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No. 942416

IFCA
IMDE

INDIGENOUS EDUCATION – GUIDING PRINCIPLES

St. James – Assiniboia School Division acknowledges that all of its buildings and surrounding school community sits on Treaty One land, the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, Ininiw and Dakota peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation. It is also the current home of the Dene and Oji-Cree peoples. The land connects us all.

The community of St. James – Assiniboia has rich and historical Indigenous roots. First Nations and Métis communities used the Assiniboine River and the Portage Trail, known today as Portage Avenue, to cultivate and maintain their vibrant culture and traditions. For generations, the Métis built a community based on trade relations, agriculture, and opened their homes to families moving west to build a new life.

Indigenous peoples consider themselves unique, sovereign nations with diverse languages and cultural practices that are needed to retain and transmit their identity. This process is determined in accordance with their own languages and cultural practices.

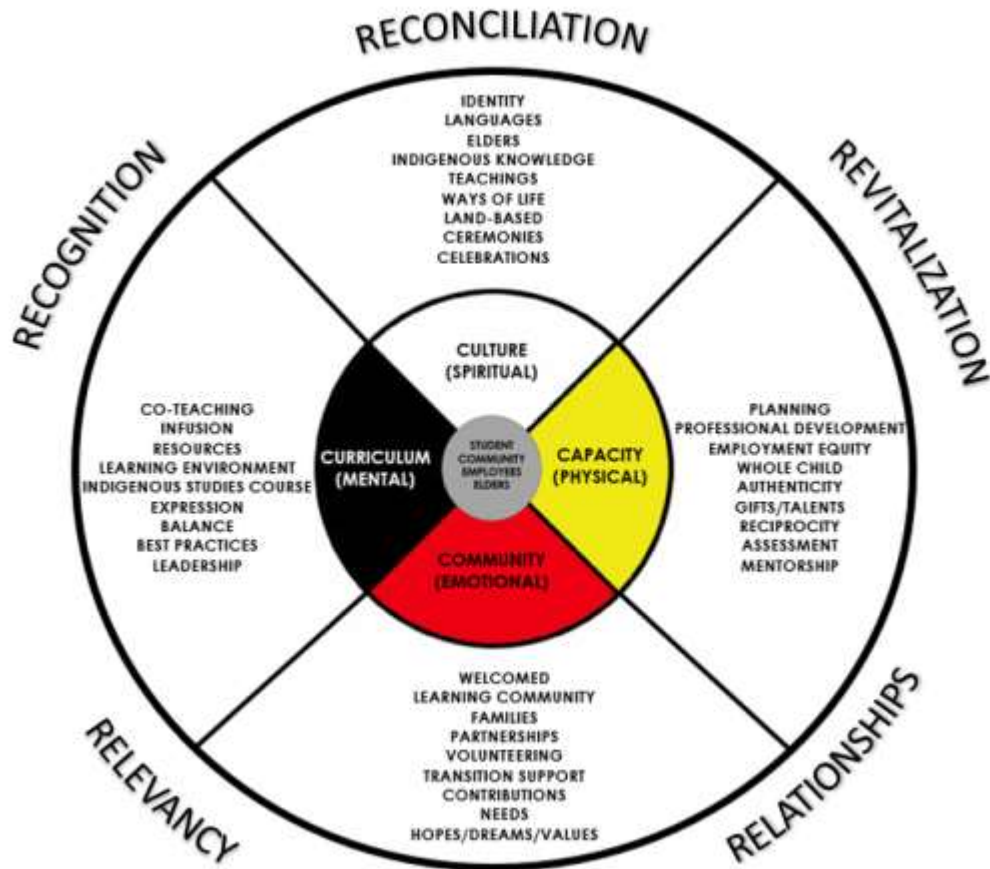
The division recognizes that colonialism has altered, interrupted, and interfered with the lives of Indigenous people and communities. We understand that the past informs our present practices, and that educators have an important part to play in moving Canada forward, towards reconciliation for the next seven generations and beyond. Relationships are foundational and essential in order to move forward towards reconciliation. Our students deserve relationships based on mutual respect and reciprocity.

This is a living, breathing document, which will be reviewed and amended as necessary in keeping with provincial direction and to reflect the ongoing needs of our students and the school community.

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The division, as outlined in the following principles of Indigenous Education, will implement practices and procedures in support of the board policy and Manitoba Education priorities in the following areas:

- I. Capacity
- II. Community
- III. Curriculum
- IV. Culture



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I. Capacity

When creating classroom community, our planning will honour the importance of balance in our lives, which encompasses the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual parts of the student. Providing authentic learning that honours the gifts that each student brings to the learning community will strengthen each individual learner and the classroom as a whole.

Staff will engage in purposeful planning, as well as professional development opportunities, which will assist them in developing accurate knowledge and understanding of Indigenous histories, perspectives, contributions, challenges, and ways of knowing and learning.

Schools will ensure that assessment practices take into account appropriate cultural content and allows for the expression of Indigenous perspectives.

The division will maintain and further develop initiatives for hiring Indigenous employees for various positions, at all levels.

For Reference - Assembly of First Nations – Redefining How Success is Measured:

http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education/5.2007_redefining_how_success_is_measured_en.pdf

II. Community

The division recognizes that a strong connection between family and school is essential for the success of all students, and understands that to enhance reciprocal relationships we need to honour and respect the differences in parenting styles.

Building a strong, respectful relationship with families that is both flexible and responsive to family needs increases positive communication, builds bridges, and validates the important role that families bring to the school community.

Schools will provide opportunities for families to connect with cultural Elders and teachings to make meaningful contributions as members within the school community.

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The division will support the transition of Indigenous students from rural to urban settings, as well as the transition from graduation to post-secondary or employment. With this in mind, we will continue to develop partnerships with outside agencies to support the achievement of Indigenous students.

For Reference - MB Education - First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework: http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/aed/fnmi_framework/document.pdf

III. Curriculum

The infusion of Indigenous perspectives into all areas of curriculum will have a positive effect on the identities of our students, as students will see themselves reflected in the learning environment. Students who have a strong sense of self, will develop leadership and mentorship skills that will create an ongoing sense of pride in themselves and their community. All students, from various cultural backgrounds, upon graduation, will have a strong knowledge of Indigenous histories, perspectives, contributions, challenges, and ways of knowing and learning. The division will continue to develop, support and enhance existing initiatives and best practices in Indigenous education.

Schools will ensure that Indigenous perspectives are being infused in all core curricular areas as outlined by Manitoba Education and the province, at all grade levels, helping Indigenous students make personal connections with community, curriculum, and culture. Experiential learning will be provided where appropriate.

The division will ensure that resources are available that provide balanced, accurate, culturally appropriate information regarding Indigenous histories, cultures, and languages that foster positive attitudes, values, and knowledge for all learners.

For Reference - MB Education - Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into Curricula: http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/abpersp/ab_persp.pdf

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Academic Achievement of Indigenous Students

The division is dedicated to supporting Indigenous students in reaching their full potential. We will work to ensure that the Aboriginal Academic Achievement Grant is fully implemented, with a strong focus on literacy and numeracy, and is reflected in divisional, school, and classroom planning.

Schools will undertake measures to ensure that students who are struggling are identified as early as possible. Strengths based supports will be put in place to ensure their continued self confidence in attaining their personal and academic goals. A variety of data will be used at both school and divisional levels to monitor and support student learning and success.

IV. Culture

The division recognizes the importance of culture in the everyday lives of its students, and understands that individual students come to school as part of a family, a community, and the world. Mino Pimatziwin (leading a good life) means one walks in balance with the medicine wheel, which also speaks to our connection with the land and water. Everything is ceremony and connects us to the world around us.

Schools will provide opportunities for all students and their families to make connections with Elders and cultural teachers, and participate in ceremonies and cultural celebrations. An example of this would be the practice of Smudging within our schools (*for further information on this, see Policy IMDE*).

Where appropriate, schools will provide opportunities for students to connect with nature. Being connected on a deep level with the land, water, and animal relations helps us maintain a healthy relationship with ourselves, each other, this place, and the world. The division is committed to developing and offering language and land-based programs to students, staff, and families of the division, which will support the academic achievement and development of identity.

For Reference - MB Education – Kindergarten to Grade 12 Aboriginal Languages and Cultures: http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/abedu/framework/k-12_ab_lang.pdf

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