan 2023-2027.

Participants engaged in four rotating workshops, including Relational Witnessing, Learning with the Land: Interconnectedness and Relationships, Outdoor Learning: Irreplaceable Benefits and Experiences, and Children as Teachers: Practical Co-Learning on the Land. The sessions emphasized interconnectedness, reflection, and the practical application of land-based learning in early childhood settings.

Kelsey Lenaghan, LRSD's Divisional Vice-Principal of Indigenous Education, opened the day with a keynote on cultural understandings and transformation. "The day was beautiful!

It was really nice to spend time with learners to unpack what land-based education is and what it is not," she said. "Before people start to implement land-based learning with students, it's important for them to work on building their own relationships with the land first."

The event drew a diverse group of attendees, including kindergarten teachers, childcare providers, family centre staff, and members of Manitoba Education & Early Childhood Learning. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many describing the experience as grounding, inspiring, and transformative.

"This was one of the most meaningful experiences I've had within the division," said one school clinician. "It deepened my love and appreciation for the land."

Another clinician highlighted the inclusive impact of the sessions: "I really love the fact that we are looking at land-based learning for all our students, in particular our students with complex needs. The outdoors is such a sensory-rich environment and can be extremely therapeutic."

A kindergarten teacher praised the event's alignment with longterm educational goals: "It was fantastic to attend a divisional PD that was purposeful in moving us along this path as educators."

Others reflected on the emotional and spiritual resonance of the day. "What an absolutely wonderful day!

So organized and soul-soothing," said the Children's Centre executive director. "Tonight... the sun was an amazing orange glow... I thanked it for its power to keep life alive, for warming my soul and for adding such beauty to the end of my magnificent day."

One participant from the Early Learning and Childcare Division shared how the event resonated personally: "I was able to take away learning that impacted my own Métis culture... I also loved all the resources and articles you shared, as well as the work your librarians put into organizing the books."

Divisional Vice-Principal Tricia Bailey Sauvé expressed gratitude for the collaborative spirit of the day.

"I was so grateful for so many things. For the team, for the people that came, for how things really came together really well."

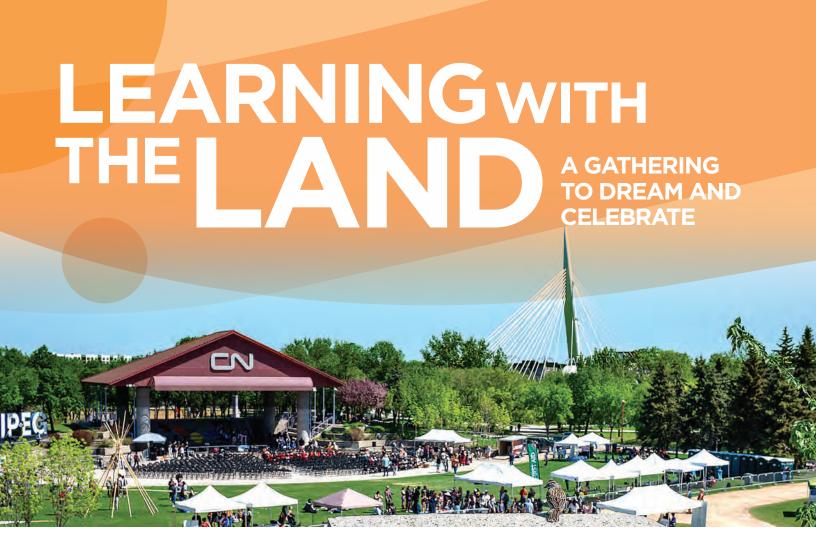
As LRSD continues to integrate Indigenous ways of knowing into its educational practices, events like this one underscore the division's commitment to fostering meaningful, inclusive, and culturally responsive learning environments.











Beneath a bright blue sky, under a glaring gold sun, on growing green grass, where the rivers meet — students, educators, and community members came together on Thursday, May 22, 2025, at The Forks for the inaugural Learning with the Land: A Gathering to Celebrate and Dream.

This was no ordinary school day in the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD)—it was a living classroom and a celebration of Indigenous land-based learning and a dedication to sustainable development goals.

Approximately 780 students and staff gathered at the CN Stage at The Forks for the day of land-based learning. They were joined by a handful of community partners running the workshops alongside LRSD staff.

The day's hosts kicked off the day with energy! Southern Chiefs' Organization Youth Chief and Dakota Collegiate student Lacy Bird (centre) joined Nokomis Bineshii (right, red dress, two-feet tall), meaning Grandmother Bird in Ojibwe, and Mooshom Píyesís (left, blue jeans, also two-feet tall), meaning Grandfather Bird in Cree.

Rose Bird and Véronique Reynolds were kind enough to give Nokomis and Mooshom helping hands throughout the day.

From the Louis Riel School Division's Indigenous Council of Grandmothers and Grandfathers, Chickadee Richards (Benais Quimiwin Ikwe, Thunder Rain Woman) graced students with opening words of wisdom.

Throughout the day, students rotated through a wide range of hands-on workshops that explored themes of cultural identity, environmental stewardship, and global citizenship. From soapstone carving and beadwork to storytelling, language revitalization, and SDG-focused games, each session offered students a chance to engage deeply with the land, reflect on sustainability, and learn from diverse knowledge systems. Activities like "Journey of a Seed," "Bioaccumulation Dice," and "Reducing Food Waste" helped connect local actions to global goals in creative and meaningful ways.

There were many opportunities to learn, but it wasn't a passive learning. Students got their hands dirty, joined in activities, and even had plentiful chances to sign up to do and learn more after the day was done.





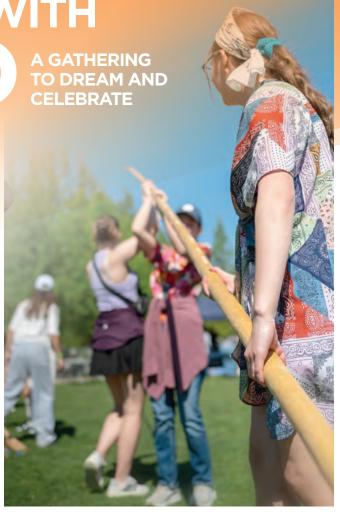
And the importance of involving the whole school community in "learning and teaching about the United Nations'
Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations
Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, with an emphasis on Indigenous worldviews and land-based education" (Strategic Action 4.5) was never lost from view.

Around noon, students and staff took a break to eat lunch and were treated to wonderful performances from LRSD students.

Dancers from Dakota Collegiate put on a beautiful display, as did hoop dancers and drummers from Lavallee School.

After lunch, students had the chance to explore The Forks in small groups, revisiting favorite stations and soaking in the vibrant atmosphere of the day. Many made their way to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights to experience the Upstander Showcase, where powerful student-created exhibits from LRSD highlighted injustice and the opportunity to create change.

As the event came to a close, we were reminded that none of this would have been possible without the dedication and spirit of our entire community. A heartfelt thank you goes out to the students, staff, volunteers, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community partners—each of you played an invaluable role in making Learning with the Land a day to remember.











# REMEMBERING THOSE WE'VE LOST

This year, we pause to remember the lives of cherished members of our community who passed away. Their contributions, spirit, and dedication continue to resonate in our hearts and work.

## In Memory of **Darlene Gerrior**

Darlene was a former teacher and student services coordinator. She was a valued member of our Board of Trustees and colleague. Darlene was committed to quality education for all students, promoting dialogue, fiscal responsibility, parental collaboration, and student focus. She will be greatly missed.

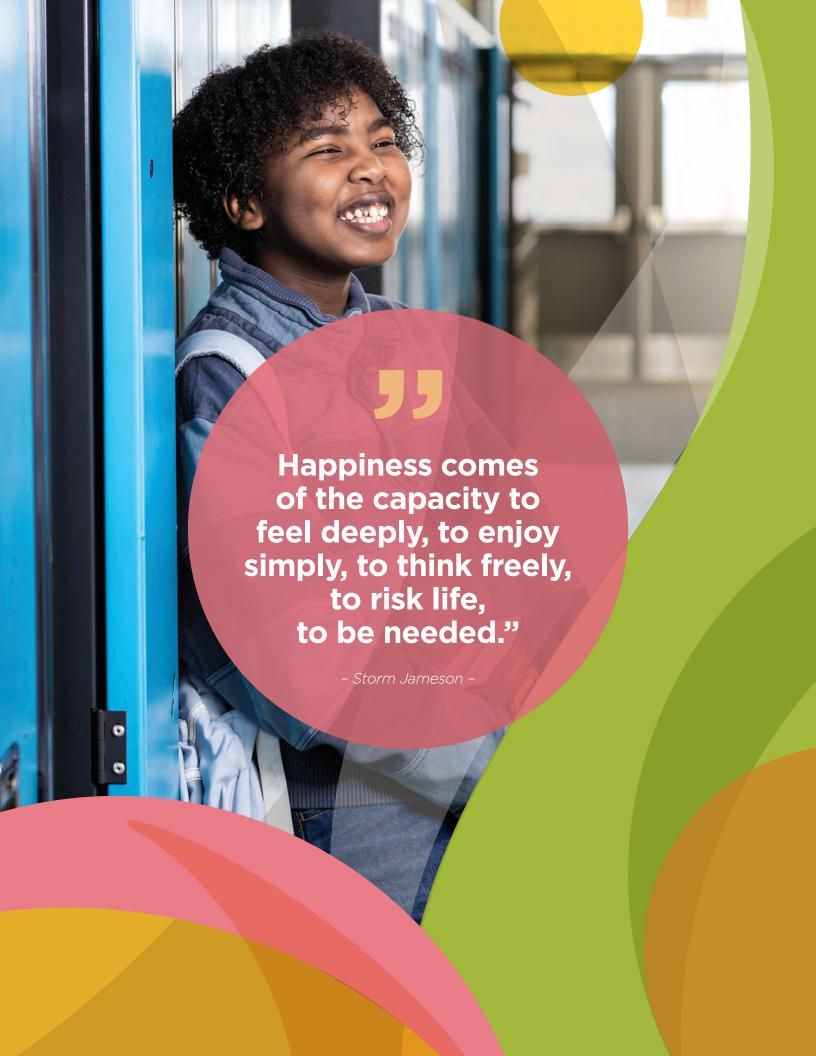
### In Memory of Hilda Kentiban

Hilda was our divisional Knowledge Keeper—a guiding light for our schools, students, and community, offering wisdom, teachings, and a spirit of connection that enriched us all. Through her stories, ceremonies, and unwavering commitment to children and families, Hilda helped foster understanding, respect, and reconciliation. She always led with kindness and love.





Though they are no longer with us, their memory lives on in the work we do and the lives they touched. We honour them with gratitude and carry their spirit forward.





## LOUIS RIEL

SCHOOL DIVISION

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