



DIVISION SCOLAIRE

LOUIS RIEL

SCHOOL DIVISION



2025 | 2026
ANNUAL REPORT

LRSD.NET

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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

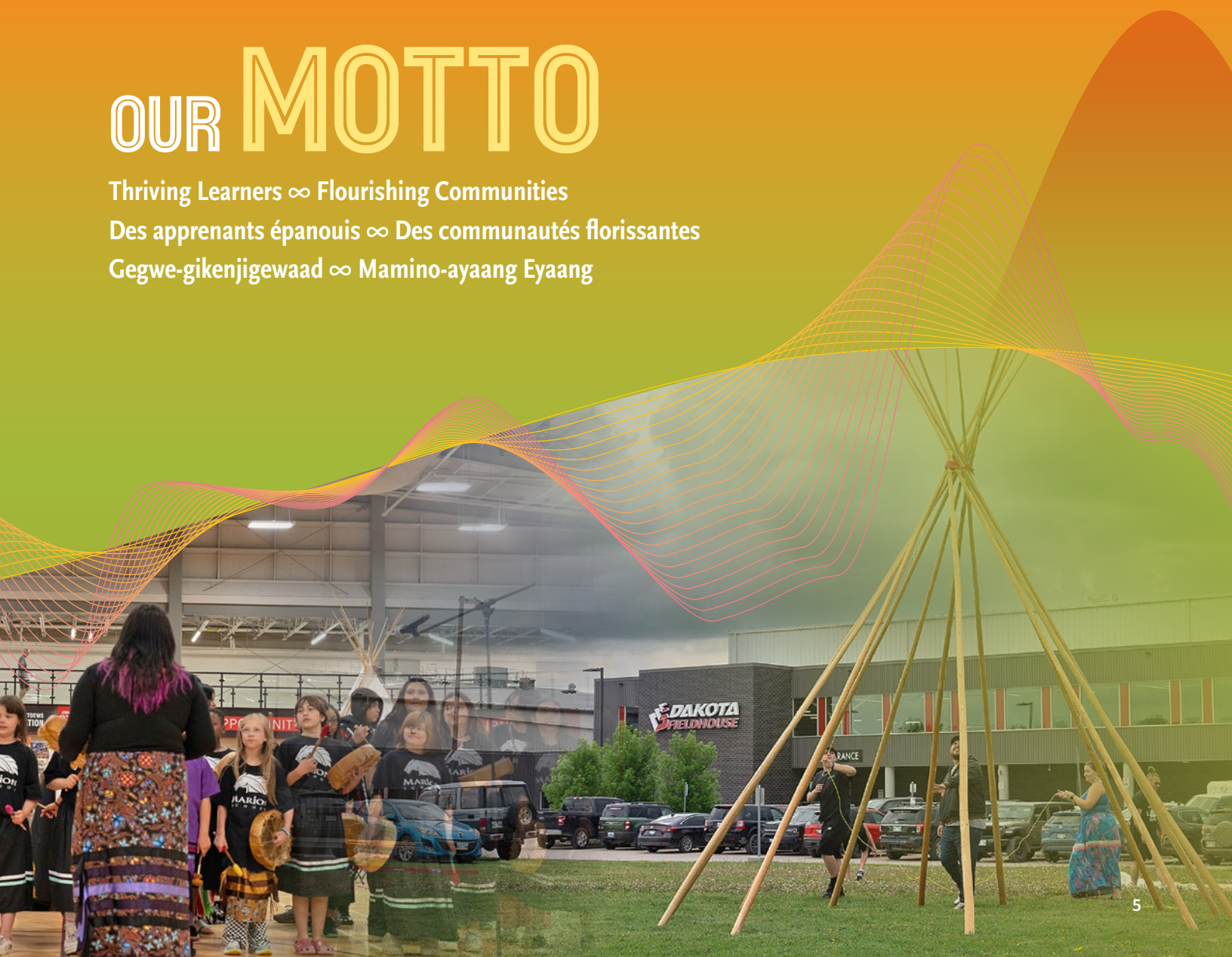
Our Mission is to provide a safe, inclusive, and engaging environment, where personal and collective learning are valued, and each one of us reaches our full potential.

OUR MOTTO

Thriving Learners ∞ Flourishing Communities

Des apprenants épanouis ∞ Des communautés florissantes

Gegwe-gikenjigewaad ∞ Mamino-ayaang Eyaang



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

In the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD), we refuse to be content with the status quo. The powerful, collective voices of our students, staff, and community drive us. We constantly look for opportunities to move forward, to be better, and to ensure public education stays relevant to our students and the world they will live in. LRSD students and staff are fierce advocates for social justice, equity, and their own health and wellness. At the same time, they uphold the highest standards of academic success.

An exceptional divisional leadership team nurtures this relentless pursuit of excellence. We recognize and celebrate the immense care, kindness, and selflessness of everyone who leads in LRSD. Our Senior Leadership Team works tirelessly to support the well-being and safety of our schools and buildings. This support provides a solid foundation for student and staff success.

This year, that legacy of dedication is well personified. We extend our deepest gratitude to our retiring Superintendent & CEO, Christian Michalik. Christian's 37 years of service to public education and his compassionate, visionary leadership have left an indelible mark on LRSD. He ensured we never stop taking bold steps.

We welcome Jackie Connell as our new Superintendent & CEO. Jackie is a trailblazer, a collaborator, and a learner. She has a reputation for being highly professional and dedicated to ensuring all programs, students, and staff thrive.

Guiding this vision is a school board that governs for success. We remain steadfast in our commitment to safe, equitable, and welcoming environments. None of this is possible without our deeply engaged community. Your partnership and active involvement ensure that we are not just a growing division but a flourishing one, always moving forward. Our Annual Report to Community is both a reflection of, and a testament, to what we have accomplished together.

"We cannot accept excuses like 'We're working hard,' 'It's complicated,' or 'You can't expect change overnight.' Yes, you can."

— Dr. Cindy Blackstock

Sandy Nemeth

Chair

Louis Riel School Division

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) 934-3047



Ian Walker
(204) 781-0438

WARD 2



Chris Sigurdson
(204) 230-4601



Irene Nordheim
Vice-Chair
(204) 290-3739

WARD 3



Peter Bjornson
(204) 232-1326



Ryan Palmquist
(204) 290-9976



Sandy Nemeth
Chair
(204) 230-6475

WARD 4



Chipalo Simunyola
(204) 688-7479



Pamela Kolochuk
(204) 297-5339

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Each year, the Annual Report to the Community gives us an opportunity to pause, look back, and share a small part of what makes this division remarkable. This year, I read it differently, with the particular gratitude of someone preparing to step away.

This year's report marks the third Annual Report to the Community in our current Multi-Year Strategic Plan cycle. Across these pages, you will see evidence of work that continues to deepen across our schools and workplaces: strengthening belonging, expanding opportunity, supporting learner confidence and independence, and nurturing generosity in the ways we care for one another and our communities.

The stories in this report are not the whole story of LRSD. They are glimpses. They reflect the daily efforts of students, staff, families, trustees, community partners, and leaders who continue to make our division a place where learners can thrive and communities can flourish. From new programming and student leadership to food security, language learning, inclusive supports, data governance, land-based learning, and workplace well-being, this report shows a division continuing to learn, adapt, and grow.

As I prepare to retire, I read this report with deep gratitude. I am grateful for the students who continue to remind us why this work matters. I am grateful for staff whose care, skill, and persistence bring our commitments to life every day, often in ways that are quiet, generous, and unseen. I am grateful to families and community partners for their trust, collaboration, and belief in public education. Working alongside the Board of Trustees as they navigate the governance of public

education, and alongside the Senior Leadership Team to navigate the complex work of leading a school division, has been one of the great privileges of this role.

I am also pleased to acknowledge Jackie Connell, who will become LRSD's next Superintendent & CEO. Jackie will bring a fresh perspective to LRSD, and I know she will be embraced by a community that cares deeply about its students, staff, families, and future. She is a thoughtful listener, a steady learner, and a relationship-centred leader. She will have the opportunity to learn with and from many generous colleagues and partners, and I trust she will carry the work forward with care, curiosity, and purpose.

The work of a school division is never finished. Strategic plans help us name our commitments, but it is people who bring them to life. For me, this report is both a reflection of what has been built together and a reminder that the most important work is always carried forward by others. It is an invitation to keep learning together, to keep listening carefully, and to keep building the conditions where every person in LRSD can belong, grow, contribute, and flourish.

With deep appreciation,

Christian Michalik

Superintendent & CEO

Louis Riel School Division

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM 2025-2026

The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) supports and works alongside more than **2,400 staff**, serving more than **17,600 learners** across **41 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
Louis Riel Arts & Technology Centre



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



Mia Guenther
Assistant Superintendent, Staff Services
Glenlawn Collegiate Family of Schools



Corey Kapilik
*Assistant Superintendent, Diversity,
Equity, Inclusion, & Anti-Racism Services*
Dakota Collegiate and
Nelson McIntyre Collegiate Family of Schools
René Deleurme Centre

LRSD BY THE NUMBERS



STUDENTS, SCHOOLS, & STAFF



 **17,642** total students*

 **41** Schools:

27 English **13** French Immersion **1** Technical & Vocational

 **2,451** total staff*

 **1,346** teachers
(includes principals and vice-principals)

 **1,105** non-teaching staff

*Numbers pulled on June 26, 2026

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.

13 Certificate Programs

257 Certificate Program Recipients

204 participants in work experience opportunities

96 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 **47,646** pounds of food to community and schools
- **1,084** cost-shared Fresh Food Boxes purchased by community members via **23** pick-up weeks.

Through the LRSD Zone Settlement program:

- More than **89** new client referrals received for settlement service via community partner organizations
- More than **484** clients participated in programs and information sessions (including English Conversation, Parenting, Sewing, and Youth Wellness Programs)
- The settlement team provided service in **10** languages
- **550** clients received settlement services, and the top source countries were:
 - Arabic-speaking countries, including Sudan, Syria, Iraq, as well as North African countries such as Morocco and Algeria
 - Nigeria
 - Eritrea and Ethiopia

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 2025-2026 school year, this included:

- **1,555** Comprehensive eye exams
- **355** Prescription eyeglasses
- **15** Mobile Vision Care Clinics (**14** schools + **1** community clinic)

Community Clinics:

- **1** Flu Vaccination clinic with a total of **86** vaccinations
- **1** Tax Filing clinic for adults
- **1** Dental Screening clinic

Indigenous Cultural Programming:

- **37** Beading & Breakfast sessions
- **11** Traditional Teaching sessions for caregivers
- **9** Full Moon Ceremonies
- **2** Medicine Picking Outings for caregivers and youth
 - **1** Medicine Bag Workshop
 - **1** Diamond Willow Workshop

Parent Mentorship Programming:

- **10**-week program, **13** adult participants volunteering in classrooms and receiving weekly professional development sessions, over **1,100** hours volunteered

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 2026, there were:

- **5** sites
- **392** children from **20** schools

RDC also hosted conversations to guide its work:

- **1** formal Community Conversations

In collaboration with the RDC Commissary Kitchen:

- Prepared and distributed **72** hampers for Ramadan



DOLLARS & CENTS

At a special meeting on Tuesday, March 10, the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) Board of Trustees approved an operating budget of **\$281,731,342** for the 2026–2027 school year, a 2.89 per cent increase over the previous year. This translates to a mill rate increase, for home and property owners, of 9.99 per cent.

A Snapshot of LRSD's 2026-27

\$281,731,342
BUDGET

85.9%
\$242,101,959
Salaries & Benefits

14.1%
\$39,629,383
Operating

WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM

42.03%
\$118,420,658
Provincial Government

1.52%
\$4,286,409
Other

0.82%
\$2,320,916
International Student Program

55.62%
\$156,703,359
Local Funding

HOW EACH DOLLAR IS SPENT*

3.49%
Divisional Administration

0.24%
Adult Learning Centres

9.11%
Operations and Maintenance

1.43%
Community Education and Services

3.86%
Instructional & Other Support Services

1.75%
Fiscal

2.62%
Transportation

23.10%
Student Support Services

0.20%
Capital

54.20%
Regular Instruction

The budget prioritizes core classroom support while maintaining essential system-wide services and investments in student learning and well-being. Cost reductions, deferrals, and efficiencies were used to arrive at a balanced budget that includes the elimination of the accumulated deficit.

“Our responsibility is to steward public dollars carefully while responding to growing student needs,” said Jamie Rudnicki, secretary-treasurer & chief financial officer. “This budget stabilizes LRSD’s financial position and ensures resources remain focused on classrooms and student supports, while we continue advocating for long-term solutions to infrastructure pressures.”

The approved budget incorporates substantial community feedback collected via LRSD’s Budget and Strategic Priorities Survey. Respondents consistently identified priorities including class size and composition, student support services, mental health and well-being, and issues related to aging infrastructure.

“This budget reflects the voices we heard from families, staff, students, and community members,” said Sandy Nemeth,

chair of the LRSD Board of Trustees. “The Board worked to balance affordability for taxpayers with the need to maintain safe, inclusive, and supportive learning environments for students. It is regrettable that for another year, we are deferring infrastructure improvements; however, classroom and student needs must come first.”

Budgetary decisions were implemented throughout all areas of the organization, with an emphasis on preserving classroom size and student support services. Trustees emphasized that inflation, increasing enrolment, years of austerity by previous governments, and binding contractual obligations are contributing to ongoing and increasing financial strain.

“Our community was clear: students need support, classrooms need stability, and schools need to be safe and welcoming places,” said Christian Michalik, superintendent & CEO.

“This budget reflects those priorities while continuing our commitments to equity, reconciliation, and student well-being, even in a challenging fiscal context.”

THE 2026-2027 BUDGET REFLECTS:



What our community told us matters most — class size, supports, mental health, safety, inclusion, and transparency.



Careful, student-centred decision-making that protects what happens in classrooms.



Realistic and responsible financial planning, even in a challenging funding environment.



Ensures reductions focus on non-classroom areas, to respond to calls for greater restraint in administrative budgets.



Long-term thinking, guided by LRSD’s values and commitment to every student’s success.

YEAR OVER YEAR BUDGET CHANGE

	2026-27	2025-26	Difference	Change
Wages & Benefits	242,101,959	228,471,396	13,630,563	5.97%
Operating	39,629,383	45,333,750	5,704,367	-12.58%
Total	281,731,342	273,805,146	7,926,196	2.89%
Projected Enrolment	17,570	17,793	-223	-1.08%

WHAT DOES THIS BUDGET MEAN FOR PROPERTY OWNERS?

Based on an average home in LRSD valued at:

\$423,300

Results in a property tax increase of:

9.99%

or **\$153.60** a year
(**\$12.80** a month or **\$0.42** a day)



TOTAL STAFF

2,401 FTE

1,152
Teachers



685
Educational Assistants



339
Non-Teaching Support Staff



78
Principals & Vice-Principals



68
School & Classroom Support Team
Includes Clinical, Instructional, and Indigenous Support Teams



58
Board Office Staff



9
Trustees





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.

Provincial Investments in 2025-2026

Island Lakes Community School (ILCS)

Phase Three: Relocation of École Van Belleghem Modular Classrooms to ILCS **\$581,623**

Shamrock School

Building Envelope Upgrade **\$8,740,818**

Local Investments in 2025-26

Archwood School

- Renovated the boys change room **\$42,652**
- Installed water bottle filling station **\$4,235**
- Installed new public address system **\$22,770**

Collège Béliveau

- Upgraded lighting in north wing **\$78,000**

Collège Jeanne-Sauvé

- Replaced library flooring **\$28,298**
- Painted interior to align colour scheme **\$18,856**

Darwin School

- Installed new wall in Room 8 and 9 **\$8,630**

Dr. D.W. Penner School

- Installed lockers **\$1,500**
- Refreshed offices with new flooring, paint, and electrical **\$25,899**

École Guyot

- Installed new public address system **\$22,000**

École Henri-Bergeron

- Replaced main entrance landing **\$14,859**
- Installed soundproofing panels in music room **\$6,880**
- Installed power and data for workstations in the student services area **\$2,500**
- Installed a guitar storage cabinet **\$7,115**
- Installed additional receptacles for student microwaves **\$3,932**
- Installed a cubicle office complete with power and data for the Teacher-Librarian **\$1,500**
- Installed new public address system **\$22,770**

École Howden

- Replaced windows on the north side of south hallway **\$53,832**

École Marie-Anne-Gaboury

- Installed new flooring in gymnasium **\$136,445**
- Replaced library flooring **\$18,123**
- Upgraded lighting in gymnasium **\$18,500**

École Provencher

- Installed bike cage **\$6,500**
- Installed magnetic door holders **\$7,039**
- Installed water bottle filling station **\$4,235**
- Installed air conditioning **\$792,703**

École St. Germain

- Installed bike cage **\$6,299**
- Installed water bottle filling station **\$4,619**

École Van Belleghem

- Gender-neutral washrooms **\$322,136**
- Replaced flooring **\$11,045**
- Repaired main entrance landing **\$5,207**

École Varennes

- Installed water bottle filling station **\$4,235**

Frontenac School

- Installed canopy outside modular classrooms **\$7,372**

- Repaired fracture in the wall between the existing and addition building **\$2,900**
- Painted exterior metal cladding and doors **\$33,684**
- Installed new eye wash station **\$4,692**

Glenlawn Collegiate

- Replaced flooring in Room 240 **\$24,993**
- Upgraded lighting in gymnasium **\$18,700**

Glenwood School

- Replaced windows in the west wing **\$58,724**

H.S. Paul School

- Installed water bottle filling stations **\$4,619**

Hastings School

- Replaced windows on the west side of the building **\$63,470**

Highbury School

- Repainted metal roof and overhang at entrance **\$101,346**

Island Lakes Community School

- Installed new eye wash station **\$4,262**

J.H. Bruns Collegiate

- Added 60 lockers to the south corridor **\$17,250**

Marion School

- Installed new wall on second floor **\$9,441**
- Renovated washrooms **\$175,348**

Nelson McIntyre Collegiate

- Replaced library flooring **\$14,648**
- Replaced flagpole **\$17,584**
- Installed water bottle filling station **\$4,602**

Niakwa Place School

- Replaced flooring **\$4,220**

Nordale School

- Refreshed staff room **\$40,323**

Sage Creek School

- Re-established makers studio and home ecology rooms **\$54,553**
- Reconfigured commons area back to original design **\$14,395**

Samuel Burland School

- Added doorway to room 18 from main hallway **\$5,895**
- Installed lockable cabinets along the south wall **\$14,645**

Shamrock School

- Removed berm on playground **\$1,500**
- Installed water bottle filling station **\$4,654**

Victor H.L. Wyatt School

- Replaced flooring **\$7,821**

Victor Mager School

- Installed barrier-free ramp **\$45,034**

Windsor School

- Replaced flooring **\$19,500**

All Schools

- Replaced ceiling tiles **\$30,000**

A SHOUTOUT TO STAFF & STUDENTS

With 41 schools and more than 17,600 students, there's a lot to celebrate in the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD). Here are just a few of the noteworthy highlights and achievements from the 2025-2026 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:

Talia Leitaio, Collège Béliveau

Delaney Boileau, Collège Jeanne-Sauvé

Hope Strong, Glenlawn Collegiate

Caleb Chow, Dakota Collegiate

Sarah Holmes, J.H. Bruns Collegiate

Veronika Madinova, Nelson McIntyre Collegiate

Richard Huynh, Windsor Park Collegiate

Division 1 Champs

Glenlawn Collegiate Institute's girls' hockey team made school history by winning its first-ever Division 1 championship in March 2026. After years of perseverance and multiple finals appearances, the Lions' victory reflected resilience, teamwork, and strong community support. The milestone win marked a proud moment for the Glenlawn community and highlighted the continued growth of girls' hockey across Winnipeg.



École Van Belleghem Tops “Name That Plow” Contest

Students in Mme Tugby's Late Immersion class at École Van Belleghem earned top honours in the City of Winnipeg's inaugural “Name That Plow” contest through creativity, collaboration, and community engagement. Working together to brainstorm and refine ideas, the class's winning entry “Brrrrr-ger Kings” was selected through a public vote and is now the official name of the City's sidewalk and pathway plow fleet.



Jules Lavallee Memorial Bursary

Rhianna Manningway-Crate and Jynx Houle, graduating students from Glenlawn and Windsor Park Collegiates, both received the Jules Lavallee Memorial Bursary at the 2026 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.

Lights, Camera, Climate Action

Students across the division demonstrated the power of voice and climate action in the Climate Change Connection Youth Video Challenge. In the province-wide Grade 5–8 category, LRSD students earned the top three honours, with École St. Germain placing first, followed by students from Glenwood School and École Varennes. This outstanding achievement reflects the division's strong commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

LRATC Alumni Shine on Olympic Curling Broadcast in Italy

LRSD alumni Graham Parsons, Johnathan Schneider, Zoe Krzuk, and Jamie Wiebe brought their hurry-hard mentality to the international stage this year, contributing to Olympic curling broadcasts at the Milan–Cortina 2026 Winter Games. Graduates of the Media and Broadcasting program at the Louis Riel Arts & Technology Centre, the alumni worked across key production roles, showcasing the strength of LRSD's career-focused education and the meaningful pathways it creates for students in arts and technology fields.



Mathematicians Rise to the Challenge

Students from Glenlawn Collegiate Institute earned an impressive range of awards at the 2025 Canada Lynx Mathematical Competition, Manitoba division, showcasing strong achievement across multiple grade levels. With top honours, including gold, silver, and bronze awards, Glenlawn students demonstrated dedication, growth, and a deep commitment to mathematical learning.



Students Strike a National Chord

Two guitar ensembles earned national recognition as finalists in the CBC Canadian Music Class Challenge, showcasing student talent and creative learning in action. Grade 7 students from École George-McDowell and Grade 10 students from Collège Jeanne-Sauvé were selected among the Top 10 in the Studio Production category, highlighting the impact of dedicated arts education, student collaboration, and innovative teaching practices across LRSD schools.

WPC Staff Go Viral with Creative Parody

A creative parody video created during spirit week by Windsor Park Collegiate staff inspired by Bad Bunny's Super Bowl performance captured widespread attention, reaching over one million views on Instagram. The video highlights the energy, creativity, and strong sense of community within the school.

2025 Susan Langley Earth Steward Teaching Award Runner-Up

Suzanne Simpson, Teacher-Librarian at École Varennes and École Provencher, brings climate action and outdoor learning to life through SDG-focused lessons that combine storytelling, discussion, and hands-on activities. A Master Gardener, Master Composter, and Forest School Practitioner, Suzanne shares her expertise with students and staff while leading Environment Clubs and supporting community gardens. In recognition of her work, she was named a runner-up for the 2025 Susan Langley Earth Steward Teaching Award, reflecting her deep commitment to environmental stewardship and education.

SHAPING THE FUTURE THROUGH A MULTI-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

A multi-year strategic plan is more than a document. At its best, it becomes a shared way of thinking, learning, deciding, and acting together.

In the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD), the Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) 2023–2027 has helped bring greater coherence to our work across schools and board office teams. It has provided a clear frame for our priorities while leaving room for the learning, adaptation, and local decision-making that strong public education requires.

This year marks the third Annual Report to the Community (ARC) in the current MYSP cycle. Over time, the work has continued to mature. What began as a plan has increasingly become a set of shared practices: gathering evidence, noticing patterns, asking better questions, learning from what is working, and naming what still needs attention.

That is the spirit behind the next iteration of our MYSP dashboard. **Scan the QR code** to see MYSP dashboard.

The dashboard is being redesigned to make progress easier to see, understand, and discuss. It organizes the 25 strategic actions across the four MYSP priorities — Belonging, Mastery, Independence, and Generosity — and helps identify where each action sits in its implementation journey. Some actions are emerging. Some are developing. Others are becoming more deeply embedded in practice.

This matters because meaningful system improvement is rarely linear. It requires honesty about where momentum is strong, where learning is still underway, and where more focused attention is needed.



The purpose of the dashboard is to support thoughtful public accountability, as well as to report activity. It helps us move beyond listing what has been done and toward a richer understanding of what we are learning together. It gives students, staff, families, trustees, and community members a clearer view of both progress and unfinished work.

That kind of transparency is important. Public confidence grows when we acknowledge the complexity of the work, demonstrate that we are paying attention, learn honestly and take shared responsibility for what comes next.

As we look ahead to the final year of the current MYSP cycle, this work will increasingly become a bridge: from implementation to reflection, from reflection to renewed engagement, and from renewed engagement to the next plan. In 2026–2027, LRSD will need to take stock again, as we did in 2023, by looking carefully at what has been accomplished, what still requires attention, and what new possibilities are emerging.

That process will need to be built in community, with community, and for community. It will require listening to students, families, staff, trustees, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, community partners, and the many people who help shape public education in LRSD.

It will also require a willingness to carry forward what is working, strengthen what remains unfinished, and imagine what the next chapter of our shared work should become.

This is also a moment of leadership transition.

“As my time as superintendent & CEO ends, I am grateful for the many people who have shaped this MYSP and brought it to life in schools, board office teams, and communities across the division. Its strength has always come from collective effort,” said Christian Michalik, superintendent & CEO. “As Jackie Connell begins her time as LRSD’s next superintendent & CEO, the year ahead will offer an important opportunity to listen, learn, build relationships, and take stock with the community. The next plan will not be created by one person, or from one perspective. It will need to emerge from the shared knowledge, hopes, questions, and commitments of the LRSD community.”

Plans set direction. What moves a school division forward is the daily commitment of people who show up, care deeply, and keep going.

The redesigned MYSP dashboard offers a broader view of that progress. It shows where each of our 25 strategic actions sits in its implementation journey, what is gaining momentum, and what still needs attention. It is an invitation to look closely, ask honest questions, and stay engaged in the work ahead.



BELONGING

A ROYAL WELCOME

Community Shows Up for WPC Football

Long before the first whistle, something special was already taking shape.

Staff across LRSD's Healthy Living department, Windsor Park Collegiate (WPC) and Collège Béliveau (CB) came together with a shared goal: bring football to Windsor Park and build something students could belong to. What followed was months of planning, uncertainty, and belief. The result was the first-ever WPC Royals football team.

For coach Brett Delisle-Boughen, it all came together quickly.

"It was great. It was stressful. It was very challenging," he said. "It's been a whirlwind, but it's been awesome."

After a call from principal Robbie Mager, the former Dakota Collegiate coach stepped into a new opportunity. In just a few months, a small group of interested students from WPC and CB turned into a full roster, ready to compete.

Getting there took real effort. Staff worked closely with leagues, partners, and provincial organizations to make it possible. The timeline, stretching from May to September, was tight.

"Cuckoo bananas," Mager said.

Still, they pushed forward.

At first, there was hesitation in the community. A football team at WPC was new. Unexpected. But as the season approached, momentum grew.

And when game day arrived, the community showed up.

The Royals' inaugural home opener drew a packed crowd of families, friends, and alumni. The stands were full. The energy was loud. It felt like something had been missing—and suddenly, it was there.

"To see that excitement... it was a packed house," said Mager. "That speaks volumes to what football truly means in this community."

On the field, the team was young. Many players were completely new to the game. There were challenges. There were mistakes. But there was also growth.

"They had to learn through repetition and errors," said Delisle-Boughen. "But every game, there were moments."

Those moments became more frequent.

A long touchdown off a perfectly timed route. A defensive breakout from a player who had never played before. An offensive line that, game by game, started to click.

Slowly, the game started to make sense.

But the biggest wins weren't on the scoreboard.

"Belonging is the first one," said Delisle-Boughen.

"Kids need to feel that they are part of something."

That sense of belonging showed up everywhere.

In the hallways, where players wore their jerseys with pride. In the high-fives from classmates. In the smiles before games.

"It's like they have something. They have a purpose," said Mager.

And football made space for everyone.

"It's such a body-inclusive sport," said Delisle-Boughen.

"Every type of student has a role. They all work together toward the same goal."

Looking ahead, that sense of purpose is only growing.

Next season, the Royals will move into full varsity competition, supported by a stronger and more experienced program. Returning players will bring a full year of game experience, stepping into leadership roles and helping guide newer teammates.

At the same time, new students continue to sign up, many of them exploring school athletics for the first time.

"We have a number of leaders now," said Delisle-Boughen.

"That's going to be a huge benefit for our team."

The coaching group is expanding as well, with a veteran varsity coach joining the program.

Preparation is also starting earlier. Camps and training opportunities throughout the summer will give players more time to learn, connect, and build confidence before the season begins.

To make the sport even more accessible to the LRSD community, WPC and neighbouring CB have created a formal partnership, allowing students at the French Immersion school to remain at their home school while still playing for the Royals.

On the field, expectations are growing. Confidence is building.

"We're coming out swinging," said Delisle-Boughen.

"We've got nothing to lose."

But the mission remains the same.

"We want to be competitive," he said, "but that's not the main priority. It's to build accountable, active members of our community."

And that is already happening.

"If you never take a chance, you never have a chance."



ADVANCING TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE WITH TCIS

At its core, the work of schools is about relationships.

In the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD), that understanding is guiding a division-wide effort to strengthen how staff connect with and support students, especially those who may be experiencing trauma or distress. Through the implementation of Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools (TCIS), schools are building a shared, compassionate approach to responding to students in ways that prioritize care, dignity, and belonging.

TCIS, developed by Cornell University, is grounded in a simple idea: behaviour is a form of communication. When students are overwhelmed, dysregulated, or struggling, their actions are often expressing a need. TCI helps staff pause, reflect, and respond with curiosity and empathy, asking not “What’s wrong?” but “What does this student need right now?”

Rather than relying on isolated strategies or one-time training, LRSD set out to build a common framework that could support every student, in every school, through a trauma-informed lens.

“We began this work around a shared goal among staff: figuring out how best to support students who have experienced trauma or who experience moments of distress during the school day,” said Mia Guenther, assistant superintendent of staff services. “We wanted an approach that was consistent across all schools, in the language we use, the strategies we use, and how we follow up.”

What followed has been a deliberate and collaborative journey. Divisional leaders and clinical staff first took part in intensive training, before building an internal network of 44 trainers made up of clinicians, student services teachers, and administrators. Together, they are supporting schools as this work takes root in classrooms, hallways, and everyday interactions.

For many staff, this work builds on their existing relationship-centred practice by deepening their ability to attune to students in moments of distress. It involves slowing down, noticing one’s own responses, and acting with intention. TCIS emphasizes the deliberate use of one’s presence as a key tool in supporting students—what it refers to as the “intentional use of self.”

Over the past year, school staff across LRSD have been engaging in learning together. By May 1, 2026, all educational assistants and student services teachers completed comprehensive three-day training, while school-based sessions have introduced TCIS principles to all staff who interact with students throughout the day.

“What’s exciting is that we now have a common approach and a common language to support all students,” said Lisa Tymchuk, clinical supervisor of developmental supports. “There is an emphasis on regulation, building relationships, and being proactive. No matter which school a student is in, the response is grounded in the same understanding.”

In practice, these shifts are often seen in small, everyday moments. Staff are taking time to anticipate student needs, and creating environments that support emotional safety. When a student experiences distress, the response is about connection, which helps the student regulate, recover, and return to learning with dignity.

This work is also reshaping how staff see themselves. There is a growing recognition that supporting students begins with understanding one’s own reactions, pausing, grounding, and choosing how to respond in a way that fosters trust.



“Staff are learning to ‘drop the rope,’” said Tymchuk. “They’re also learning how to better plan and anticipate for students, putting proactive strategies in place.” TCIS strengthens school culture by deepening understanding of student behaviour, building collaborative practices, and fostering relationships and connection.

As the work continues, LRSD is listening and learning alongside its schools, gathering feedback, developing resources, and strengthening supports to ensure this approach is sustainable. This includes a continued focus on how students transition back to learning following moments of distress, and how staff can support those transitions with care.

“We’re still in the middle of implementation,” said Guenther. “It’s about practice, reflection, and making sure schools have the support they need through trainers in schools and ongoing learning.”

Looking ahead, the vision is simple and ambitious: that adults in schools feel prepared to respond to students with confidence, care, and skill; that students experience a sense of safety in their daily interactions; and that relationships continue to support learning and well-being.

What is most important about this work is the culture being built alongside the strategies being learned. It is a culture where students feel seen, supported and understood, especially in the moments when they need it most.

“It’s not only about academic learning in school,” said Tymchuk.

“It’s about helping students build skills to respond to stressors in their lives and be able to carry those skills with them into other environments as they grow. That’s the kind of learning that stays with them.”





BUILDING HEALTHIER WORKPLACES TOGETHER

Across the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD), a growing focus on staff well-being is reshaping how schools support employees and students. In a time marked by increasing complexity in classrooms, workforce pressures, and rising mental health needs, the division is taking a thoughtful, proactive approach to strengthening workplace conditions and fostering supportive, connected school communities.

From Insight to Understanding

LRSD's current focus on workplace well-being began with a desire to better understand the experiences of staff across the division. Following the COVID-19 pandemic and alongside broader provincial and national concerns about employee mental health, the division engaged in the Guarding Minds at Work survey in February 2024.

This research-based, confidential survey provided a starting point, offering a valuable snapshot of staff experiences across LRSD.

"The findings highlighted many areas of strength within LRSD, including strong relationships, high levels of engagement, pride in the division, and a commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion," said Roza Gray, well-being consultant. "At the same time, the data pointed to an important opportunity for growth: strengthening systemic approaches to well-being."

Since that time, the division has continued to build its understanding, recognizing that staff experiences and needs continue to evolve.

A Shift in How Well-being is Understood

This work represents a shift from traditional approaches to workplace wellness.

Historically, workplace wellness has often focused on individual strategies, encouraging staff to access services such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) or to engage in personal wellness strategies. While important, this approach alone does not fully address the factors that shape how people experience their work.

In LRSD, well-being is starting to be understood as something influenced by multiple interconnected layers:

- Individual experiences and circumstances
- The immediate work environment within schools
- Broader organizational and system factors

As a result, the division has focused its efforts on strengthening the day-to-day experiences of staff within schools, where the greatest opportunity for impact exists.

Turning Data into Action in Schools

This year, schools were invited to participate in a collaborative process to explore staff well-being, with 17 schools taking part. In partnership with divisional staff, principals supported conversations with their teams to reflect on their experiences and identify what was most important to them now.

"Rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach, we supported schools in curating their well-being work based on their specific context, priorities, and staff feedback," said Gray.

Guiding the work were several key principles, including acknowledging current realities, engaging staff in planning, and focusing on system-level change.

What the Work Looked Like in Schools

Across participating schools, the work was shaped by local priorities, but shared common elements grounded in reflection, collaboration, and relationship-building.

In some schools, staff participated in strengths-based team activities, exploring how individual strengths contribute to team dynamics and how differences can sometimes create both energy and tension. These conversations helped build understanding and opened the door to more collaboration.

Other schools chose to revisit and build on the original Guarding Minds data. Through facilitated sessions, staff shared their current perspectives, helping to determine what remained relevant and what had shifted. This feedback was analyzed and returned to school leadership to inform planning for the future.

In all cases, the process emphasized creating space for honest dialogue, reflection, and collective problem-solving.

"We wanted school leaders to understand that well-being is not an initiative, but it's embedded in everything we do, in all aspects of school planning and daily practice," said Shauna Streich, disability case manager with The Manitoba Teachers' Society.

What Does a Mentally Healthy Workplace Look Like?

When we talk about a healthy workplace, these 13 factors have been shown to impact the mental well-being of individuals in the workplace. Together, they describe what a healthy workplace looks like, and they underpin Canada's national standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace.



The Role of Leadership

School leaders play a central role in shaping the conditions that support staff well-being. Through this process, many leaders have gained a deeper understanding of how their actions influence workplace culture.

Rather than viewing well-being as something separate from their work, leaders are increasingly integrating it into school planning and daily practice. This includes considering how decisions, structures, and interactions contribute to a sense of belonging, purpose, and support among staff.

This work has reinforced that leadership for well-being involves guiding collective efforts that strengthen the entire school community.

Learning, Challenges, and Growth

Supporting staff well-being at a system level is complex work. It requires time, ongoing reflection, and a willingness to navigate diverse perspectives and constraints.

Participants in this work have acknowledged that it is both challenging and energy-intensive, particularly within the realities of busy school environments and existing structures.

Early Signs of Impact

While this work is ongoing, several early indicators of impact are beginning to emerge.

Many participating schools are incorporating well-being into their planning for the upcoming school year, identifying specific goals and strategies to strengthen staff experiences. Across the division, there is also growing awareness of the importance of workplace culture and the role it plays in supporting staff and students.

There are also signs of shifting mindsets, with leaders and staff increasingly recognizing the importance of collective approaches and the role of workplace conditions in shaping well-being.

By focusing on staff well-being, LRSD is strengthening not only its workplaces, but the learning environments that support students every day and ensuring everyone can thrive.

Strengthening Key Staff Supports

A focus of this work has been collaboration with the School and Classroom Support Team (SCST) and members of the Clinical Services Team. Guarding Minds data suggested that some of these staff may face unique challenges, prompting further exploration.

This work has focused on understanding the complexity of these roles, gathering input from staff across disciplines, and working collaboratively with senior leadership to identify both short- and long-term actions.

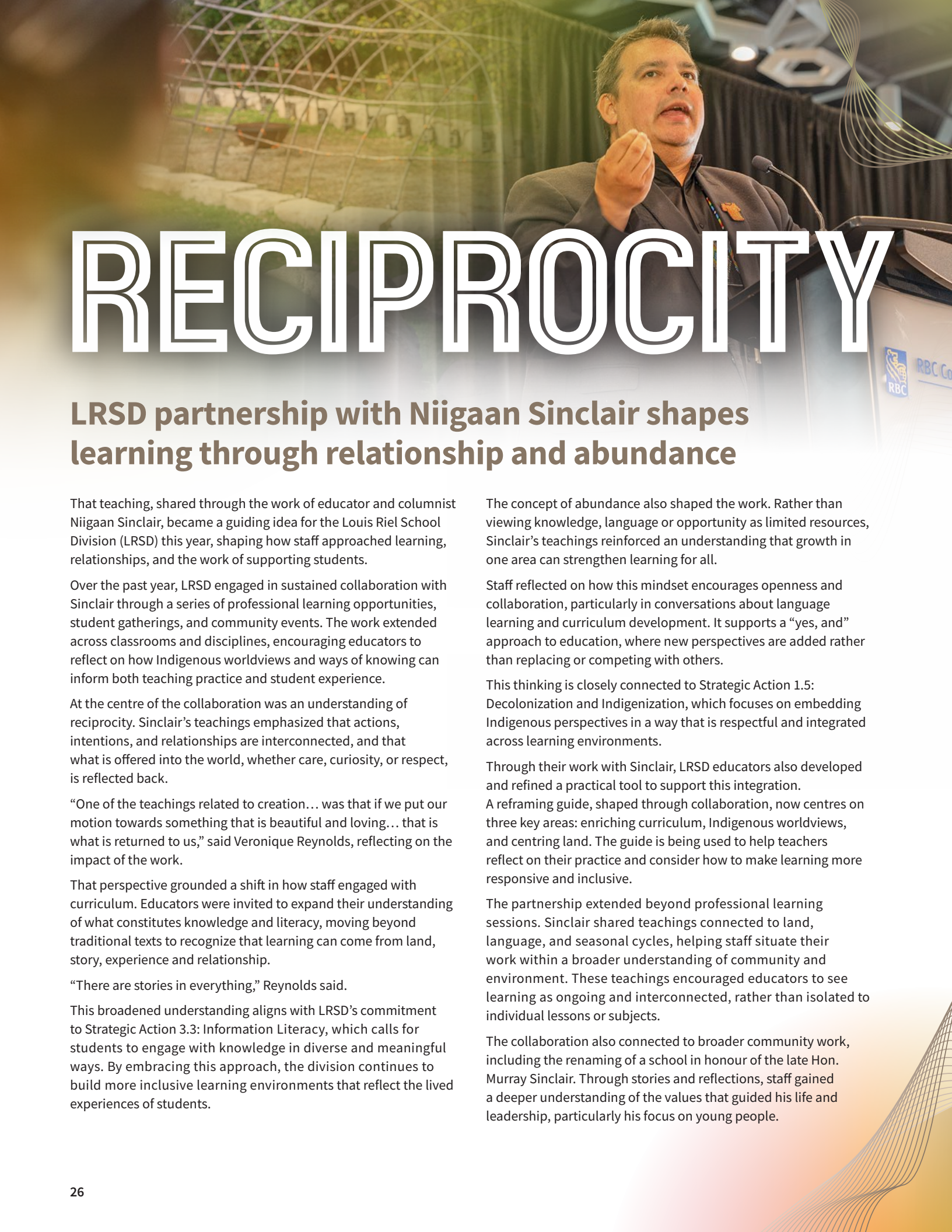
The goal is to ensure that these critical staff, who play an essential role in supporting students, feel supported, valued, and equipped to succeed in their work.

Rebuilding Connection and Culture

Another important focus has been strengthening workplace culture and rebuilding a sense of connection among staff.

"One of the things we lost during the COVID-19 pandemic was this sense of coming together," Streich said. "Doing activities after school together, team building, fun things throughout the day, being intentional. We had so much separation during the pandemic that when we got back, we kind of lost that sense of doing things together."

Schools have been exploring intentional ways to reconnect through shared activities, collaborative time, and opportunities to strengthen relationships.

A man with short brown hair, wearing a dark jacket, is speaking at a podium. He is gesturing with his right hand. In the background, there is a large, green, wireframe dome structure. The word "RECIPROcity" is written in large, white, stylized letters across the middle of the image.

RECIPROcity

LRSD partnership with Niigaan Sinclair shapes learning through relationship and abundance

That teaching, shared through the work of educator and columnist Niigaan Sinclair, became a guiding idea for the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) this year, shaping how staff approached learning, relationships, and the work of supporting students.

Over the past year, LRSD engaged in sustained collaboration with Sinclair through a series of professional learning opportunities, student gatherings, and community events. The work extended across classrooms and disciplines, encouraging educators to reflect on how Indigenous worldviews and ways of knowing can inform both teaching practice and student experience.

At the centre of the collaboration was an understanding of reciprocity. Sinclair's teachings emphasized that actions, intentions, and relationships are interconnected, and that what is offered into the world, whether care, curiosity, or respect, is reflected back.

"One of the teachings related to creation... was that if we put our motion towards something that is beautiful and loving... that is what is returned to us," said Veronique Reynolds, reflecting on the impact of the work.

That perspective grounded a shift in how staff engaged with curriculum. Educators were invited to expand their understanding of what constitutes knowledge and literacy, moving beyond traditional texts to recognize that learning can come from land, story, experience and relationship.

"There are stories in everything," Reynolds said.

This broadened understanding aligns with LRSD's commitment to Strategic Action 3.3: Information Literacy, which calls for students to engage with knowledge in diverse and meaningful ways. By embracing this approach, the division continues to build more inclusive learning environments that reflect the lived experiences of students.

The concept of abundance also shaped the work. Rather than viewing knowledge, language or opportunity as limited resources, Sinclair's teachings reinforced an understanding that growth in one area can strengthen learning for all.

Staff reflected on how this mindset encourages openness and collaboration, particularly in conversations about language learning and curriculum development. It supports a "yes, and" approach to education, where new perspectives are added rather than replacing or competing with others.

This thinking is closely connected to Strategic Action 1.5: Decolonization and Indigenization, which focuses on embedding Indigenous perspectives in a way that is respectful and integrated across learning environments.

Through their work with Sinclair, LRSD educators also developed and refined a practical tool to support this integration.

A reframing guide, shaped through collaboration, now centres on three key areas: enriching curriculum, Indigenous worldviews, and centring land. The guide is being used to help teachers reflect on their practice and consider how to make learning more responsive and inclusive.

The partnership extended beyond professional learning sessions. Sinclair shared teachings connected to land, language, and seasonal cycles, helping staff situate their work within a broader understanding of community and environment. These teachings encouraged educators to see learning as ongoing and interconnected, rather than isolated to individual lessons or subjects.

The collaboration also connected to broader community work, including the renaming of a school in honour of the late Hon. Murray Sinclair. Through stories and reflections, staff gained a deeper understanding of the values that guided his life and leadership, particularly his focus on young people.



Community and relationships is what it all comes down to.

IN ACTION

**What we put
into motion
returns to us.**

“He kept coming back to how his dad would have just been happy to sit with the kids,” said Sean Oliver, recalling how those stories centred students in the work.

This aligns with Strategic Action 3.2: Student Voice and Agency, reinforcing LRSD’s commitment to ensuring that students remain at the heart of decision-making and learning.

Throughout the year, the collaboration with Sinclair was understood not as bringing in an external voice, but as strengthening existing relationships. Staff emphasized that the work reflects a broader commitment to community connection and shared learning.

“Community and relationships is what it all comes down to,” Oliver said.

As LRSD continues to advance the priorities outlined in its Multi-Year Strategic Plan, the partnership offers a model for how learning can be shaped through reciprocity, humility, and respect.

By grounding its work in these principles, the division is building a foundation for ongoing growth while addressing present needs. Through this work, what is shared, supported and nurtured today continues to return, strengthening learning for students and communities alike.



MASTERY

MORE THAN A SWIM

Designed for students with complex physical, medical, and sensory needs, the Therapeutic Swim Program creates a space where students can move, regulate, and participate in ways that may not always be possible in traditional settings. In its first year as a divisionally coordinated, therapeutic program, the initiative brought students together from across families of schools for six-week blocks of sessions in a warm-water, supported environment.

“This was a real pilot project year,” shared program lead and occupational therapist Travis Hoare. “Next year, we’re looking to expand so students can attend for longer and have more opportunities to be in the water.”

A Program Designed Around Students

Each session is thoughtfully structured to ensure students feel safe, supported, and ready to engage. Students are transported from their schools to Aqua Essence, where they are welcomed into a calm, inclusive environment.

“This is an invitation-only group,” Hoare explained. “We went school by school and identified students who would benefit therapeutically from being in the water with clinical support.”

In the pool, a collaborative team works alongside each student. Educational assistants provide one-on-one support, while physiotherapists and occupational therapists adapt physical therapy goals to the water. Swim instructors and lifeguards from Aqua Essence work alongside the clinical team, blending therapeutic approaches with foundational swim skills.



The water is warm and quiet. As students enter the pool, movements begin to ease, tension softens, and confidence starts to take shape. For many students in the Louis Riel School Division’s (LRSD) Therapeutic Swim Program, this is more than a swim. It is a moment of possibility.

“It’s really the best of both worlds,” Hoare noted. “We’re building traditional swim skills, but we’re also supporting their physical therapy goals in the water.”

Growth, Confidence, and Connection

Across the six-week sessions, growth often unfolds in powerful and deeply personal ways.

“We’ve had multiple examples where this is the first time students have ever been swimming,” Hoare shared. “Session one, there’s lots of nervousness, but by session six, to a person, it’s like, ‘I wish we could keep going.’”

For some students, early hesitation gives way to joy and confidence.

“We had one student who didn’t get into the water in the first session,” Hoare said. “But by session six, they were laughing, splashing, singing, even trying to jump off the edge.”

Other milestones are quieter. For some students, they are putting their face in the water, floating, or moving more freely than they can on land for the first time.

For one student, the experience was extra special:

“He jumped with us,” Hoare reflected. “And we know, based on his diagnosis, that he’s not going to be able to jump forever. So, the fact that we could provide that opportunity, in the safest way possible from a clinical lens, is infinitely valuable.”

Water creates a unique environment where students can experience success in new ways.

"If you can go swimming, you can almost do anything in terms of community activities," Hoare added. "It really shows that students are capable of a lot more than sometimes we give them credit for."

Building Relationships and Community

Beyond therapeutic benefits, the program fosters connection between students, staff, and schools.

"The swimming program was not just therapeutic, it was also social," said Willow Gauthier, an educational assistant in the division. "It was a highlight of our week, and we saw a lot of growth over the course of the program. The smiles created from swimming were not soon forgotten."

By organizing sessions by family of schools, students connect with peers from different communities.

"They start to see themselves in other students," Hoare shared. "They gain confidence together."

Relationships between students and educational assistants also deepen through shared experiences.

"You're going to have a tighter bond going through something like swimming together than you sometimes would working on math sheets in class," said Hoare.

Following each session, students and staff gather for lunch, transforming Aqua Essence's lobby into a cafeteria.

"We've built our own little community at the pool," Hoare said. "Students from different schools connect, and staff do too."

The Difference Families Feel

For families, the impact of the program extends beyond the pool.

"Our family was truly blown away by the success of the therapeutic swimming program offered this year and felt privileged to watch each session," said Richelle Friesen, a parent of a student who participated in the program. "The sense of community in the pool was palpable, and the pure joy on all the children's faces was something we will never forget. For children who so often do not have access to the same activities and experiences as their peers, this program was incredibly meaningful."

Moments like this highlight not only the growth students experience, but the meaning it holds for those who support them every day. Access to a program like this creates opportunities that families may not always be able to facilitate on their own, offering students safe, supported ways to explore new experiences and build confidence.

Expanding Possibilities Beyond the Classroom

The Therapeutic Swim Program is part of a broader commitment to helping students access and navigate community spaces with confidence.

"We want our students' worlds to be as big as possible," Hoare emphasized. "If we don't create these opportunities, those worlds can get pretty small."

Through experiences like swimming, students build skills that extend beyond the pool, learning how to participate, regulate, and engage in a variety of environments.

"We want students to be able to regulate not just at school, but at the pool, at the park, at the grocery store, wherever life takes them," he explained.

"The Therapeutic Swim Program has had a truly transformative impact for one of our students," said Angela Power, principal of Island Lakes Community School. "It has opened doors to experiences beyond his daily routines, making his world feel bigger and more accessible. At the same time, the program has provided critical physical benefits, easing pressure on his body and joints, strengthening his movement skills, and supporting more fluid, confident motion. The combination of physical relief and expanded opportunity has had a lasting and meaningful influence on his overall well-being."

A Strong Foundation for the Future

This year marked the first iteration of the program in its current, more therapeutic and interdisciplinary form, building on earlier versions of swimming programming but with a more intentional focus.

In the process, staff have also experienced meaningful growth.

"Seeing students and what they are capable of in a different environment like swimming is quite eye-opening," Hoare said. "Staff go back to their schools with more confidence and a different understanding of what is possible."

Looking ahead, Hoare and the team are exploring ways to expand the program while maintaining the level of support that makes it successful.

"We want to keep building on this," he said. "But we also want to do it thoughtfully, based on what we've learned."

A Commitment to Inclusion and Well-being

The Therapeutic Swim Program reflects a commitment to creating meaningful, inclusive opportunities for students.

"I think it's hard to articulate how important this kind of work is," Hoare reflected. "This is about community access. It's about making sure students can participate in the world beyond school."

By bringing together clinical expertise, instructional support, and community partnership, the program supports physical development while also fostering confidence, connection, and belonging.

For students, time in the water is more than a therapeutic intervention.

It is a chance to discover what's possible.

NEW PATHWAYS, NEW POSSIBILITIES

Late French Immersion opens doors for students in LRSD

For students who might once have thought they missed their chance to learn French, a new path is now open.

In the 2025-26 school year, the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) introduced its Late French Immersion program, creating a new entry point for Grade 6 students to begin intensive language learning and build fluency alongside their peers. The program expands on existing early and middle immersion opportunities, giving more students access to French learning and new opportunities.

At principal Jennifer Oldfield's school, École Van Belleghem, the first cohort has already demonstrated what is possible.

"I'm really impressed by the progress that I've seen these kids make in that class," said Oldfield. "I can imagine on the first day, it was kind of intimidating, the idea of doing school in a whole new language. But now, they've got the confidence and the skill to be able to speak French in front of the whole school."

That growth is visible every day. Students who began the year unsure of their ability to learn French are now speaking it with confidence and pride.

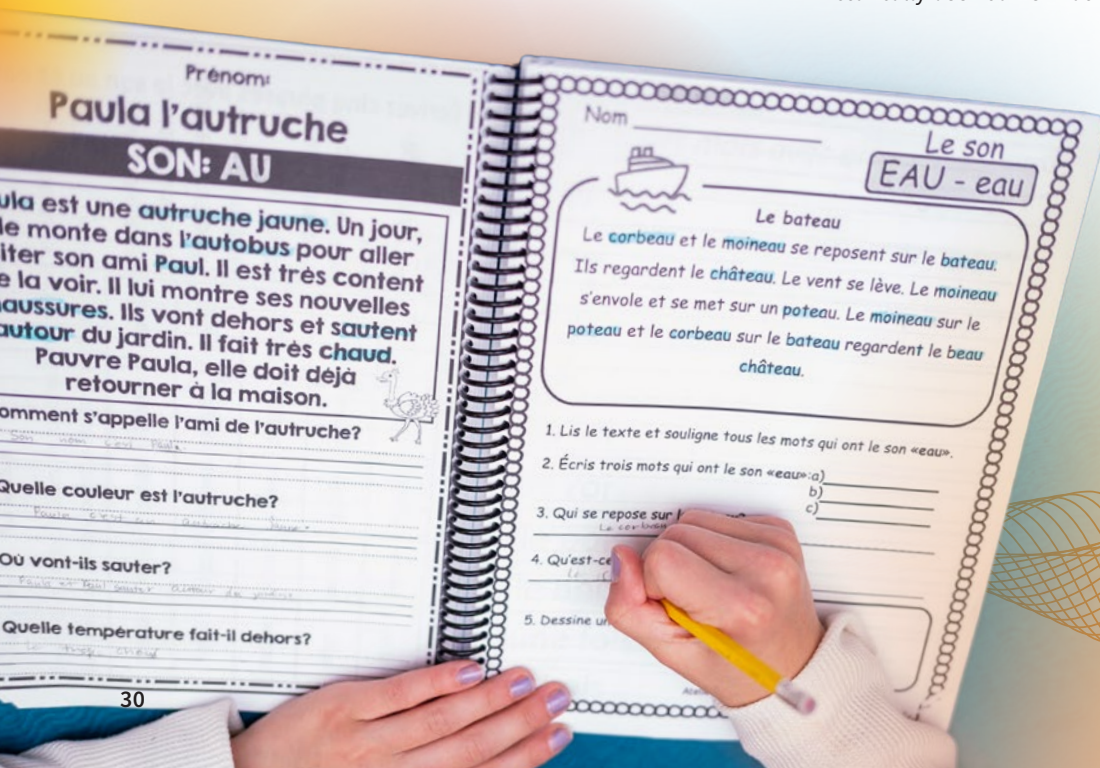
"J'aime parler avec les autres élèves en français," said Usman, with a natural flow you'd hardly expect from someone who didn't speak a lick of French some months earlier.

"I was really nervous when I started the year, and I thought I couldn't learn French at all," said Usman, a Grade 6 student in the program. "I feel really proud."

For Isabella, the experience has been similarly transformative. "It makes me feel kind of confused, like how did I do that?" she said. "But it makes me so happy."

These experiences highlight both the intensity of the program and the remarkable growth students achieve in a short period of time. Within months, learners move from foundational skills to confidently using French in academic and social settings.

The program addresses a significant gap in access. For many families, particularly those new to Canada or those who did not enter early or middle immersion, French programming has historically been somewhat inaccessible.





“I think it was more excitement because we see families every year who ask about joining French Immersion,” said Oldfield. “I know we were really excited to have another entry point, you know, especially for people who might be new to the country and missed that opportunity.”

By introducing Late French Immersion, LRSD is creating more equitable access to programming aligned with Strategic Action 2.5: Access to French Immersion. The initiative reflects a broader commitment to ensuring all students have meaningful opportunities to participate.

Students are expected to build their skills over three years and join their peers in the regular French Immersion stream by high school.

“I’m just really excited to see them continue to gain that confidence and that skill. In Grade 9, they’re going to find themselves joining in with their peers, and nobody’s going to know that they started a little later,” said Oldfield.

Learning another language opens doors to new experiences, perspectives and connections.





ÉCOLE MAZINA-GIIZHIK

On May 6, 2026, a crowd of all ages gathered to celebrate the naming of École Mazina-Giizhik — an important and meaningful act of reconciliation. The moment also carried a deep sense of gratitude as the school community honoured the late Honourable Murray Sinclair, whose life and legacy continue to inspire students, staff, and families across Louis Riel School Division.

“Justice Murray Sinclair’s spirit name reminds us that stories matter,” superintendent Christian Michalik shared. “That truth must be spoken clearly. That the sky holds memory, guidance, and hope — and that we are responsible for teaching our children how to look up, listen carefully, and see one another fully.”

Mazina Giizhik means “the One Who Speaks of Pictures in the Sky,” and students spent time learning about what the name represents, along with Murray Sinclair’s remarkable life and legacy. His work as a judge, senator and chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission left a lasting mark on the country, and the renaming was framed as a way to carry that legacy forward with care and respect.

Students played a central role in the ceremony. The school choir sang “Mitêh” by Sherryl Sewepagaham, a Cree-Dene musician and educator from Little Red River Cree Nation in northern Alberta. The title, which means “heart,” reflected the spirit of the day and the school’s emphasis on learning with empathy and purpose.

A group of Kindergarten to Grade 8 students also shared their pride in being Eagles and spoke about what they had learned throughout the renaming journey, showing a growing understanding of identity, community, and reconciliation.

“Murray Sinclair believed in children’s voices and the importance of education,” said Bellange, one of the emcees. “At our school we are learning what it means to be an eagle; les aigles. A: amitié – friendship, I: inclusion – inclusion, G: générosité – generosity,

L: langues et communication – languages and communication, E: effort – effort, and S: sécurité – safety. These are values that we believe Murray Sinclair would support because he worked hard his entire life to make the world a better place.”

Students also shared examples of their learning in action.

“This year, we learnt about some of the traditional medicines and we grew cedar, sage, and sweetgrass in our classroom,” said Lincoln, one of the students who shared during the ceremony. “With the guidance of Mme Reynolds, we harvested and dried the sage, and it was used to smudge the school this week.”

The ceremony was a powerful reflection of learning, community, and connection. Niigaan Sinclair, alongside his daughter Sarah Fontaine-Sinclair, spoke about Murray Sinclair’s life, legacy, and enduring impact. Their words helped ground the event in both personal and collective memory.

In keeping with Cree and Anishinaabe tradition, Niigaan Sinclair named Christian Michalik, assistant superintendent Corey Kapilik, principal Cam Johnson and vice-principal Lisa Albrecht as honorary witnesses to the renaming ceremony. Each received a Truth and Reconciliation Commission pin that had belonged to Murray Sinclair, symbolizing their shared responsibility to carry forward his work and to honour his memory in the years ahead.

The renaming also reflected a deeper commitment within the school to create a learning environment rooted in inclusion,

belonging, and respect. School leadership spoke to the intentional work underway to build a community where every student is seen and valued.

“In a short amount of time, we have worked deliberately to design systems and structures that reflect who we want to be — systems centred on accessibility, inclusion, and dignity, so that every child can find themselves here,” said vice-principal Lisa Albrecht. “This has meant learning together as a staff; building strong teams and asking hard questions about how our decisions serve all students. From the very start, we said this would be a place where every story carries importance, where learning is relational, and where reconciliation is not an add-on, but a way of being. And we are honest enough to say today: we have much to do.”

The design of École Mazina-Giizhik reflects that same sense of connection and belonging. Inspired by the prairie landscape, each learning community within the school is represented by a native plant and colours that mirror the prairie sunset. These design elements are woven throughout signage, graphics, and learning tools, including the Seven Teachings, helping support both identity and a shared understanding of values.

The learning communities themselves are also uniquely connected to one of the Seven Teachings, further reinforcing the school’s commitment to fostering respectful relationships and holistic learning.

Together, the ceremony marked not only a new name, but a renewed commitment to truth, to learning and to walking forward in a good way. A young student who shared at the ceremony summed up the division’s thoughts well: “What an honour for our school to be named after Murray Sinclair.”



INDEPENDENCE

STUDENT VOICES SHAPING CHANGE

When students are given opportunities to share their perspectives, they do more than participate. They help shape their schools and communities.

Through the Student Advisory Board (SAB) and divisional Indigenous Youth Leadership (IYL), Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) high school students are developing the confidence, knowledge, and connections needed to lead, advocate, and create positive change. While each group offers a distinct experience, both are rooted in a shared belief: students have valuable insights, and their voices matter.

Learning to Advocate

This year, the SAB's work centred on three pillars: connection, education, and advocacy. Through regular meetings, discussions with divisional leaders, and opportunities to engage with decision-makers, students explored the issues that matter to youth.

For Grade 10 student Yuvi Singh of Dakota Collegiate, one of the most significant experiences was presenting directly to the Board of Trustees.

"It was impactful to see them actively listening to our thoughts and what we had to share about our views on the school division and policies and what we hope to accomplish in the future," he said.

Those conversations helped students understand not only how governance works, but also how their voices can influence decision-making. Discussions about the possibility of future non-voting student trustee reinforced that student perspectives are valued.

"Knowing that the trustees are open to having a non-voting student trustee made me feel like we were truly making a difference," Singh said.

Students also learned more about the structures that guide public education. Through conversations with trustees and divisional leaders, they gained a deeper understanding of governance, policy development, and the different roles played by elected officials and administration.

From Ideas to Action

Throughout the year, SAB members participated in experiences that extended beyond the classroom. Students attended the One Manitoba Youth Summit, visited the Manitoba Legislature, met with elected officials, and discussed topics such as class sizes, student supports, Indigenous governance, and educational opportunities.

A key lesson was that advocacy involves working collaboratively toward solutions.

"Instead of saying, 'No, this can't happen,' it's asking, 'How can we make this possible?'" said Singh.

Students explored Indigenous governance and leadership with guidance from educators Sean Oliver and Rose Bird, learning about decision-making models that consider how choices will affect future generations.

"We learned about thinking seven generations ahead," said Singh. "You have to think about how something might help now, but also how it will affect people in the future."

Those lessons translated into action through initiatives such as Learning with the Land, where SAB members helped facilitate conversations with younger students across the division.

"These kids are so passionate about the world and about these ideas," he said. "Sometimes that doesn't get recognized because they're kids, but a lot of them can think very deeply."

Just as important as the advocacy work were the relationships students built along the way.

Through meetings, cultural learning opportunities, divisional events, and shared experiences, students connected with peers from across LRSD while learning from perspectives different from their own.

"The Student Advisory Board is a place to learn and grow," said Singh. "It's also a place to make connections, see the diversity that our division has to offer, and celebrate it."

For Grade 10 student Alvina Nabiha of Dakota Collegiate, the experience on SAB this year reinforced an important lesson about leadership.

"It's okay to be a quiet leader," she said. "So many people don't have that outgoing personality, and that's okay. You can still be yourself in these spaces."

That message is one students hope future members will carry forward.

"This group was created so students can have a voice," said Singh. "If they don't offer you a seat at the table, pull up a folding chair."

Finding Identity, Belonging, and Purpose

While SAB focuses on student voice and advocacy, divisional Indigenous Youth Leadership (IYL) provides Indigenous students with opportunities to connect with culture, community, and one another.

For Grade 11 student Logan Tymchyshyn of Dakota Collegiate, the program has played a significant role in his personal growth.

"Grade 11 has been a big year of reflection for me," Tymchyshyn said. "IYL has been a really big part of me being able to reflect on who I am."

Logan joined IYL midway through Grade 10 after becoming involved in Dakota Collegiate's Tawâw program. Through monthly divisional gatherings, land-based learning, cultural teachings, and leadership experiences, he found a sense of connection that helped strengthen his understanding of his Métis identity.

"Going to IYL really opened my eyes to the community that I was missing out on," he said. "It's really helped me find my sense of self and my sense of identity."

This year, students in IYL gathered regularly for activities that included beading, drumming, dancing, singing, medicine teachings, land-based learning, and conversations with Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

For Logan, some of the most powerful lessons came through everyday moments.

"When I was learning beading, I was taught to leave the mistake because it's a spirit bead," he said. "It shows that not everything is perfect."

Other teachings have carried into his daily life.

"I used to think of smudging as just a mental thing," Tymchyshyn explained. "But I learned it's a spiritual cleanse too. I smudge almost every day now, and it's amazing how one teaching carried over into my day-to-day life at school."

A New Name, a Shared Purpose

This year also marked a significant milestone for IYL as Elder Ed Azure gifted IYL a new name: e-winaskochik, meaning groundhog.

"I thought it was an amazing experience to be a part of something sacred," said Riel Ethier, a Grade 10 student from Collège Béliveau.

The name represents perseverance, leadership, and helping



others—qualities that align with the group's purpose and values.

For Tymchyshyn, participating in the naming process was both meaningful and educational.

"I learned about how much thought and care goes into the naming process and how sacred it really is," he said. "It was a really good learning opportunity."

The experience deepened students' connection to the group and reinforced the importance of honouring both culture and community.

Using Their Voices

Throughout the year, IYL students also had opportunities to share their experiences and perspectives with others.

At LRSD's Leadership Retreat in October, Tymchyshyn joined a student panel that invited divisional leadership to reflect on Indigenous student experiences in public education.

"It was a little nerve-wracking," he said. "But I had my points, my values, and my intentions. I was proud of myself."

He spoke about the importance of representation and understanding the distinct histories and experiences of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples.

"Indigenous representation is important in every space," Tymchyshyn said. "It's a respect not only to the people, but to the land that we're on."

He also found opportunities to celebrate and share his identity through other activities, including introducing Qilak, an Indigenous-language choral piece, at a divisional choir performance.

"I really enjoy being able to represent myself and my culture in places where they're not typically represented," he said.

Looking Forward

Whether through SAB or IYL, students are demonstrating that leadership takes many forms. What unites them is a belief that young people can make a difference.

"I've never felt such a sense of community in my heart," Tymchyshyn said. "It's a really good space to get comfortable with who you are, build community, and be a leader."

For Yuvi, the hope lies in the next generation of student leaders.

"Seeing younger students and how much passion they have gives me hope for the future," he said.

Together, their stories reflect the power of student voice in LRSD: students learning, leading, connecting, and helping shape the future of their schools, communities, and beyond.



GUARDRAILS AND GROWTH

LRSD prioritizes data governance, security

The Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) is advancing a system-wide approach to artificial intelligence that places data governance, safety, and security at its core.

Led by Marnie Wilson, data strategy officer, and Clarke Hagan, director of information systems, the division has spent the past year developing a governance framework alongside the introduction of internally built AI tools. Rather than treating AI adoption as a standalone initiative, LRSD has focused on aligning it with a broader strategy grounded in leadership, organizational values and responsible data use.

“That we are doing data governance... as the foundational piece as we’re considering AI adoption,” Wilson said, describing the approach as central to the division’s work.

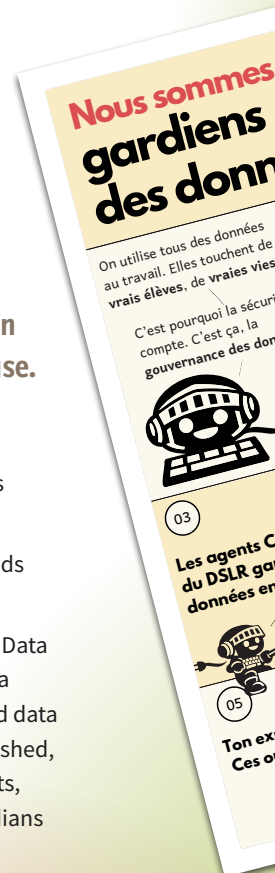
At the heart of the initiative is a recognition that the data managed by schools is among the most sensitive in the community, including student records, staff information and family details. LRSD leaders emphasize that this information directly affects decision-making, from student supports to resource allocation, and must be both accurate and secure.

Data governance provides the structure to support that work, establishing clear roles, standards and processes that ensure information is protected, used ethically and accessible to those who need it. Division leaders say the growing use of AI has

increased the urgency of that work, as emerging tools rely on underlying data and can amplify both its strengths and its risks.

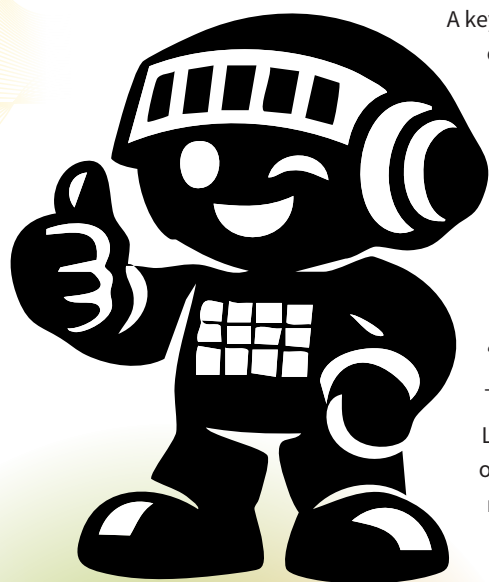
“Anything we’re going to build or use AI on top of needs to be safe first,” Wilson said.

Over the past several months, LRSD has completed a Data Governance Charter built on key pillars including data quality, privacy and security, clear accountability, and data literacy. A governance structure has also been established, bringing together leadership from across departments, alongside a broader network of data advisors, custodians and school-based champions.



A division-wide awareness campaign, “We Are All Data Stewards,” reinforces the expectation that all staff share responsibility for protecting data and using it appropriately in their daily work.

This focus on shared responsibility reflects a broader shift away from viewing data governance as a technical issue and toward understanding it as a collective practice embedded in how the organization operates. Leaders say this approach helps maintain trust with families and ensures compliance with privacy requirements while supporting effective decision-making.



A key component of LRSD’s strategy is the development of AI tools within its own secure environment, rather than relying on public platforms. One example is CLARA, a report card comment-writing assistant for Grades 9 to 12 teachers. The tool is designed to reduce administrative workload while maintaining professional quality and safeguarding student information.

By keeping the tool within the division’s systems, student data remains protected and aligned with provincial guidelines and LRSD standards. Early pilot results indicate that teachers are finding the tool both efficient and helpful in producing consistent, high-quality feedback.

“I was able to have all my report card comments for four classes reviewed in about an hour — which felt like a small miracle,” one teacher said.

LRSD’s approach has also gained attention outside the division, including recognition from organizations such as Dell Technologies and C21 Canada, which have identified the work as a national case study.

Leaders say the recognition reflects the division’s decision to link AI development directly to governance, rather than treating them as separate initiatives. While many organizations focus on the rapid adoption of AI tools, LRSD has emphasized building a sustainable foundation first.

“Everyone’s worried about the AI sprint, and we are worried about the governance marathon,” Wilson said.

The division is also taking a measured approach to how AI is introduced to staff. Rather than mandating classroom use, LRSD is focusing on building understanding and confidence among educators, allowing them to explore the technology within their professional roles while learning about its limitations and ethical considerations.

This work aligns with LRSD’s Multi-Year Strategic Plan, particularly Information Literacy (Strategic Action 3.3), as the division supports staff and students in developing the skills needed to engage critically and responsibly with emerging technologies.

Looking ahead, LRSD will continue to expand staff training, refine policies and build its internal network of data leaders. While much of the work remains behind the scenes, division leaders say it is essential to maintaining the safety, trust and integrity required to use both data and AI effectively.

“It’s unglamorous, most of it,” Wilson said. “But it is how we earn the right to call ourselves a data-informed school division — and mean it.”



We are all Data Stewards

...and I'm Data Stewart. Wait, why are you groaning?

01 Safe data use is everyone's responsibility

You, and all LRSD staff, are responsible for:

- maintaining accurate data.
- keeping data private & secure.
- using data appropriately & ethically.

02 Microsoft Copilot is LRSD's only approved AI tool

Enterprise AI means protection and security—unlike public AI tools.

Copilot is our approved sandbox. The walls are built in—the sand stays in the box.

03 LRSD-created Copilot agents help keep data safe.

An agent is Copilot, set up to do one specific job.

LRSD builds its own Copilot agents, with values, permissions, and safeguards built right in.

That's governance in action—not just policy on paper.

04 You're not on your own — LRSD has a Data Governance Working Group

You're supported by a group that keeps this work clear and safe.

They handle frameworks, guidelines, and security, so you don't have to guess what's OK and what isn't.

They also work to help everyone learn how to use data and AI well.

05 Your expertise leads. These tools support it.

You can use Copilot for work that's already part of your role.

It can help lighten the load so you can focus on your community.

The thinking, decisions, and responsibility stay with you—always.

We all use data as part of our work. That data represents **real students and real lives.**

That's why using it safely matters. That's **data governance.**



LRSD PROGRAMMING OUT OF MONTEREY

Across Louis Riel School Division (LRSD), there is a shared understanding that every student experiences learning in their own way. While many students thrive within their school communities, others benefit from time in a different learning environment. As a division, LRSD is committed to providing flexible, relationship-based supports so that every student can experience success as a learner.

This commitment comes to life through LRSD Programming out of Monterey—a short-term, transitional learning environment for students in Grades 7–12. The program is designed to work alongside students' home schools, the schools they are connected to within LRSD, to create space for connection, reflection, and growth before a supported transition back. Rather than replacing a student's connection to their school community, Monterey strengthens it, helping students build confidence, strengthen relationships, and develop a renewed sense of possibility as they move forward.

Students like Val feel this support deeply. Reflecting on her journey prior to Monterey, she shared, “Sometimes it's not ‘I don't want to do this.’ It's literally, ‘I cannot do this.’” Her experience highlights an important understanding: engagement in learning is shaped by more than just effort. It is connected to feeling confident, ready, and understood. Students benefit from environments that are flexible, responsive, and grounded in trust.

At Monterey, understanding shapes every interaction. Guided by Therapeutic Crisis Intervention for Schools (TCIS), staff prioritize emotional safety, co-regulation, and relationship-building. In this environment, learning begins with ensuring students feel safe and understood.

As Val described, her introduction to Monterey focused first on connection: “For the first couple weeks, it wasn't like, ‘you've got to do this work.’ It was making sure I was okay.”

This foundation is strengthened through the Circle of Courage, which emphasizes belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity as essential to student development. These values are reflected in everyday practice. Throughout the day, students make choices about their learning, set goals, and contribute in ways that feel manageable to them. Some take the lead on projects, while others participate more quietly at first. As they begin to experience success, they start to see themselves as capable and in control of their learning.

Mamàhtawisiwin further informs Monterey's approach by guiding reflection, planning, and the ongoing development of inclusive learning environments. In partnership with the Indigenous Education team, Monterey brings these perspectives to life through culturally grounded practices, land-based learning, and opportunities to learn from Elders and community members. These experiences help students connect to identity, community, and well-being.

A key part of learning at Monterey is finding the appropriate level of challenge. Programming is intentionally tailored so each student can begin where they are. Whether through smaller supported steps, hands-on experiences, flexible pacing, or individualized instruction, students are able to build success in ways that align with how they learn best.

This responsive approach is reflected in the range of opportunities available to students. In addition to academic learning, students may engage in work experience with local businesses, participate in community-based projects, and take part in land-based and experiential learning. Their work has also been shared publicly through initiatives such as the LRSD Arts in Action display at St. Vital Centre, where their creations engaged and moved community members through their messaging and quality. Reflecting on the exhibit at St. Vital Centre, Sandy Nemeth, chair of the board, described the work as “absolutely captivating,” noting the “great deal of talent behind each piece” and the “power of a visual voice and the beauty of someone choosing to share that with others.” These opportunities help students build skills, explore interests, and see themselves as capable contributors in different settings.

As students re-engage with learning, they also begin to explore new interests and strengths. This year, many students discovered a range of passions, from sewing and beading to music and fitness, often continuing these interests beyond the school day. These experiences support students in building confidence and seeing themselves as capable in new and meaningful ways.

For some students, this growth becomes visible in specific milestones. At this year’s graduation, one student walked across the stage surrounded by family and friends, proud to be the first in their family to graduate. In their grad quote, they expressed gratitude for the relationships that supported them along the way. Moments like these reflect a deeper shift in which students begin to see themselves not only as learners, but as capable of achieving goals that once felt out of reach.

For Val, this has shifted her relationship with school. “Now I find myself thinking about school outside of school... sometimes I really am excited to come,” she shared. What was once a source of frustration has become a place of connection, belonging, and growth.

This impact is reflected across the programming. Many students have experienced an increase in attendance compared to previous years.

Caregivers have also shared the impact of this approach, noting growth in independence and responsibility. In the words of one caregiver, their child has “come so much farther than he ever has... he’s learning, he’s taking responsibility, and he’s looking after adult things more than ever.”

These connections extend beyond the classroom. At the end of the year, students and caregivers gathered for a shared meal, reflecting on their experiences together. These moments highlight the importance of relationships, not only within the learning environment, but across families and community.

Throughout their time at Monterey, students remain connected to their home schools, while staff work closely with caregivers, school teams, and community partners to ensure consistent support. This collaboration allows students to focus on building relationships, re-engaging with learning, and planning for what comes next.

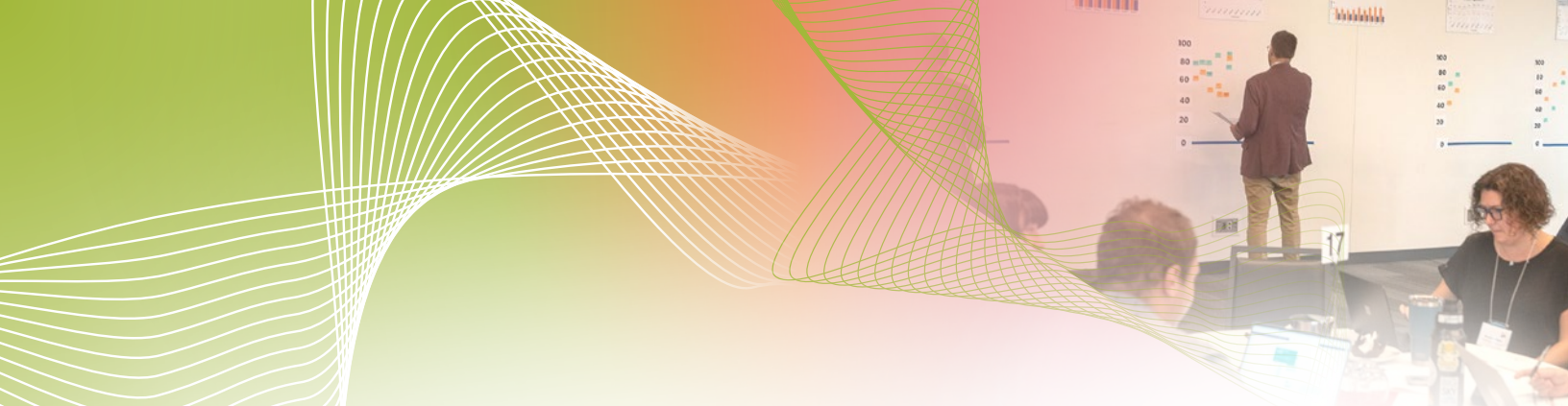
From the outset, Monterey is designed with transition in mind. Whether students return to their home school, move into work experience, or prepare for graduation, the goal is always the same: to help students leave with a stronger sense of themselves as learners and a clearer path ahead.

For Val, that future now feels within reach. “I always worried that I would never graduate,” she reflected, “and now it feels like a goal, not a dream.”

LRSD Programming out of Monterey is a key part of the division’s continuum of supports. It shows what is possible when learning environments are designed to respond to student voice, build strong relationships, and provide the right level of challenge and support. Through the integration of TCIS, the Circle of Courage, and Mamàhtawisiwin, and through strong partnerships across schools, caregivers, and communities, Monterey reflects LRSD’s commitment to inclusive, responsive education.

Most importantly, it helps students feel seen, supported, and understood, so they can engage in learning, build confidence, and imagine a future that is within reach.





CLIMBING THE MOUNTAIN AS A DIVISION

In the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD), leadership means learning—together.

This year, Project-Based Leadership Learning (PBLL) brought leaders across the division into a shared experience of inquiry, reflection, and action. By applying the principles of project-based learning to their own leadership practice, leaders engaged in meaningful, self-directed projects rooted in the needs of their schools and communities.

The work reflects a powerful idea. Improvement demands more than a single initiative or quick solution. It is a journey. As described through the “Climbing the Mountain” framework, meaningful change happens step by step, through persistence, collaboration, and a shared goal, even when the path is challenging.

Learning as Leaders

For Marnie Wilson, data strategy officer, the power of PBLL is grounded in what it represents. “I think it’s a good example of leadership learning and lifelong learning,” she said. “It’s also a good example of leaders modelling self-directed learning... it was a way to model that kind of good learning in practice.”

The idea of leaders as learners remained at the heart of the work. Instead of simply guiding others, leaders were actively engaged in their own learning journeys.

Learning with Purpose

While each leader pursued a unique project, the work was grounded in a common purpose.

“People had the autonomy to choose what was relevant for their own learning in the context of the communities that they serve,” explained Nicole Mager, divisional principal. “Even though everyone had that opportunity, there were lots of themes throughout, and all of those themes reflect the Multi-Year

Strategic Plan (MYSP).”

This balance between autonomy and alignment meant that individual efforts were not isolated. They were connected to a larger, division-wide commitment.

As leaders worked, many began to see their projects through a new lens: not just as school-based initiatives, but as part of a collective journey toward improvement. Like climbing a mountain, each step forward contributed to a shared goal.

Learning in Action

Throughout the year, leadership meetings were reimagined as active learning spaces. Leaders engaged in structured collaboration, explored new frameworks, and tested ideas in real time, mirroring the type of learning environments they strive to create for students and staff.

“What we modelled for leadership, leadership could then model for their own staff,” said Mager. “Every activity, we gave the template and material so leaders could then take that back to their own teams.”

This intentional modeling ensured that PBLL extended beyond individual projects, influencing teaching and learning across schools.

Relationships at the Centre

At its heart, the work was relational.

“It was also an opportunity to collaborate in ways that we wouldn’t normally get,” reflected Wilson, noting the value of networking and collective problem-solving.

Through shared learning, dialogue, and structured collaboration, leaders developed a deeper understanding of one another’s



contexts and challenges. This created a sense of collective responsibility and an understanding that improving outcomes for students is everyone's work.

PBLL also evolved in response to participants. Leaders were invited to provide feedback, and their input directly shaped future sessions. As Nicole noted, the work was done with leaders, not to them.

A Culture of Reflection and Growth

A key shift this year was the focus on clarity, structure, and reflection. Leaders worked toward clear goals, revisited their progress regularly, and shared their learning with others.

"Everyone knew what the bullseye was, then I think that really helped to keep people on task and to do the work that they needed to do to come back to our monthly meetings," reflected Mager. "We also had check-ins every month. We would do a little section at the beginning that talked about what we did the previous month. We were catching people up and then moving forward, catching people up and then moving forward."

By making learning visible, PBLL created accountability and purpose, while also creating opportunities for celebration. Leaders shared their projects, learned from one another, and saw the impact of their work across the division at a meeting in May.

SPARK

Woven into the PBLL experience this year was SPARK, an AI-powered agent built specifically for this cohort. Designed to support leaders as they navigated their projects, SPARK gave each participant a way to engage with their own learning in a more immediate and personalized way, retrieving their PBLL profile, exploring resources shared across the cohort, and connecting with colleagues working in similar areas of focus.

What made SPARK meaningful was not just what it could do, but when. Leaders could access it during sessions to surface a connection or revisit their goals or return to it independently between meetings as their thinking evolved. In this way, SPARK functioned less like a tool and more like a thinking partner, one that reflected the division's own learning back to them and helped make the collective work visible.

Just as PBLL asked leaders to model self-directed learning for their staff, SPARK offered a lived example of what it looks like to have personalized, on-demand support embedded directly into a learning experience.

Climbing Together

As the year progressed, leaders began to see their work not as separate efforts, but as interconnected steps toward a larger vision.

This understanding reflects the deeper meaning behind "Climbing the Mountain." The journey requires persistence, reflection, and the willingness to keep moving forward despite challenges.

Through PBLL, LRSD leaders are embracing that journey. They are learning alongside one another, supporting one another, and working collectively toward improved outcomes for all students.

They are not climbing alone.

They are climbing the mountain as a division.



GENEROSITY

BLAST OFF!

New LRSD BLAST program supports families with safe, welcoming spaces

Some families have described it as life changing.

“I’ve spoken with parents almost in tears, telling me we’ve won the lottery,” said BLAST manager Tricia Bailey Sauv  .

That early feedback speaks to the meaningful impact of the Louis Riel School Division’s (LRSD) **BLAST program**, which has just completed its first year as a coordinated initiative supporting students and families before and after the school day.

BLAST, which stands for Before-School, Lunch, and After-School Time, was introduced in response to a clear and growing need for safe, accessible supervision outside regular school hours.

A Spring 2025 survey of LRSD families, with 2,936 responses, found that more than 1,200 families had unmet supervision needs, highlighting a significant gap across the division.

The program aligned directly with LRSD’s **Multi-Year Strategic Plan 2023–2027**, specifically **Strategic Action 4.3: Expand access to before- and after-school care**.

BLAST is a supervision program, not licensed childcare. While childcare services are curriculum-based and externally regulated, BLAST focuses on creating safe, structured, and welcoming environments where students can enjoy arts and crafts, games, reading, and indoor and outdoor play, while building friendships and a sense of belonging. The program is designed to complement existing childcare services in LRSD communities, not replace them.

Before the creation of BLAST, some schools did their best to respond to demand for before- and after-school programming, often with support from school administration or clerical staff.

With BLAST now established as a centralized program, LRSD is helping ease that responsibility for school staff so they can focus on the school day, while also building a more consistent, division-wide approach to supervision. Standardized procedures,

clear staff and guardian handbooks, centralized enrolment and fee management, strengthened safety practices, and new digital tools, including online applications and tracking systems, have all contributed to a strong and sustainable foundation.

By the end of its first school year, BLAST was operating in seven locations serving eight schools. More than 200 students were enrolled, with over 250 students on a division-wide waitlist, underscoring both the program’s success and the continued demand from families.

BLAST operates on a cost-recovery model. Approximately 92.6 per cent of the program’s budget supports staffing, reflecting a strong focus on supervision, relationships and student safety, with the remainder supporting supplies, activities and snacks.

At the heart of BLAST’s success are its people and its environments. Caring, child-centred staff, safe and welcoming spaces, and flexible programming have helped make BLAST a positive and valued part of students’ days across each location.

While the program continues to grow, it is not yet available across the entire division. Expansion will take place over time, with current challenges including balancing demand between communities, limited space in some schools, staffing for split shifts, and ensuring appropriate supports for students with additional or complex needs.

Looking ahead, LRSD aims to expand access to before- and after-school supervision to half of its communities by January 2027. This will be achieved through a combination of new BLAST locations and partnerships with childcare providers, along with continued efforts to strengthen staffing, expand access, and reduce financial barriers for families.

BLAST’s strong first year reflects a true division-wide effort, with staff across schools, operations, transportation, and central departments working together to support students and families.

As the program continues to grow, LRSD remains focused on building a sustainable model that responds to community needs while supporting student well-being and strengthening connections within school communities.



Before-School, Lunch, and After-School Time

LOCATIONS *(as of the end of the 2025/26 school year)*

- Archwood School
- Sage Creek School
- École Mazina-Giizhik
- École St. Germain
- École Van Belleghem
- Marion School:
for Marion School & École Provencher
- Niakwa Place School



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

"We are grateful to have spots in BLAST! The on-site staff are wonderful and are doing a great job."

— Parent/Guardian

"Thanks to LRSD, my manager and my school I work in. I am so proud of working with amazing people that support staff in creating safety and health at work every day."

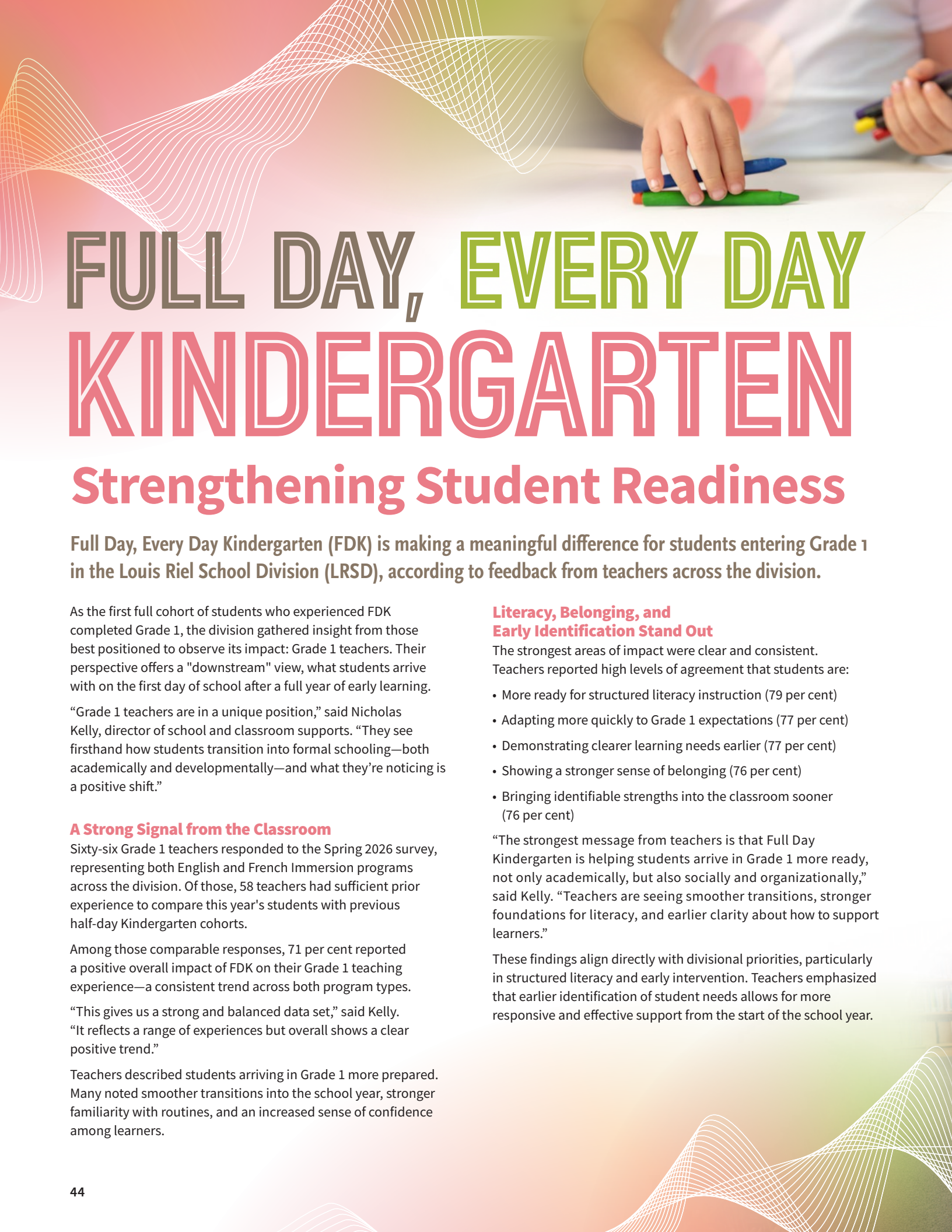
— BLAST staff

"Staff are excellent. My kids are really enjoying the current structure of the program, and the freedom to play in the gym, open areas, and outside."

— Parent/Guardian

"Collaboration with the school team is going well. The manager and coordinator are working hard with staff to establish clear guidelines and expectations."

— School Administrator



FULL DAY, EVERY DAY KINDERGARTEN

Strengthening Student Readiness

Full Day, Every Day Kindergarten (FDK) is making a meaningful difference for students entering Grade 1 in the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD), according to feedback from teachers across the division.

As the first full cohort of students who experienced FDK completed Grade 1, the division gathered insight from those best positioned to observe its impact: Grade 1 teachers. Their perspective offers a "downstream" view, what students arrive with on the first day of school after a full year of early learning.

"Grade 1 teachers are in a unique position," said Nicholas Kelly, director of school and classroom supports. "They see firsthand how students transition into formal schooling—both academically and developmentally—and what they're noticing is a positive shift."

A Strong Signal from the Classroom

Sixty-six Grade 1 teachers responded to the Spring 2026 survey, representing both English and French Immersion programs across the division. Of those, 58 teachers had sufficient prior experience to compare this year's students with previous half-day Kindergarten cohorts.

Among those comparable responses, 71 per cent reported a positive overall impact of FDK on their Grade 1 teaching experience—a consistent trend across both program types.

"This gives us a strong and balanced data set," said Kelly. "It reflects a range of experiences but overall shows a clear positive trend."

Teachers described students arriving in Grade 1 more prepared. Many noted smoother transitions into the school year, stronger familiarity with routines, and an increased sense of confidence among learners.

Literacy, Belonging, and Early Identification Stand Out

The strongest areas of impact were clear and consistent. Teachers reported high levels of agreement that students are:

- More ready for structured literacy instruction (79 per cent)
- Adapting more quickly to Grade 1 expectations (77 per cent)
- Demonstrating clearer learning needs earlier (77 per cent)
- Showing a stronger sense of belonging (76 per cent)
- Bringing identifiable strengths into the classroom sooner (76 per cent)

"The strongest message from teachers is that Full Day Kindergarten is helping students arrive in Grade 1 more ready, not only academically, but also socially and organizationally," said Kelly. "Teachers are seeing smoother transitions, stronger foundations for literacy, and earlier clarity about how to support learners."

These findings align directly with divisional priorities, particularly in structured literacy and early intervention. Teachers emphasized that earlier identification of student needs allows for more responsive and effective support from the start of the school year.

Teacher Voice Brings the Data to Life

Survey comments reinforced these findings, offering vivid insight into the day-to-day classroom experience.

“The transition felt much smoother overall,” one teacher shared.

“Students came in ready to decode and encode words,” noted another.

Others described “fewer tears” and “more stamina for a full day,” along with a stronger understanding of classroom routines and expectations.

“What stands out in the open-ended comments is how often teachers use words like smoother, stronger, more ready, and more confident,” said Kelly. “This suggests that the impact is being felt both in academic programming and in the day-to-day conditions that help students succeed.”

A System-Wide Impact Across Programs

The positive trend was consistent across both English and French Immersion programs, with each reporting around 71 per cent positive impact.

While the overall results were aligned, teachers highlighted different strengths within each program. English program responses emphasized routines, stamina, and readiness for structured literacy instruction. French Immersion teachers noted strong oral language development, sense of belonging, and early identification of learning needs.

“This is a meaningful response set across both English and French Immersion programs,” said Kelly. “The overall pattern is clearly positive, while still leaving room for nuance and important cautionary feedback.”

Important Nuance: Conditions Matter

While the overall findings are positive, teachers were clear that the impact of FDK is not uniform across all classrooms.

Some areas, such as sustained engagement and emotional regulation, showed more mixed results. Only about half of respondents reported that students are able to sustain engagement for longer periods, and responses related to emotional regulation varied.

Teachers also identified a number of factors that influence outcomes, including class composition, student needs, access to support staff, and broader social factors.

“This is not a story of Full Day Kindergarten solving every challenge,” said Kelly. “Teachers are very clear that outcomes are shaped by the realities in classrooms, including student need, staffing, support levels, and the consistency of implementation. That nuance strengthens the credibility of the findings.”

Creating the Conditions for Success

A major takeaway from the survey is that conditions matter.

Teachers consistently identified key factors that strengthen the impact of FDK:

- Manageable class sizes
- Consistent access to educational assistants
- Strong alignment between Kindergarten and Grade 1 programming
- High-quality program implementation and continuity

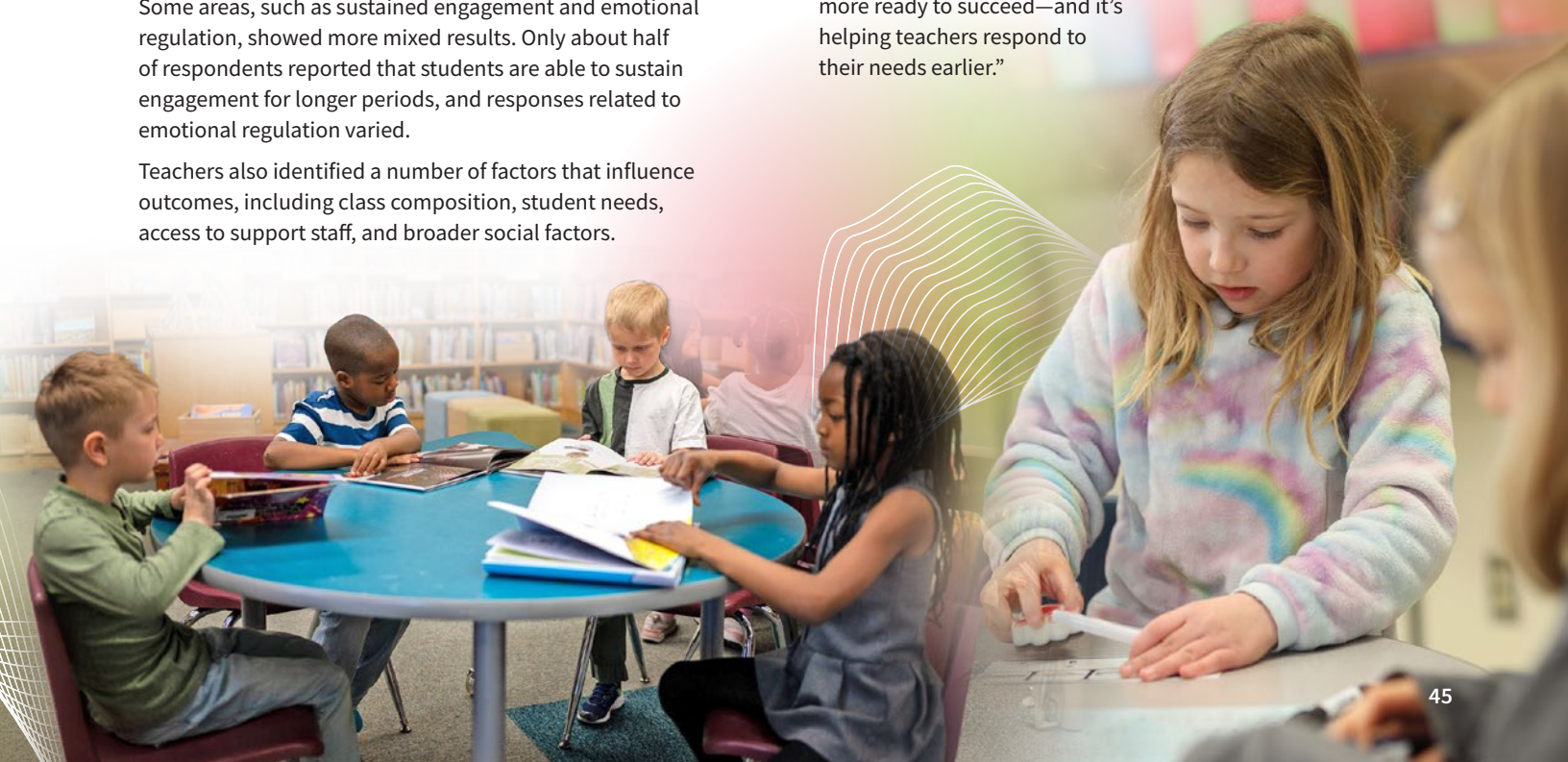
“Full Day Kindergarten provides a strong foundation,” said Kelly. “But its benefits are strengthened when the right supports are in place—when classrooms are set up to respond to the needs of all learners.”

A Strong Foundation for the Future

Overall, the findings provide a clear system-level signal: FDK is supporting a stronger, smoother start to school for students across the division.

Students are arriving more ready to learn, more familiar with school routines, and better prepared to engage in literacy and classroom learning from the outset. At the same time, the survey reinforces the importance of continuing to invest in the conditions that help those gains take hold.

“Our Grade 1 teachers are telling us that Full Day Kindergarten is making a meaningful difference,” said Kelly. “It’s helping students feel more prepared, more confident, and more ready to succeed—and it’s helping teachers respond to their needs earlier.”





NOURISHING OUR COMMUNITY

In the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD), students have consistent access to nutritious food throughout the school day, supporting their well-being, readiness to learn, and ability to succeed.

Through the **Universal Nutrition Program (UNP)**, food is available to all students, without barriers or stigma.

LRSD's approach is universal, meaning every student can access food regardless of income or need. This removes stigma and ensures that no student stands out when accessing support.

To support this approach, LRSD has developed a centralized food system:

- A food service provider that supplies schools division-wide with a broad range of food options, and
- The René Deleorme Centre (RDC) Commissary, which prepares and distributes meals while supporting and expanding the work schools are already doing, rather than replacing their existing programs.

This model allows schools to access food, with flexibility to match their infrastructure, from those offering basic grab-and-go items to those providing full meal programs.

Menus are intentionally designed to support all students, including culturally relevant options and choices that meet the needs of neurodivergent learners. This ensures that food is accessible, welcoming, and responsive to the diverse identities and preferences within LRSD schools.

The program also prioritizes sustainability by reducing waste and promoting environmentally responsible practices. Across the division, schools are repurposing food-grade buckets for gardening, using milk dispensers to reduce packaging, and transitioning to reusable dishes and utensils wherever possible.

Since its launch in September 2024, the program has expanded rapidly. Increased infrastructure, health permits, and food

distribution capacity have enabled more schools to safely prepare and serve meals to students.

The program is supported through provincial funding, federal investments, and grants, helping to ensure continued growth and long-term sustainability.

Across the division, schools are bringing the program to life in ways that reflect their communities.

École Henri-Bergeron

In late November 2025, École Henri-Bergeron welcomed families into the school for an open house and student progress conferences. For many, it was their first opportunity to step into the new kitchen, quickly becoming a hub of connection, learning, and community.

The space sparked meaningful conversations between staff and families, opening the door to greater collaboration.

"Parents were excited to be engaged in preparing meals for students," said Jeremy Bender, manager of the Universal Nutrition Program.

That enthusiasm has already sparked interest, with one parent offering to come into the school to cook jollof rice alongside students, creating a potential opportunity for cultural sharing and hands-on learning.

Sierra Cook, a Grade 7 teacher, is leading the design of food literacy activities that actively engage students in preparing lunches. Through this work, students are building leadership skills, gaining practical experience, and developing a deeper understanding of food and community.



“Through the nutrition program at École Henri-Bergeron, we have been able to create a space where healthy snacks and meals are offered to all students,” said Patrice Chartrand, principal, École Henri-Bergeron. “Students know that when they arrive to school, there will be a variety of quality food offered to them every day. The staff has been learning new skills and knowledge about nutrition through this program as well.”

St. George School

“The implementation of the Universal Nutrition Program at St. George School has had a far-reaching impact beyond what we initially anticipated,” said Carly Friesen, Principal of St. George School. “Each day, we provide nutritious, culturally appropriate food to more than 200 students.”

To support student growth, staff at St. George offer a wide variety of healthy food options. This approach encourages students to explore new flavours, learn about different foods, and develop an appreciation for a range of fruits, vegetables, and high-quality ingredients that support a healthy lifestyle.

“Our community room has also become the hub of student generosity each month when we serve our hot lunches,” said Friesen.

Student volunteers in Grades 5 and 6 dedicate their time each month to portion and package food for every student in the school. Through this experience, they build skills in food safety and proper handling while delivering meals to classrooms across the building.

“It’s been a lesson not only in how to be helpful in the kitchen, but also an act of generosity,” said Friesen.

Victor H.L. Wyatt School

At Victor H.L. Wyatt School, a small opportunity led to a meaningful change for one student.

Staff had been working to support the student, who previously faced challenges with consistent attendance. When the student was invited to help with the Universal Nutrition Program breakfast cart by handing out menu items to peers each morning, it marked a turning point.

What began as a simple role grew into a source of purpose. Having a responsibility to show up for, the student began arriving at school more regularly and on time. Each day, they greeted classmates, contributed to the morning routine, and became a

familiar, welcoming presence in the school community.

With this growing sense of ownership came a visible shift. The student takes pride in their role, expressing excitement about helping others and being part of something bigger.

This experience highlights the broader impact of the Universal Nutrition Program. Beyond providing nourishment, it creates opportunities for students to build routine, develop a sense of belonging, and strengthen their connection to school. These foundations support attendance and overall well-being.

Dakota Collegiate

“At Dakota Collegiate, the UNP is providing equitable access to healthy food while giving students hands-on experience with a clear pathway toward employment in the community,” said Krista Labossiere, vice-principal, Dakota Collegiate.

The “Sandwich Crew,” a group of co-op students, make approximately 175 sandwiches each week, building responsibility, teamwork, and problem-solving skills while learning food safety and workplace expectations.

“They’re gaining practical experience that supports future job readiness and making more informed choices about what they eat,” said Labossiere.

Glenlawn Collegiate

Charlene Edye-Rowntree, vice-principal, Glenlawn Collegiate, notes that the school is providing equitable access to nutritious meals and snacks for all students, removing barriers to food security. The program operates on a barrier-free model, ensuring students can access food as needed throughout the day.

Serving more than 300 students daily, the program extends beyond nutrition to create meaningful experiential learning opportunities. Students develop essential workforce skills through hands-on experience in food preparation, service delivery, and customer interaction.

By addressing nutritional needs and fostering practical skill development, the program helps ensure students are properly nourished and optimally prepared for academic success.

While these are just a few examples, there are many other great stories across our division.



LEARNING WITH THE LAND GROWS IN SECOND YEAR. plants sustainability in LRSD soil

By the time students gathered at The Forks on May 21, the learning had already taken root.

What may have appeared on its surface to be a single, large-scale celebration, the second annual Learning with the Land: A Gathering to Celebrate and Dream, was in fact the culmination of months of classroom inquiry, collaboration, and reflection across the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD). Throughout the 2025-26 school year, students and staff engaged in a coordinated effort to explore sustainability, responsibility, and relationship to land, shaping learning that extended far beyond one day.

“It really was bigger than one day,” said Suzanne Simpson. “It was something profound to see those conversations we were having with staff members from different schools trickle down and happen again in classrooms with students.”

That work began early in the year, with a clear goal of embedding learning connected to sustainability, Indigenous perspectives, and global citizenship into classrooms across the division. Through a series of professional learning sessions, educators explored themes linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, building shared understanding and practical connections to their teaching.

These efforts align closely with **Strategic Action 4.5: United Nations SDGs and the UNDRIP**, which calls for students to engage meaningfully with global and Indigenous frameworks through their learning.

Across the division, that learning took many forms, from land-based inquiry projects to community partnerships and student-led initiatives. Educators worked to connect classroom learning to place, encouraging students to explore their responsibilities to the land, to one another, and to the communities they are part of.

For Sean Oliver, the focus was on ensuring that these conversations became part of the fabric of school life.

“This year we knew it was all about embedding this learning in the division and building that capacity,” he said. “It was about demonstrating how to have conversations, how to get on the land and make meaning from those experiences.”

By spring, the impact of that approach was visible across the division. Student projects reflected months of learning, with a strong emphasis on local action and real-world connections, including environmental stewardship initiatives, explorations of Indigenous teachings and meaningful partnerships with community organizations.

Walking through the gathering, Simpson described a sense of both pride and possibility.

“It was a really powerful thing to see,” she said. “To look at all of the student learning that had happened and to see them engaged in what I believe are some of the most important conversations we can be having right now in the world.”

A key shift in the second year was the central role of students. Rather than observing or participating in pre-designed activities, students led the learning by presenting projects, sharing ideas and guiding conversations alongside community partners.

For Oliver, that student leadership stood out as both expected and inspiring.

“It’s a lesson to all of us that when we let students lead their learning ... it just hits that much harder. It’s that much more authentic.”

This approach directly reflects **Strategic Action 3.2: Student Voice and Agency**, reinforcing the division's commitment to placing students at the centre of their own learning and recognizing their capacity to lead.

It also fostered a shared sense of purpose across the division. Students, staff and community partners worked alongside one another, creating opportunities to learn together and from one another.

"It didn't actually matter what you brought," said Veronique Reynolds. "It was about being in community with others, sharing learning and the excitement of what it means to learn."

That collective energy was reflected in the gathering's most visible moments, including student pledges focused on caring for the land, reducing waste and supporting their communities. The commitments highlighted both personal responsibility and

a broader understanding of interconnectedness, with students pledging actions such as reducing litter, protecting natural spaces, composting and giving back to their communities.

For many involved, the experience was deeply meaningful.

"The right word would be humbled," said Oliver. "Humbled by the depth of care, generosity and motivation of our students."

As the year concluded, Learning with the Land served not only as a celebration, but as a marker of ongoing work. The initiative demonstrated how sustainability can be meaningfully integrated into everyday learning, with students playing an active role in shaping both their understanding and their actions.

Within LRSD, that work continues to grow, rooted in classrooms, carried forward by students and strengthened through a shared commitment to learning with the land.

School	Student Project(s)
Dakota Collegiate Institute	Environmental class passion projects
Collège Béliveau	Planning process activity
Niakwa Place School	Tabletop composting
Niakwa Place School	Wasaniibi water chemistry micro-ecosystems / Sing to the Water ceremony
Nordale School	Neighbourhood cleanup
Glenwood School	IYL fishing art installation
Glenlawn Collegiate Institute	Biology Beavers / Play Like a Girl
Victor Mager School	Food insecurities / responsible consumption
Shamrock School	Clothing swap (fast fashion)
Sage Creek School	Bike bus
Island Lakes Community School	Community quality of life; clothing drive and thrift store
General Vanier School	Storytelling (SDGs, superhero puppets, book creation)
École St. Germain	Environmental club music video
École Varennes	Composting
École George-McDowell	Food forest and interpretive walks (Henteleff Park)
École Marie-Anne-Gaboury	Club Jedi; monthly student presentations
Darwin School	Grade 5/6 music project (song)
Frontenac School	Beading and ribbon skirts
École Henri-Bergeron	Supporting Morgan's Warriors
Louis Riel Arts & Technology Centre	Revitalizing school grounds
École Julie-Riel	Parent council environmental club
École Howden	Bike bus
Hastings School	Community engagement scavenger hunt
École Sage Creek Bonavista	Water filtration project; classroom library
Lavallee School	Drumming, dancing, land-based learning, art piece
H. S. Paul School	Composting program
Highbury School	Songs, sewing club, star blankets, outdoor garden giveaway
St. George School	Eco club and activities
École Van Belleghem	Pollinator garden and bees (model)
École Guyot	Composting and signage relay race
Dr. D. W. Penner School	Revamping outdoor space (accessibility, species map)
École Provencher	Seeds project

PLEDGES



Melody

“ Je promets de protéger et ramasser les déchets.”



Brayden

“ Je promets de réutiliser tout ce que je peux.”



Christin, Trac, Jaycee, Kayden, & Riley

“ We promise not to litter.”



Alimah

“ I pledge to pick up garbage.”



Folagdera

“ I pledge to take care of the land.”



Mathea

“ I pledge to recycle.”



Lee-Ann

“ I want to stop crime issues and engage with different stations.”



Cameron

“ Je promets de ne pas polluer.”



Marques

“ I pledge to take care of people, stop littering and take garbage off the ground.”



Aeesire & Neza

“ I pledge to give back to the community. — I pledge to learn and appreciate everyone’s culture.”



Natalia, Dana, & Gardenca

“ We pledge not to litter.”



Maddie & Tami

“ We promise to promote more composting areas at school.”



Baraka

“ I promise to garden.”



Ashley

“ I promise not to litter, to acknowledge the Indigenous land we are on, and to do no harm.”



Indya

“ I pledge to give back more.”



Charlotte & Kate

“ I pledge not to swat bees & plant more plants. — I pledge to plant and garden more.”



Marleigh

“ I am part of planting a medicine garden at my school.”





DIVISION SCOLAIRE

LOUIS RIEL

SCHOOL DIVISION

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