



## MEMORANDUM

June 17, 2025  
Regular Board Meeting

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<b>TO</b>	Board of Trustees
<b>FROM</b>	Shauna Boyce, Superintendent
<b>ORIGINATOR</b>	Mark Francis, Deputy Superintendent
<b>RESOURCE</b>	Dean Bernard, Division Principal, Northern & Indigenous Relations Leanne Traverse, Facilitator, Northern & Indigenous Education Relations Geri Wu, Facilitator, Northern & Indigenous Education Relations
<b>GOVERNANCE POLICY</b>	Board Policy 1: Division Foundational Statements Board Policy 2: Role of the Board Board Policy 12: Role of the Superintendent
<b>ADDITIONAL REFERENCE</b>	BP 1: Vision, Foundational Statements BP 2: Education Planning and Programming
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>INDIGENOUS EDUCATION REPORT</b>

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### PURPOSE

For information. No recommendation required.

### BACKGROUND

The Board of Trustees upholds the Mission for Parkland School Division (PSD) to “assure supportive learning environments, meaningful experiences and healthy relationships that create opportunities to develop resilience, to gain diversity in perspectives and to achieve enduring success.”

Stakeholders, and particularly the Indigenous communities connected to PSD, gain trust and confidence when we are attending to developing a strong relationship between the Division and the Indigenous communities that results in increased academic achievement and a greater sense of belonging for our students.

Stakeholders also gain trust and confidence when our staff are actively attending to strategies to reduce the First Nation, Métis and Inuit achievement gap, to promote positive relationships with Indigenous students and to promote increased attendance rates.

This report is in support of the Division's Mission and is provided with respect to the Board's Annual Work Plan

## **REPORT SUMMARY**

Staff, students, parents and community stakeholder partners are called on to acknowledge the historical significance and contributions of Indigenous People and their cultures within the context of education. The Superintendent recognizes the need for all staff to take appropriate action to bridge and to build our relationships with First Nation communities. This Indigenous Education Report highlights the actions, intentions and shared responsibility of all staff members, that are considered from the dual perspectives of looking back at our successes and challenges, and of looking forward; planning and responding for continual improvement. Our primary responsibilities toward healing are twofold:

- To ensure that all students learn about the history and legacy of residential schools, along with the robust history of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples of Canada; and
- To enable all First Nations, Métis and Inuit students to achieve success, in a welcoming, supportive and safe school culture, without exception.

This Indigenous Education Report provides an overview of results and recognizes specific events and achievements throughout the year.

Administration would be pleased to respond to any questions.

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## Indigenous Education Report

June 17, 2025

Presented to the Board of Trustees, June 17th, 2025

Deputy Superintendent Mark Francis

Resource: Dean Bernard, Div. Principal of Northern & Indigenous Relations

Leanne Traverse, Northern & Indigenous Education Relations Facilitator

Geri Wu, Northern & Indigenous Education Relations Facilitator

*Our Students Possess the confidence, resilience, insight and skills required to thrive in, and positively impact, the world.*

### BACKGROUND

To align with the priority of Indigenous Perspectives and Ways of Knowing, Parkland School Division staff are actively working to build strong relationships with Indigenous communities and partners. Our goal is to understand the needs of Indigenous students and families to create educational environments where all students thrive. By engaging with Indigenous perspectives, PSD aims to foster successful learning, promote belonging, and create truly inclusive spaces.

This work is framed through Parkland School Division's Indigenous Education Braid, which symbolizes our commitment to walking alongside Indigenous communities. Like a braid of sweetgrass, each strand is essential on its own and stronger when woven together. The three strands of the braid are:

- First Nation, Metis and Inuit Worldviews – The "how" of Indigenous knowledge, such as oral traditions, land-based learning, ceremony, and storytelling.
- Indigenous Learners' Support – Grounded in the medicine wheel, focusing on the emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual well-being of self-identified First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students.
- Building Community Kinship – Strengthening and sustaining relationships with local Indigenous communities, nations, and families to foster reciprocity and belonging.



Within the context of looking forward to success, the 2023–24 Education Plan for Parkland School Division highlighted the enduring priority of "Indigenous Perspectives and Ways of Knowing":

"PSD is building relationships with Indigenous communities that increase understanding of their experiences, and therefore increase attendance rates, academic completion, and a sense of belonging for Indigenous students. In addition, we need to learn the history of our continent that predates colonialism — we have a responsibility to listen to the stories of the Elders and to increase our understanding beyond what we were taught in school, and to bring those perspectives into our day-to-day work and learning."

Additionally, Element 5: *PSD Staff Develop and Apply Indigenous Foundational Knowledge* states that:

Staff demonstrate an understanding of Indigenous perspectives and allocate resources in order to support Indigenous students' success and well-being.

Finally, within that element, the strands for development are outlined as follows:

- School leaders, teachers and support staff develop students' experiences with Indigenous ways of knowing through art, symbols, ceremony, story and song – and therefore raise the visibility of Indigenous culture in schools.
- School leaders identify a lead teacher, at each site, to collaborate and directly participate in supporting the needs of Indigenous students.
- School leaders and teachers collaborate with Indigenous Elders and community members, and increase their supportive role within the school setting.
- School leaders, teachers and support staff develop students' opportunity to experience Indigenous Knowledge Systems in schools, including connection to land, language, Elders and relationships.

## PSD LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*With peace, harmony and unity, we honour the land on which PSD resides which now includes Treaty No. 6 and Treaty No. 8 territories.*

*In Treaty No. 6, we recognize and acknowledge this is traditional and ancestral land, home to many First Nation, Métis and Inuit, including our immediate neighbours from Alexander Cree Nation, Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation, Enoch Cree Nation and Paul First Nation.*

*Treaty No. 8 is the traditional homeland to Cree, Dene, and Métis. Athabasca Delta Community School serves Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, Fort Chipewyan Métis and the Mikisew Cree First Nation.*

*We take time to recognize the land as an act of reconciliation and gratitude. We acknowledge Indigenous values, traditional teachings, ways of being, contributions and historical inequalities. We respect all cultures with an open heart and an open mind.*

*We ALL heal together.*

This is the official PSD Land Acknowledgement that is typically done at formal events and is accessible on the PSD website. However, with current teachings from elders and knowledge keepers PSD encourages all employees to personalize their land acknowledgements to reflect their individual relationships with the land, promote inclusivity, and encourage reflection and action in the ongoing process of reconciliation.

## DEMOGRAPHICS & DATA

### Indigenous Students Statistics

Demographics			
	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Metis	501 (36.81%)	468 (36.19%)	540 (36.39%)
Status First Nations	362 (26.60%)	302 (23.35%)	345 (23.25%)
Non-Status First Nations	233 (17.12%)	226 (17.47%)	238 (16.04%)
Federally Funded First Nations	237 (17.41%)	270 (20.88%)	332 (22.37%)
Inuit	28 (2.06%)	27 (2.08%)	29 (1.95%)
Total	1361	1293	<b>1484</b>

Indigenous Student Representation			
School	2024-2025	School	2024-2025
Athabasca Delta Community School	84.4%	Memorial Composite High School	13.1%
Blueberry School	5.0%	Ecole Meridian Heights School	8.9%
Brookwood School	8.0%	Millgrove School	7.2%
Ecole Broxton Park School	6.9%	Muir Lake School	7.6%
Connections For Learning	18.4%	Parkland Village School	7.8%
Copperhaven School	5.9%	Prescott Learning Centre	8.4%
Duffield School	28.8%	Spruce Grove Composite High School	9.0%
Entwistle School	7.6%	Tomahawk School	7.3%
Forest Green School	20.8%	Wabamun School	12.7%
Graminia School	6.4%	Westview School	11.3%
Greystone School	9.9%	Woodhaven School	10.3%
High Park School	7.9%		

## ELDER PROGRAM

The Elder in Residence Program within PSD is designed to support both students and staff in attaining Indigenous foundational knowledge through meaningful engagement with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers. These esteemed individuals are not merely resources; they are the holders of sacred cultural knowledge that is invaluable to those they share it with. The program's purpose is to foster respectful and special relationships with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, thereby honouring and respecting the rich historical, cultural, and spiritual knowledge they impart. This work directly supports the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action by promoting culturally appropriate education and recognizing the central role Elders and Knowledge Keepers play in sharing truth, engaging in reconciliation and healing together.

By engaging with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, students and staff benefit from a holistic enrichment of their learning experiences. This engagement strengthens their understanding and appreciation of Indigenous traditions and perspectives. Elders and Knowledge Keepers working with PSD from local First Nations, as well as from Parkland County and surrounding communities. The Indigenous Education Facilitator plays a crucial role in this program, ensuring that staff are connected with the appropriate Elders or Knowledge Keepers who can deliver teachings and knowledge relevant to the given context.

This year, two Elders were added to the program in order to broaden the perspective of knowledge and teachings shared, as well as enrich community connections.

Name	Bio	Locations	Visits / Events Attended
Elder Linda "Kôkum" Sinclair Anderson	Linda Sinclair Anderson is a Cree Elder from Slave Lake, Alberta. This is her second year working with the school division. With students and staff, she shares sacred family heirlooms and culturally significant items. She imparts traditional knowledge and teachings, prepares bannock, and leads smudging ceremonies. Additionally, she is passionate about providing educational insights on Truth and Reconciliation.	Blueberry, Forest Green, High Park, Meridian, Millgrove, SGCHS, Westview	50
Elder Wilson Bearhead	Wilson Bearhead is an Elder from Paul First Nation, and this is his first year working with the school division. Wilson shares knowledge and teachings, especially about the drum and does so through oral storytelling. He shares with both small groups as well as whole schools in drum teachings. He also facilitates the Blanket Exercise with staff to promote deeper understanding and reflection on Truth and Reconciliation.	Broxton, Brookwood, Forest Green, MCHS, Meridian, Parkland Village, Woodhaven	7
Elder Philip Campiou	Phillip Campiou is a Cree Elder from Driftpile First Nation. He has been working with the school division for over 10 years and spends time in PSD classrooms sharing about smudging, tipi teachings as well as traditional ways of knowing and being.	Broxton, Brookwood, Forest Green, MCHS, Westview.	7

Elder Violet “Kôkum” Poitras	Violet Poitras is a Stoney, Cree and Métis Elder from Paul First Nation. She has been working with the school division for over five years and spends much time in PSD classrooms. She enjoys speaking about “being born in a tipi” and her upbringing in traditional ways. She also enjoys speaking to cultural and ceremonial ways of knowing as well as treaty relationships.	Broxton, Brookwood, Duffield, Forest Green, High Park, MCHS, Meridia, Westview	58
Elder Maryann Stepien	Maryann is a Métis Elder originally from Hinton, AB. She has been working with the school division for over three years and is an active member of the Métis community. She enjoys speaking about Métis history and culture and enjoys doing hands-on activities with students (i.e. making Red River carts or dream catchers made from willows in her own backyard).	Broxton, Forest Green, High Park, MCHS, Meridian, Westview	23

## Notable Elder Events

### Drum Teachings

Elder Wilson provided invaluable support across multiple schools through both small-group and large-group activities designed to foster connection, belonging, and cultural understanding. In small group settings, Elder Wilson worked closely with students who were in need of emotional support, helping them strengthen their sense of identity and well-being, contributing to their mental health. In addition to this targeted support, Elder Wilson led large group and whole-school drumming sessions, where students were actively involved in learning traditional drumming practices. These teachings were delivered at Brookwood, Broxton, Forest Green, High Park, Memorial, Meridian, and Parkland Village schools. The events were well-received by both students and staff, creating a welcoming environment and enhancing school-wide appreciation for Indigenous culture and traditions.

### Furthering Indigenous Ways of Knowing - Brookwood School

Brookwood School undertook a year-long initiative to meaningfully integrate Indigenous Ways of Knowing into school life. The journey began with an assembly introducing Elders and Knowledge Keepers, followed by monthly themes explored through assemblies, classroom lessons, and hands-on activities.

Highlights included student-led Land Acknowledgements in October, a drumming and music day with Elder Wilson Bearhead in January, and a celebration of Inuit culture in February. In April, Elder Maryann Stepien and Jack Flett taught Métis traditions through classroom and gym jigging sessions. May featured tipi teachings with Elder Phillip Campiou, and in June, Kokum Violet Poitras shared her regalia and the meaning behind traditional dance.

### Indigenous and Allies Club-École Broxton Park

Throughout the 2024–2025 school year, the club hosted engaging sessions with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, featuring hands-on cultural activities such as ribbon shirt making, Métis beading, storytelling, drumming, and tipi teachings. Students also participated in meaningful sharing circles on topics like Residential Schools.

These experiences deepened students' understanding of Indigenous cultures and helped challenge stereotypes. Their enthusiasm was evident in the pride they took in their creations and their eagerness to continue learning. Interest in the club spread throughout the school, with younger students and teachers requesting classroom visits from Elders, a first for the school.

The impact extended to families and the broader community, as students shared their learning at home. In response, the parent council committed to funding more Indigenous cultural initiatives, ensuring the continuation and growth of this important work.

## Recurring Elder Events

### Harvesting the Healing Garden

Forest Green has continued its healing garden program, and new plans are underway for Greystone and Broxton Park to begin their own healing gardens on school grounds next year, in consultation with Elders. In fall 2024, Elder Violet Poitras joined Forest Green staff and students to harvest plants. The cycle continued on June 6, when Elders Phillip and Violet Poitras returned to help staff and students plant this year's seeds and plants.

### Smudge Teachings and Circle

Throughout the year, Elders continued to share smudging and circle teachings across Parkland School Division, supporting schools in fostering cultural understanding, wellness, and connection. These teachings were offered in both classroom and school-wide settings, often focused on community-building and recognizing student leadership and oskapewis (helper) roles. Many schools expressed intentions to incorporate smudging into their daily or weekly routines, reflecting a growing commitment to embracing Indigenous practices and creating spaces that honour traditional teachings.

## HONOURING INDIGENOUS CULTURE

### Athabasca Delta Community School Cultural Space

Athabasca Delta Community School has developed a dedicated cultural space on school grounds, featuring a permanently located tipi and trapper tent. This new space serves as both an outdoor classroom and a gathering place for cultural learning and celebration. It is actively used by students and staff as part of the school's learning environment, supporting outdoor education and land-based learning. The space has already hosted significant events such as the "Special Woman in Your Life" celebration and will be used by local Nations during Treaty Days later this month. The creation of this space has been a meaningful collaboration with community partners and reflects the school's ongoing commitment to honouring Indigenous culture and ways of knowing.

### Beading Course - LCD 1014

Offered through Connections for Learning, this course was a collaboration with Geri Wu and Erin Yeung to introduce students to the cultural, artistic, and therapeutic practice of beading. Launched on April 15th, the course began with a smudge to set a respectful tone and to ground students in Indigenous ways of knowing. Students then learned the fundamentals of beading, including how to plan, design, and create their own beadwork. Emphasis was placed on beading



not only as an art form but also as a calming practice, one that helps focus the mind and soothe the spirit through its rhythm and intention.

Following the launch, students continued to return independently to work on their projects, finding in CFL a safe and welcoming space where they could express themselves and grow creatively. Now formally recognized as **LDC 1014**, this course offers students the opportunity to earn 3 credits toward graduation while engaging in meaningful, hands-on learning rooted in culture and wellness.



#### Honouring Métis Week

Due to the fall break occurring during the traditional November Métis Week, an annual observance that pays homage to Louis Riel and the Métis people, with Louis Riel Day on November 16th as its culmination, Parkland School Division ensured that Métis culture and heritage were honoured throughout the month. On the November 8th Professional Development Day, twelve Parkland School Division staff attended a session focused on 'How to Support Métis Week' featuring Special Guest Elder Maryann. During this valuable session, Elder Maryann spoke to the importance of Métis Week and provided practical guidance on how to incorporate Métis culture and history into classroom

learning. Attendees were also introduced to a variety of resources, including Google slideshows tailored for Kindergarten to Grade 12, Rupertsland documents, and Métis culture cards. As an added highlight, one lucky attendee received the book 'Métis Like Me' by Tasha Hilderman." École Broxton Park students engaged in Métis beading and shared cultural exchange with Elder Violet Poitras, Duffield staff and students experienced the vibrant traditions of Métis fiddling and song, and High Park School learned from Métis Elder Maryann Stepien about Red River Carts. These examples illustrate the variety of ways Parkland School Division honoured Métis culture and history throughout November, demonstrating a collective effort across the division to provide meaningful learning opportunities for both staff and students.

#### Indigenous Cultural Celebration

The Northern and Indigenous Relations team, Memorial Composite High School, Spruce Grove High School, Connections for Learning, and Athabasca Delta Community School collaborated to plan and host the annual Indigenous Graduation celebration to recognize and celebrate Indigenous graduates within the division. This significant community event featured community powwow dancers, Métis jiggers and fiddlers, and a community feast. In a meaningful gesture recognizing their achievements and cultural heritage, each graduating student was gifted either an eagle feather, Métis sash, or an ulu, each symbolizing profound cultural significance for their distinct Indigenous identity. In preparation for the graduation celebration held on June 4th, an enriching 'An Evening of Teachings' was hosted, providing students with invaluable insights from Elders and Knowledge Keepers on the deep cultural meaning and importance of the eagle feather, Métis sash, and ulu. It was a wonderful celebration acknowledging the graduates and beautifully bringing together schools, families, and the wider community.

#### Inuit Elder Teaching and Performance

Westview School hosted a powerful learning experience featuring teachings and stories on Inuit history and culture, shared by an Elder and Knowledge Keeper. Students had the opportunity to learn about the significance of Inuit songs as carriers of stories and memories from their travels, the cultural meaning behind traditional clothing, and what life was like living in an igloo. This session offered valuable insights into Inuit ways of life and helped foster deeper respect and understanding of Indigenous knowledge and traditions among students and staff.

#### Land-Based Field Trip

Junior high students from Entwistle and Tomahawk Schools participated in a land-based learning experience focused on traditional Teepee Teachings. Guided by Elder Philip and Kokum Violet, the session provided students with meaningful cultural teachings that emphasized the importance of connection to the land and community. The event was rooted in

supporting student wellness, offering a space for reflection, cultural understanding, and personal growth. This experience strengthened students' sense of identity and belonging through hands-on learning and the sharing of traditional knowledge.

### *MMIP Sharing and Walk*

Many schools across the Parkland School Division participated in events to honour Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples, with activities focused on raising awareness, fostering empathy, and encouraging action. Several schools held walks and sharing activities to reflect on the significance of the day. At Memorial, students participated in a walk to honour those affected, while at High Park, the school engaged in the Moose Hide Campaign through a whole-school assembly and classroom-based learning.

The Moose Hide Campaign is a grassroots movement aimed at ending violence against Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people. Wearing a small square of moose hide symbolizes a personal commitment to stand up against violence and support healing and reconciliation. These events provided important opportunities for students and staff to come together in solidarity and deepen their understanding of the ongoing impacts of colonial violence on Indigenous communities.

### *Mural Woodhaven Wolf Mural*

At Woodhaven School, Artist Chloe Bluebird Mustooch collaborated with staff and students to create a vibrant mural reflecting the school's identity as the Wolfpack. Rooted in the Indigenous teaching of the wolf, which represents humility, this project was supported by Elder Wilson, who shared teachings to deepen understanding of the cultural significance. The mural was unveiled during a special celebration attended by Elders, artists, and drummers, recognizing the collective effort and creativity that brought the artwork to life. The event highlighted the school's pride and strengthened the connection between cultural teachings and school identity, leaving a lasting impact on the community.



### *National Day for Truth and Reconciliation*

All schools across the Parkland School Division engaged meaningfully in Truth and Reconciliation Day through activities designed to honour survivors, reflect on the legacy of residential schools, and deepen understanding of Indigenous history and perspectives. While every school participated, here are a few highlights that illustrate the diversity of approaches across the division.

At Memorial, students gathered for a whole-school assembly featuring a residential school survivor who shared their story, followed by students dancing in honour of their relatives. At ADCS, classrooms were immersed in reflection through school-wide activities centred on Truth and Reconciliation. Parkland Student Athlete Academy welcomed Elder Linda, who shared teachings with students, while Broxton Park invited Elder Maryanne to read *"Today is Orange Shirt Day"* to early years students.

Forest Green held a powerful student- and community-led gathering for the entire school, and Westview took on whole-school projects reflecting on the day's meaning. Copperhaven classrooms explored the concept of bearing witness and held sharing circles. At Millgrove, students created projects that culminated in a mural, and at High Park, classrooms engaged in focused discussions and activities about Truth and Reconciliation.

These efforts reflect the division's collective commitment to education, reflection, and action in support of reconciliation.

### Remembrance Day/National Indigenous Veterans Day

Acknowledging the importance of National Indigenous Veterans Day on November 8th, a day to honour the brave Indigenous men and women who have served and continue to serve in the Canadian Armed Forces, educators found meaningful ways to connect with students. For instance, Grade 6 teacher Erin Awe from Copperhaven School engaged her students in learning about the remarkable history of Cree Code Talkers, highlighting the significant contributions of Indigenous people during times of conflict. In a poignant act of remembrance, her class also created pointillism poppies, visually honouring the sacrifices and dedication of Indigenous veterans.

### Ribbon Skirt Making and Collaboration

In September, Genevieve Olivie, a member of the Kinship Advisory Committee, led a meaningful session on ribbon shirt teachings and practical sewing for Parkland School Division staff. The purpose of this event was to provide staff with the opportunity to create and wear ribbon shirts and skirts at cultural events throughout the school year. Rooted in traditional knowledge and cultural pride, this session supported staff in deepening their understanding of Indigenous clothing and its significance. Genevieve has expressed a desire to continue leading these sessions in the future, with the goal of fostering greater visibility and pride in Indigenous identity across the division.

## **MAMAWAPÔWIN: A GATHERING OF MÉTIS STAFF**

The gathering provided a rich and meaningful space for Métis staff to connect with their Métis identity and with one another. A central activity involved the sharing of family stories, an important aspect of Métis culture and oral tradition. Additionally, participants took time to reflect collectively on the Métis anthem, considering its historical and cultural significance. Métis Elder Maryann Stepien offered a deeply personal contribution by sharing her own story, which created a powerful sense of connection and encouraged staff members to open up and share their own family histories. Many shared personal narratives, as well as significant items that held deep cultural or familial importance.



A key element of the gathering was the transmission of cultural knowledge. Maryann led teachings focused on the Métis sash, which culminated in a special gifting ceremony, where Métis sashes were presented to participants. This act served to honour and celebrate Métis identity and pride, reinforcing a sense of belonging and cultural affirmation among the staff. Representatives from the Rupertsland Institute played a valuable role by providing access to a range of resources related to Métis history, culture, and contemporary issues. They also facilitated connections between staff members and the organization, fostering potential avenues for further engagement and support.

The gathering concluded with a group photograph and a special feast. In addition to the shared meal, resources and gifts were distributed, ensuring that participants left with both strengthened connections and tangible support for their ongoing journey of Métis identity and engagement.

## KINSHIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Kinship Advisory Committee continues to serve as a vital bridge between Indigenous communities and Parkland School Division, bringing together Indigenous parents, guardians, families, Elders, and PSD staff to inform and guide the division's Indigenous education initiatives. This year, the committee provided valuable insight into the development and refinement of programs and resources that support the three strands of the PSD braid—Indigenous Ways of Knowing, Indigenous Learners Support, and Creating and Building Community Kinship. One of the key initiatives the committee helped shape is the Indigenous Experience Program, a full-day event planned for June that will allow students to engage in immersive learning experiences rooted in Indigenous knowledge and culture.

The day will include hands-on opportunities such as ribbon skirt making, tipi teachings, Métis medicine knowledge, and a variety of other cultural activities designed to deepen students' understanding and appreciation of Indigenous Ways of Knowing. Through this initiative, the committee continues to model its commitment to Truth and Reconciliation by ensuring students have meaningful opportunities to learn from and with Indigenous communities in ways that honour traditions, promote respect, and build lasting connections. The Indigenous Experience Program is planned to be implemented in the 2025–2026 school year.



## RESOURCES AND CURRICULUM SUPPORT

This year, resources and curriculum support efforts were dedicated to the creation, organization, and sharing of Indigenous education resources to ensure all Parkland School Division staff have access to high-quality, culturally appropriate materials. Our team prioritized collaboration with schools and individual educators to identify needs and develop responsive tools that support Indigenous Ways of Knowing. Resources are carefully vetted to ensure they align with Parkland School Division's educational priorities and are properly sourced through respectful consultation with Indigenous community members. While digital resources continue to be our main focus, allowing for wide access and easy integration, we also maintain physical kits, including the Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada map, traditional Indigenous games kits, and curated book collections for classroom use.

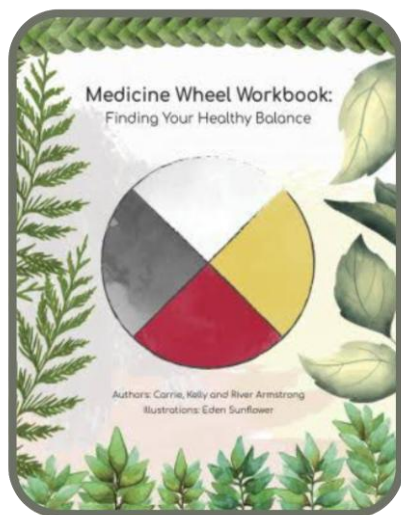
A key achievement was the continued development and cataloguing of the Indigenous Education Resource Folder on our shared Google Drive. This evolving collection includes subject-specific materials, mini-lessons, and curated content aligned with the Alberta Curriculum, as well as resources supporting days of significance, foundational cultural knowledge, and Indigenous language learning. New resources created this year include a seasonal teaching tool to complement Carrie Armstrong's Medicine Wheel Workbook, as well as Cree language bulletin board materials developed in partnership with Graminia School, designed to reflect the thirteen moons and encourage language visibility. To enhance access, we created a comprehensive Google Spreadsheet that mirrors the folder's structure and launched a submission form for staff to contribute classroom-tested materials. These efforts reflect our commitment to building an inclusive, authentic, and responsive resource ecosystem—one that grows through collaboration and community guidance to support educators across the division.

### Resource Creation


*Braiding Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being*



This resource is designed to support the use of Carrie Armstrong's Medicine Wheel Workbook: Finding Your Healthy Balance by providing supplementary materials that introduce students to an Indigenous perspective on holistic well-being, rooted in the teachings of the medicine wheel from Elder Francis Whiskeyjack (Saddle Lake Cree Nation, Treaty 6). The primary purpose is to guide students in understanding and applying the principles of the medicine wheel to achieve personal balance and well-being, aligning with the teachings presented in the Medicine Wheel Workbook. This resource directly complements Armstrong's workbook by offering seasonal Google Slide decks that unpack the teachings of each quadrant. It provides educators with visual aids, discussion prompts, and extension activities to enhance student engagement with the workbook's content. Structured around the four seasons, this resource can be implemented throughout the school year at both the whole-school and individual classroom levels. The foundational teachings are relevant for all learners, promoting a broader understanding of Indigenous wellness perspectives across different age groups.



## MOTHER EARTH



**Put into action:**

- Go on a nature walk. Look closely for all the ways water is important in your community - in rivers, plants, animals, homes and schools.

This story reminds us that we all have the power to take care of our planet and be protectors too.

**Reflect:**

- Think about what might happen if that water became dirty or unsafe. How would it affect people, animals and the environment?

### *nêhiyawêwin: Cultivating Language Through Collaboration*

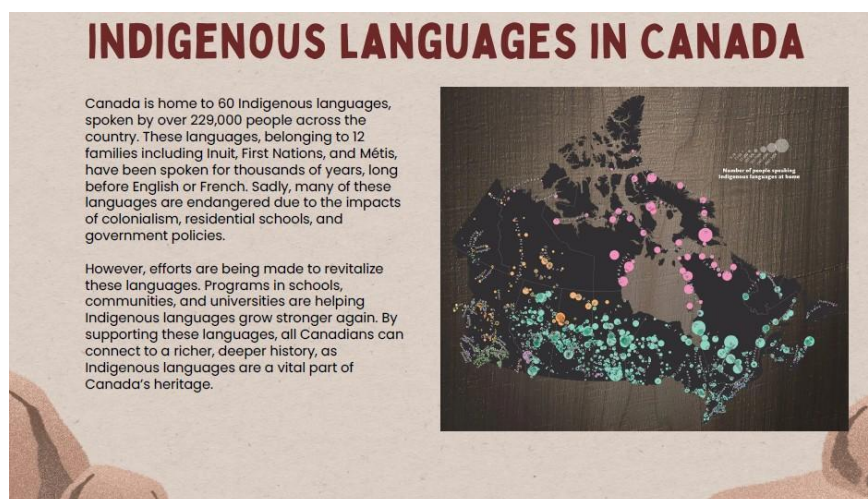
This impactful nêhiyawêwin (Cree language) resource emerged from a collaborative partnership sparked by a Graminia teacher's vision for an engaging bulletin board. Recognizing the power of visual learning, she reached out for support in bringing her idea to life. Through a dynamic collaboration, the Cree numbers one through ten were thoughtfully compiled, incorporating the delightful contributions of the kindergarten students. This foundational resource is now readily accessible for all Parkland School Division (PSD) staff, fostering early language acquisition and cultural connection.

Expanding on this initial success, the bulletin board at Graminia is evolving into a wonderful integration of nêhiyawêwin. Following the thirteen moons is a significant aspect of Indigenous knowledge; there will be corresponding Cree words with pronunciations, syllabics, and pictures. To further enrich classroom environments across the division, seasonal words, items, and actions in Cree are being developed for bulletin boards or general classroom use. These thoughtfully curated seasonal vocabulary resources will soon be available to all PSD staff, offering valuable opportunities to integrate nêhiyawêwin into daily learning and celebrate the cyclical wisdom embedded in Indigenous perspectives.



### Indigenous Atlas Project - Grade 5 Teaching Resource

The Indigenous Atlas Project exemplifies the dedication and thoughtful effort invested by Nicole Blanchet Kat Lam and their team at Prescott to deepen student understanding of Indigenous Peoples, cultures, and histories across Canada. This multi-day instructional unit was developed to guide Grade 5 students through a rich and respectful exploration of Indigenous knowledge systems using the *Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada*. The resource spans eleven structured lessons and integrates diverse, culturally responsive learning activities.



Example of a Slide

This initiative reflects a collaborative and student-centred approach that nurtures inquiry, empathy, and cross-cultural understanding. It provides an accessible and powerful model for integrating Indigenous Ways of Knowing into the classroom. The hard work behind this resource showcases the commitment to educational reconciliation and supports long-term cultural competency for both students and staff.

### Indigenous Education Digital Resource Folder

The Indigenous Education Digital Resource Folder is a vital and continually evolving collection of authentic, contemporary materials curated to enhance and support classroom instruction. These resources are directly aligned with the Alberta Curriculum, providing educators with tools to meaningfully and naturally embed Indigenous worldviews into their teaching. They are intentionally selected to support Overall Expectations (OEs) and specific strands across a range of subject areas.

By promoting a holistic approach to education, the folder aims to support student success and academic growth while fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives. The materials within the folder honour the distinct histories, cultures, and lived experiences of each group, ensuring Indigenous students see themselves reflected in their learning in authentic and meaningful ways. This approach moves beyond generalized representations to build genuine respect for diverse ways of knowing, being, and doing.

To assist educators in deepening their knowledge and classroom integration of Indigenous perspectives, the folder is organized into the following key areas:

#### Teaching Resources:

This section offers a curated collection of accessible mini-lessons, comprehensive lesson plans, and supplementary materials intentionally designed to support educators in weaving Indigenous ways of knowing into their teaching practices. These resources align with Alberta Curriculum outcomes and directly address subject-specific learning objectives through the explicit integration of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content. The folder is thoughtfully organized into subject-specific subfolders, including: English Language Arts and Literature (ELAL), Numeracy, Science, Social Studies, Art and Music, Physical Education & Wellness, and Land-Based Learning. As this valuable folder is actively being populated and updated with new materials, regular notifications will be shared to inform staff of newly available resources.

#### Days of Importance:

Acknowledging and integrating significant Indigenous days into the school calendar is fundamental to recognizing and respecting the distinct identities, histories, and contemporary experiences of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. Learning about these key dates fosters a deeper understanding of their invaluable contributions and promotes our collective journey towards reconciliation. *Please note that this is not an exhaustive list, and content will be added on an ongoing basis as new information and important dates arise.*

#### Foundational Knowledge & Worldview:

This section provides essential cultural protocols, where appropriate, alongside foundational understandings of diverse Indigenous perspectives. A significant addition is the newly released resource, 'Braiding Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being through the Medicine Wheel Workbook.' This comprehensive tool offers a holistic framework for a division-wide initiative, guiding educators in authentically weaving Indigenous ways of knowing and being into the fabric of the school environment. Structured around the profound teachings of the medicine wheel and its interconnected seasonal cycles, the workbook provides practical lessons for each quadrant, ensuring a meaningful and integrated approach to Indigenous education."

#### Indigenous Languages:

Recognizing and honouring the rich linguistic heritage of Cree, Stoney, and Métis students within Parkland School Division, the Indigenous Languages folder serves as a dedicated and continuously evolving resource. Guided by respectful language acquisition principles and developed in close collaboration with community partners, this section is committed to supporting and celebrating Cree, Stoney, and Michif. This commitment ensures the creation of culturally relevant and authentic language resources that will be regularly updated to reflect ongoing community input and the diverse linguistic landscape of our student population."

Complementing the ongoing refinement and updates to the Indigenous Education Resource Folder, two key supplementary tools have been developed to enhance accessibility and growth. Firstly, a comprehensive Google Spreadsheet has been created, mirroring the main folder structure, to provide teachers with a user-friendly overview of available resources on the shared drive. Secondly, the Indigenous Education Resource Submission Form empowers educators to contribute their own effective First Nations, Métis, and Inuit classroom resources for review and potential inclusion in the division-wide Indigenous Education Resource Folder.

## Podcast

This year, we launched the *Indigenous Ways of Knowing* podcast series as a flexible and accessible professional development tool designed specifically for Parkland School Division employees. With over 240 streams, the podcast has proven to be a valuable platform for deepening foundational knowledge, fostering understanding, and encouraging reflection on Indigenous experiences, perspectives, and teachings. Recognizing the time constraints many staff face, the podcast was developed to allow learning to happen anytime, whether during commutes, breaks, or quiet moments of reflection. Each episode features meaningful conversations with Elders, educators, and community members, offering diverse viewpoints and personal stories that bring Indigenous education to life in powerful and authentic ways.

The series includes a wide range of topics, from foundational teachings on the Medicine Wheel and the significance of protocol, to deeply personal stories about the residential school system, the Sixties Scoop, and life on reserve during the mid-20th century. Episodes also include practical discussions on how to support Indigenous students, the meaning of land acknowledgments, and how educators can examine colonial perspectives within their own practices. By blending lived experiences with professional insight, the podcast not only builds knowledge but also nurtures empathy and respect. Moving forward, the podcast will continue to serve as a bridge between oral tradition and professional learning, reinforcing our division's commitment to truth, reconciliation, and Indigenous education.

## Newsletter - Braiding Indigenous Ways of Knowing

Based on positive feedback from last year's pilot, the Northern and Indigenous Relations team has continued the *Braiding Indigenous Ways of Knowing* monthly newsletter into this school year. Originally launched to support staff in deepening their understanding of Indigenous knowledge systems, the newsletter continues to highlight significant Indigenous dates, share classroom resources, promote professional development opportunities, celebrate school-based initiatives, and connect staff with local community partners. It remains a valuable tool in supporting educators across the division in integrating Indigenous Ways of Knowing into their daily practice.

Sample pages from the May 2025 newsletter





## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This year, our professional development offerings were intentionally designed to reflect the diverse needs and interests of staff across the division. Guided by feedback from the previous year, from Elders and the Kinship Committee, we developed a robust and responsive professional development plan focused on deepening understanding of Indigenous Ways of Knowing.

A wide range of learning opportunities was made available, including traditional sessions on designated PD days and sessions tailored to specific school requests. In addition, our Indigenous Ways of Knowing cohort group was provided with enhanced experiences to further their learning and leadership in this area. Recognizing the importance of accessibility and flexibility, we also launched a podcast series to share oral traditional knowledge in an engaging, widely accessible format.

To ensure all employees had equitable access to meaningful professional development, we hosted evening sessions, such as the Métis gathering, creating space for personal reflection, cultural connection, and shared learning outside of regular work hours. This multifaceted approach allowed staff to engage with Indigenous Ways of Knowing in ways that were relevant, respectful, and enriching.

Professional Development Events	
CV·Δ·P tapwewin: Dismantling Anti-Indigenous Racism	<p>Educators engaged in an introductory workshop aimed at fostering critical reflection on systemic racism and assimilation, with a specific focus on anti-Indigenous racism. The session explored both historical and contemporary examples of racism faced by Indigenous Peoples, encouraging participants to examine their own roles in dismantling these systems within educational settings.</p> <p>This workshop provided a foundational understanding of anti-racism through the lens of Indigenous experiences and offered a range of resources to support continued learning. Participants were invited to reflect deeply, recognizing that some content may be challenging, particularly for Indigenous staff and those who have experienced racism. The session served as an important step in building awareness, empathy, and action toward equity and reconciliation in our schools.</p>
Blanket Exercise	<p>At Parkland Village School, staff participated in the Blanket Exercise as part of their ongoing learning and commitment to understanding Indigenous history and perspectives. The Blanket Exercise is an interactive learning experience that traces the historical and contemporary relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Using blankets to represent the land, participants physically move through key events such as colonization, treaty-making, residential schools, and systemic displacement.</p> <p>Facilitated in a respectful and reflective environment, the exercise at Parkland Village allowed staff to engage emotionally and intellectually with the impacts of colonialism. The experience concluded with a sharing circle, providing space for personal reflection and discussion. This powerful learning opportunity deepened staff understanding of Indigenous experiences and supported the school's efforts toward reconciliation and culturally responsive education.</p>

CASS Indigenous Education Gathering	<p>This year, Parkland School Division staff attended the CASS Indigenous Education Gathering, an event dedicated to deepening understanding and advancing Indigenous education across Alberta. Members of the Northern and Indigenous Relations team also participated, contributing to the gathering by sharing insights on the importance of community and kinship in education. Their presentation highlighted how meaningful relationships and culturally grounded approaches can create stronger connections between schools and Indigenous families. The gathering offered valuable learning, collaboration, and inspiration for Parkland staff, reinforcing the division's commitment to reconciliation and Indigenous student success.</p>
Engaging in Numeracy and Connections through First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Traditional Games	<p>This professional development session invited educators to explore the connection between numeracy and traditional First Nations, Métis, and Inuit games. Participants learned how these games can serve as powerful entry points for authentic learning, supporting both mathematical understanding and deeper engagement with Indigenous ways of knowing.</p> <p>The session highlighted how traditional games foster connections to the land, promote cultural understanding, and provide meaningful opportunities to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into classroom instruction. Educators were introduced to a variety of resources and practical strategies to integrate these games into their teaching, enriching both numeracy outcomes and cultural learning.</p>
How to Support Metis Week	<p>As part of our ongoing professional development offerings, staff participated in a session led by Elder Maryann Stepien and Leanne Traverse focused on preparing schools to meaningfully recognize Métis Week. The session provided valuable guidance on incorporating Métis culture, traditions, and history into school programming.</p> <p>Through shared insights and discussion, participants gained practical strategies for fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of Métis identity among students and staff. The session emphasized the importance of cultural celebration and offered educators tools to plan activities, lessons, and events that honour and uplift Métis heritage in respectful and engaging ways.</p>
How to Use the Indigenous Atlas of Canada in a School	<p>This professional development session introduced educators to use the map with 16 different topics and accompanying resources. Focusing on the topic of climate change, the session highlighted various First Nations, Metis, and Inuit perspectives on the subject. The events began with a smudging ceremony and explored how the physical presentation of maps can influence students' worldviews. Emphasis was placed on the importance of exploring different perspectives to enrich curriculum content.</p>
Indigenous Games	<p>The professional development session at Muir Lake, led by Lyndon Suntjens who is a current land-based teacher at Kitaskinaw School in Enoch Cree Nation, focused on a variety of Indigenous games. Participants received detailed background information and cultural and historical context for each game, and had the opportunity to play them, both in an outdoor and indoor education lens. The session included a discussion and Q&amp;A period, exploring how to integrate these experiences into Active Living within the comprehensive school health framework and Physical Education and Wellness curriculum content.</p>
Indspire National Gathering	<p>The Indspire National Gathering for Educators offers a comprehensive professional development experience, showcasing innovative approaches to Indigenous education. Participants explored diverse perspectives on key educational topics through Indigenous keynote speakers and breakout sessions. The gathering emphasizes the importance of incorporating Indigenous Ways of Knowing into the curriculum, offering sessions on best practices, resources, and strategies. Educators will engage in meaningful discussions and workshops, learning how to create inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments that honour Indigenous knowledge and perspectives.</p>

Killing the Wittigo - for PSD Counselling Staff	This session explored culture-based approaches to healing and well-being as presented in <i>Killing the Wittigo</i> . It began respectfully with a smudge, followed by an introduction to key Indigenous perspectives from the book. Participants then engaged in an open dialogue about these approaches and their relevance for supporting students. The session concluded with a sharing circle, providing a space for connection and reflection on how to integrate these valuable insights into educational practice.
Medicine Wheel and Art	As part of our ongoing commitment to Indigenous education, staff were invited to participate in a unique professional development session led by Angela Hall, a local Metis artist. This session focused on the teachings of the Medicine Wheel, offering participants a deeper understanding of its cultural and personal significance within Indigenous worldviews. Angela skillfully blended traditional knowledge with hands-on art activities, allowing staff to explore the symbolic meanings of the Medicine Wheel through a creative and reflective process. The session not only enhanced cultural understanding but also promoted personal well-being and connection.
Métis Identity and Cultural Learning Sessions	<p>Parkland School Division offered a two-part professional development series designed to support Métis staff in exploring their identity and deepening their connection to Métis history and culture. These gatherings provided a welcoming space for participants to share personal family stories, reflect on Métis ways of knowing, and engage in dialogue about the presence and celebration of Métis culture within our schools.</p> <p>A key focus of the sessions was the significance of the Métis sash, including its historical and contemporary meaning. The series concluded with a ceremonial closing in which each participant was gifted a sash, honouring their personal journey and our collective commitment to cultural understanding and belonging. These sessions fostered a strong sense of community and affirmed the importance of recognizing and supporting Métis identity within the division. (All Parkland Employees were invited to these two PD sessions)</p>
Supporting Indigenous Students in the classroom through the lens of an Education Assistant	<p>This professional development session was specifically designed for Education Assistants and focused on effective ways to support Indigenous students in the classroom. Participants explored strategies for creating inclusive and supportive learning environments that honour the cultural identities of Indigenous students.</p> <p>The session emphasized the importance of building strong, culturally responsive relationships and offered practical tools that Education Assistants can use to promote both academic and social success. Through shared discussion and reflection, attendees gained valuable insights into how to create respectful and affirming spaces that reflect an understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing and being.</p>

## Braiding Together Indigenous Lead Cohort

The *Braiding Together: Indigenous Lead Cohort* was one of our cornerstones of this year's professional development, offering a deeply enriched learning experience for a committed group of educators across the division. Designed to build leadership capacity in Indigenous education, the cohort engaged in a year-long series of culturally grounded activities that blended personal reflection, ceremonial learning, and practical application. From the opening Smudge Teachings and Sharing Circle in September with Elder Phillip Campiou to the Sweat Lodge and Feast in October, members participated in meaningful experiences that deepened their understanding of Indigenous ways of knowing, ceremony, and community.



These events not only fostered connection among participants but also laid the foundation for respectful engagement with Elders and Indigenous protocols.

Throughout the year, the cohort explored topics including Indigenous resources, leadership tools, language, ceremony, and culturally responsive practices. Highlights included individualized learning through the Indigenous Peoples Experience at Fort Edmonton Park, hands-on teachings about protocol and gifting, and a visit to Elder Bob Cardinal's teaching lodge at Enoch Cree Nation. Each session was designed not only to strengthen individual knowledge but to equip cohort members with the tools and confidence to bring these teachings back to their own schools. The year concluded with a potluck reflection and planning session, where participants shared their growth and began setting future

goals. The work of this cohort exemplifies a sustainable model for professional development, one that nurtures Indigenous leadership and creates ripple effects of learning throughout the division.

"An eye-opening experience where we were able to learn how to better support Indigenous ways of knowing within our schools to provide authentic experiences for our students." (Kristin McKeever)

"Being part of Braiding Together has inspired me to deepen my own knowledge and bring more Indigenous initiatives with my students and staff. This has helped create a more cohesive culture in our building." (Erin Yeung)

"Being part of the cohort was a deeply spiritual experience that revealed truth and reconciliation as a matter of the heart, deepening my connection to the land, spirit, and community, and guiding me to teach with greater empathy, respect, and purpose." (Kristen Chorney)

## LOOKING FORWARD 2025-2026

As we continue to strengthen our commitment to Indigenous education and reconciliation, several initiatives are planned for the upcoming school year:

**Division-Wide Indigenous Experience Event:** The Indigenous Education Cohort will continue planning a large-scale Indigenous Experience event, designed to be accessible to all schools across the division. The vision for this event includes a variety of hands-on learning opportunities such as beading, ribbon skirt making, traditional dance, storytelling, games, and teachings from Elders, allowing all students to engage meaningfully with Indigenous Ways of Knowing.

**Truth and Reconciliation Video:** A comprehensive Truth and Reconciliation video will be launched to support staff learning across the division. This resource will provide essential background on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and emphasize the critical role educators play in advancing reconciliation within schools.

**Resource and Event Expansion Through Cohort Leadership:** The Indigenous Education Cohort will use the foundational knowledge they have built to support schools in expanding their Indigenous-focused resources and events. Their leadership will help enhance and deepen the important work already taking place at the school level.