

Accountability Report

Truth and Reconciliation

June 2026



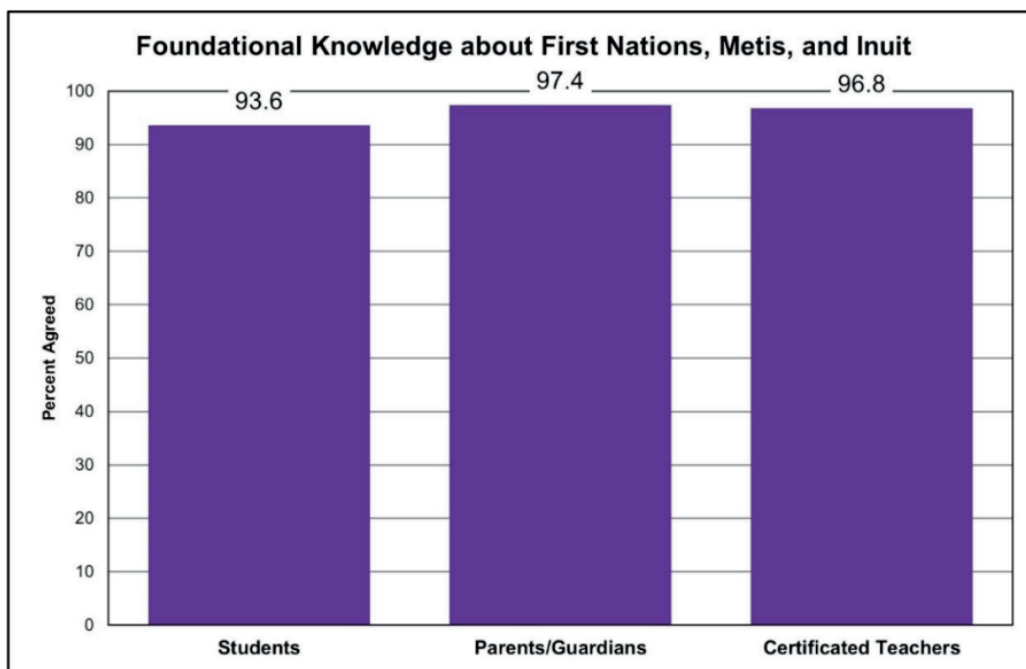
Student Services

Indigenous Learning Services



The release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action represented an important national milestone in advancing reconciliation across Canada. However, for the Edmonton Catholic School Division (ECSD), this work did not begin with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Rather, the Calls to Action affirmed and strengthened a long-standing commitment to supporting Indigenous peoples, building meaningful relationships, and fostering greater understanding of the truths surrounding Canada's historical treatment of Indigenous communities. ECSD's response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action has been part of a broader and continuing journey—one grounded in relationships, guided by Indigenous voices, and built upon years of intentional work toward reconciliation.

The Edmonton Catholic School Division conducted the ECSD Annual Survey from January 5 to January 23, 2026, to engage students, parents/guardians, and certificated teachers with respect to the quality of Catholic Education provided. Regarding Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, we are extremely proud of the of the results below which indicate the success of this intentional work being done by Student Services and the Department of Indigenous Learning Services.





Although we are extremely proud of the results of the Satisfaction Survey results from this year and years past, we recognize that reconciliation is an ongoing journey, and Student Services and Indigenous Learning Services remain committed to continually learning, improving, and moving this work forward.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #63 calls upon the public education system to develop and implement curriculum, share best practices, build student capacity, and identify related teacher training needs. Alberta's Teaching Quality Standard (TQS), Leadership Quality Standard (LQS), and Superintendent Quality Standard (SQS) focus on building foundational knowledge, creating and sustaining relationships, and career-long learning relating to Truth and Reconciliation and Indigenous Education. Division Goals also outline a focus on building capacity, foundational knowledge, and the TRC's Calls to Action.

The entire Indigenous Learning Services (ILS) department is responsible for guiding our Division along the journey of Truth and Reconciliation. This includes the work of the Council of Elders, Manager, Knowledge Keeper, Braided Journeys Supervisor and staff, the staff of the Nehiyaw Pimatisiwin Cree Language and Culture programs, Indigenous Education Consultants, and Four Directions Wellness leaders.

This report will focus on the Truth and Reconciliation portfolio lead by the Truth and Reconciliation Consultant. This portfolio includes:

- Guiding our Truth and Reconciliation Lead Teachers
- Providing Gathering Circle support and resources
- Providing accurate information, resources and links about opportunities to build Foundational Knowledge and bring meaningful experiences into our schools and classrooms
- Communicating through the Week at a Glance, the numerous opportunities available to all staff to build Foundational Knowledge both within our Division and throughout the Indigenous community





Truth and Reconciliation Lead Teachers

The Truth and Reconciliation Lead Teacher champions the integration of Indigenous perspectives, histories, and ways of knowing into school culture, curriculum, and pedagogy. This role supports staff and students in deepening their understanding of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action creating learning environments that honour Indigenous voices and experiences. Each site is encouraged to build capacity through site-based resource acquisition, ongoing Professional Development, and building relationships with local Elders, Knowledge Keepers, cultural advisors, and organizations.

Key Responsibilities:

- Support Indigenous students in achieving personal, emotional, spiritual, mental, physical, and academic success
- Lead school-wide initiatives that support the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action
- Support teachers in embedding Indigenous content and perspectives across subject areas
- Facilitate professional learning for staff on Indigenous education, cultural safety, and anti-racism
- Build relationships with local Indigenous communities, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers to support authentic learning experiences
- Organize cultural events, land-based learning opportunities, and student-led reconciliation projects
- Provide opportunities for family engagement

Aligning with the Teaching Quality Standard (TQS):

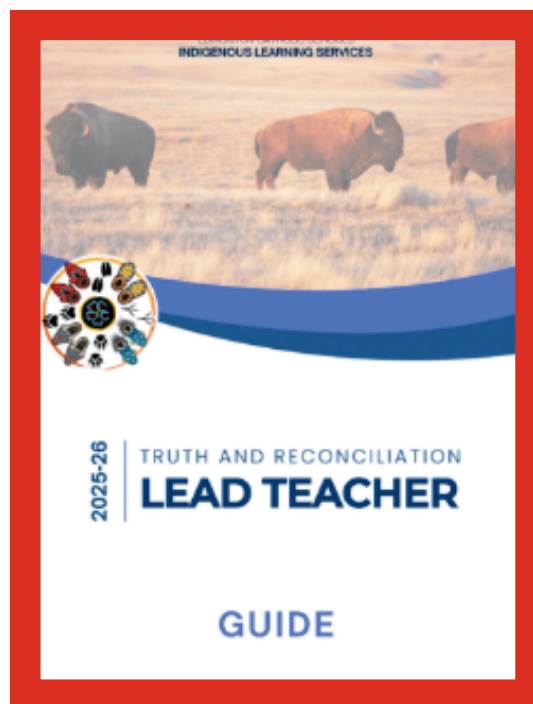
- **Fostering Effective Relationships:** Builds respectful, inclusive relationships with students, staff, families, and Indigenous communities
- **Engaging in Career-Long Learning:** Models a commitment to ongoing professional growth in Indigenous education and reconciliation
- **Demonstrating a Professional Body of Knowledge:** Applies deep understanding of Indigenous histories, cultures, and pedagogies in instructional leadership
- **Establishing Inclusive Learning Environments:** Creates safe, welcoming spaces that reflect and respect Indigenous identities and worldviews
- **Applying Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit:** Demonstrates and supports the application of foundational knowledge to benefit all students

“We are blessed to have a Braided Journeys program on site focusing on our Indigenous students, but the support we receive as Truth and Reconciliation leads has been instrumental in helping the rest of our student population make connections between Indigenous teachings and their own lives, demonstrating both empathy and critical thinking. Non-Indigenous students are showing greater openness to diverse worldviews, while Indigenous students are seeing their identities more meaningfully reflected and honoured. Both students and staff have been involved in creating and sharing personal land acknowledgements which has been very powerful for our community. This work continues to guide our school forward in living out Truth and Reconciliation in authentic and impactful ways.”



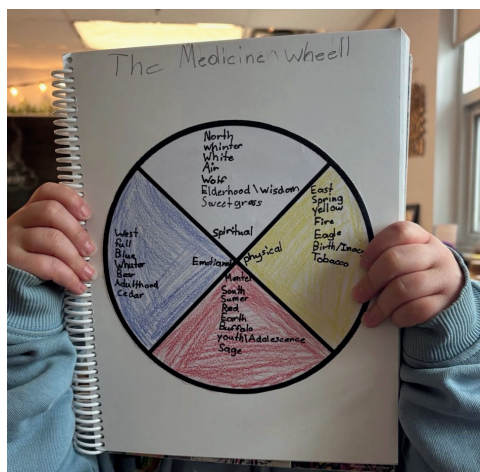
The Truth and Reconciliation Consultant provides support for these important leaders at the school site, through weekly emails, professional learning sessions and resource development.

The Truth and Reconciliation Lead Teacher Guide contains information about the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Grant, Self-Identification, Guidelines for Inviting Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Performers, Parent Engagement, Gifting and Honouraria information, sample letters to parents, as well as valuable information about Indigenous events that could be held school wide.



This year's professional learning sessions included:

- Orange Shirt Day Idea Share
- Strategies to support meaningful Truth-telling and Reconciliation in classrooms and schools
- The introduction of the new Gathering Circle Handbook 2025-2026
- Beyond Land Acknowledgements
- Treaty Education with Spirit and Intent
- Honoring Identity and Voice
- Sacred Medicines
- Indigenous People's Experience
- Preparation for National Indigenous Month
- Planning template for school teams to plan for the upcoming year



"As a Truth and Reconciliation Lead teacher within our district, I feel supported by Indigenous Learning Services staff as I continue to develop my own foundational knowledge about Indigenous peoples and look forward to using that to bring schoolwide activities to my school community, like recognizing National Indigenous History Month in June of each year. Professional Development that I have attended has been instrumental in widening my understanding of Indigenous issues and allowed me to reflect on my role as a non-Indigenous ally within Truth and Reconciliation. I am proud of the actions that Edmonton Catholic Schools has taken to support our school staff and our many our Indigenous students."

Truth and Reconciliation Lead Teacher

The Indigenous Leads Planning Guide was developed to guide Truth and Reconciliation Lead Teachers, with their administration teams, in reflection of this year and goal setting and planning steps for success for next year. It asks basic questions such as:

- Have you had a Blanket Exercise in the past 5 years? For staff? For Students?
- Do you have a dedicated space for smudging? Have you had a PD for staff teachings?
- Indigenizing spaces; Do you have a Treaty 6 Acknowledgement Canvas/Poster displayed at every entrance and personal land acknowledgment at meetings? Do you have 3 big flags displayed? Treaty 6, Metis, & Inuit Flags. What more can be done?
- Have you reviewed student data in PowerSchool for self-identification, achievement, attendance, wellbeing, tiered supports?
- Do you have time in staff meetings to share? Do you have a year plan for your school?
- Programming for Indigenous Students – has there been opportunities for Gathering Circles, Wellness Circles, Braided Journeys, or Bridging Futures?
- Calls to Action – What is your whole school Call to Action commitment? Is it part of your School Development Plan?

“...In addition to the rich classroom resources, the creation of easily accessible handbooks—including those for gathering circles, roles and responsibilities of the lead teacher, and other essential guidance—has been incredibly valuable. These documents have offered clarity, consistency, and confidence in my role, and they have supported our school in building practices that honour Indigenous ways of knowing.

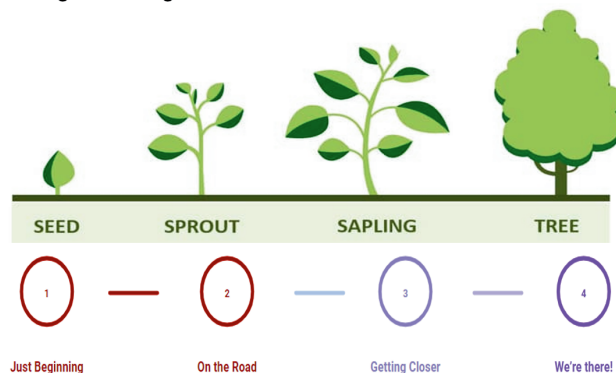
The shared Google Classroom has also become a great tool for inspiration, and collaboration. Having a centralized space where lead teachers can access, share, and distribute resources has made collaboration more efficient and has ensured that all schools benefit equitably from the work being done across the division.

Professional development opportunities offered by ILS this year have been thoughtful, relevant, and clearly shaped by teacher feedback. These sessions have deepened my understanding and expanded my capacity to support both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in meaningful learning. ...”

Truth and Reconciliation Lead Teacher

Beginning of the Year Reflection: Where is your school on the journey of Truth and Reconciliation toward the weaving in of Indigenous ways of knowing and being? Use the graphic below to consider your school's current journey.

→ Staff that have been a part of the last three years engaging in professional learning are **Getting Closer**. New staff are more **On the Road**.



- Staff feel they have personal foundational knowledge of Indigenous perspectives.
- Instruction and materials across the school reflect Indigenous ways of knowing and being.
- School and classroom environments reflect Indigenous culture.
- Elders and Knowledge Keepers are a part of the school and invited into classes.



The Indigenous Learning Services Department, including the Truth and Reconciliation Consultant, work to ensure that meaningful learning opportunities are accessible to all division staff at both the division and school levels. Some of these professional learning opportunities include:

- Blanket Exercise
- Land Acknowledgements
- Building Foundational Knowledge and Allyship in support of the TQS
- Honoring Indigenous Perspectives: Exploring Worldviews in Education
- Becoming Indigenous Trauma Informed
- Sacred Teaching: Understanding Smudging, Medicines and the Medicine Wheel

“Indigenous Learning Services plays a vital role in advancing Truth and Reconciliation by providing meaningful opportunities for professional growth and cultural learning through professional development sessions, gathering circles, and land-based experiences. In my role as a lead teacher, I support this work by engaging deeply in these opportunities and bringing that knowledge back to my school community, where it informs and strengthens our collective practice. While this is one contribution within a larger movement, it is an important step in embedding reconciliation into everyday learning.

The impact of this work is evident across our school community. Students experience a strong sense of pride and belonging when their cultures and traditions are recognized and celebrated. Through opportunities such as traditional dancing, storytelling, and preparing traditional foods, students are empowered to share their identities and talents. This not only enhances student engagement but also fosters a more inclusive and connected school environment where community is actively built and sustained.

We recognize that the work of Truth and Reconciliation is ongoing. At the school level, we contribute by creating space for meaningful dialogue and reflection around important events such as Every Child Matters and Red Dress Day. These moments of learning and remembrance encourage awareness, empathy, and continued commitment to reconciliation among students and staff. Our school is committed to embedding Indigenous perspectives and practices into daily learning. We provide opportunities for students and staff to participate in smudging within our sacred space and collaborate closely with community members and Elders who enrich our school through ceremonies and shared knowledge. Practices such as land acknowledgements, singing the national anthem in Cree, and incorporating Cree language and prayer into our routines reflect our dedication to honoring Indigenous cultures in authentic and ongoing ways.

Through these collective efforts, we are fostering a school environment grounded in respect, inclusion, and cultural understanding, contributing meaningfully to the broader journey of Truth and Reconciliation.”

Truth and Reconciliation Lead Teacher





Gathering Circles

Gathering Circle for K-6/ Wellness Circle for 7-12

Indigenous student gatherings are intended to be safe spaces where students can celebrate their identity, have fun, and take on a leadership role within their school community. The group may be hosted by a Truth and Reconciliation Lead Teacher and/or other interested staff members at your school site. It is helpful to have more than one staff coordinator to reduce the workload of a single individual. It is recommended to keep the meetings consistent as the intent is to build supportive relationships with students and for them to connect with each other. This is also a wonderful opportunity to invite parents into the school to share cultural knowledge and build a relationship with staff. Activities that can be incorporated into meetings:



Emotional and Physical Wellness:

- Sharing circles with Elders or Knowledge Keepers
- Journaling or storytelling sessions focused on identity and resilience
- Peer mentorship and team building games
- Art therapy through traditional crafts (e.g., beading, painting, or drum-making)
- Land-based activities like nature walks and talks
- Indigenous games
- Healthy cooking workshops and nutrition talks
- Pow-wow dance aerobics

Mental & Spiritual Wellness:

- Invite Knowledge Keepers to share smudge teachings
- Invite Four Directions staff to share Medicine Wheel teachings
- Goal-setting and leadership development sessions
- Inspirational films and guest speakers



Recommended Field Trips:

- Grade 7 and Grade 10 Welcome Excursions
- Volunteering (i.e food bank, local parish, senior centre)
- Post-secondary Days (Connect with Indigenous Student Centre)
- Career Days (As posted on Indigenous Learning SWAG)
- Telus World of Science (funding available for Indigenous patrons)
- INIW River Lot 1100 Indigenous Art Park (Land-based Learning)
- Royal Alberta Museum (free for Indigenous patrons)
- Fort Edmonton Park (free for Indigenous patrons)
- Transition to Ten Days (Hosted by Braided Journeys schools)
- Four Directions Junior High Symposium (Hosted by ILS)



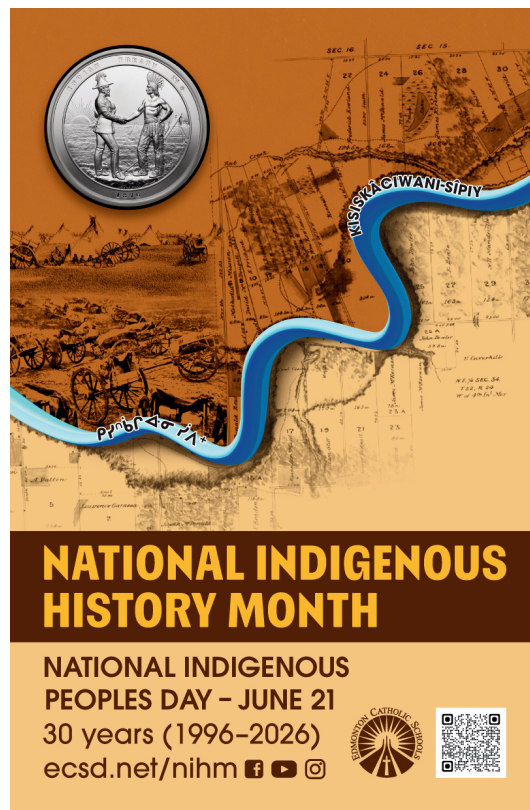
Whole School Initiatives

While it is essential that teachers and all staff continue learning about the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, the most important work happens when this knowledge is brought meaningfully into our schools and classrooms. Our responsibility is not only to deepen our own understanding, but also to ensure that students – both Indigenous and non-Indigenous – engage with these teachings in ways that build awareness, respect, and relationships. By embedding this learning into everyday school experiences, we help create communities grounded in truth, reconciliation, and shared understanding. The Truth and Reconciliation Consultant supports the following school initiatives:

- Smudging Guidelines and Supports
- Gathering Circles for K – 6/Wellness Circles for 7 – 12
- Orange Shirt Day
- Remembrance Day
- Rock Your Mocs
- Métis Week
- Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirit Plus People
- Indigenous Youth Wellness Symposium
- National Ribbon Skirt Day
- National Indigenous History Month



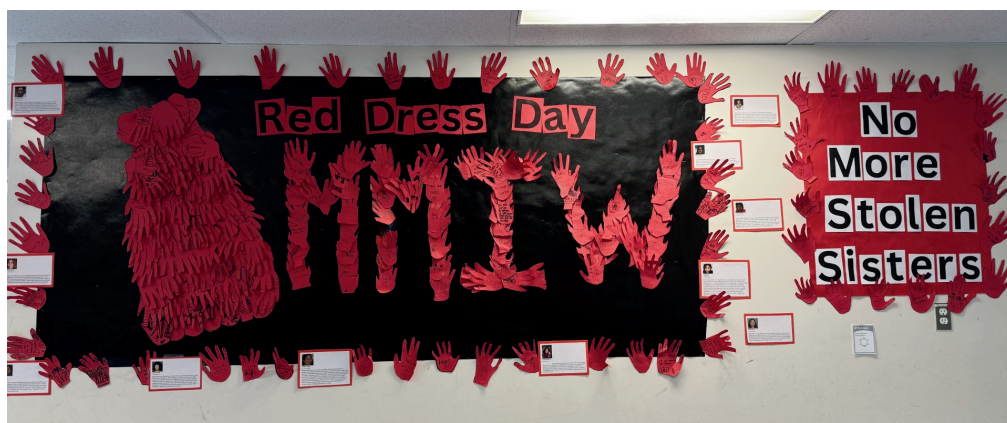
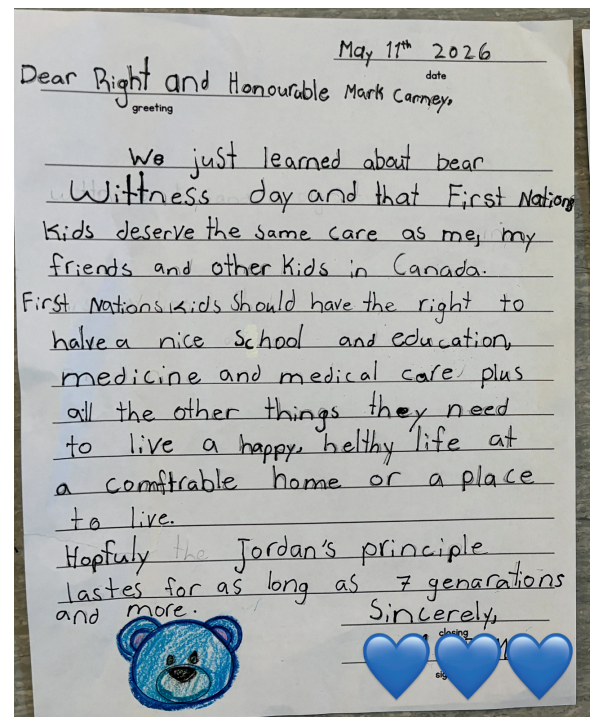
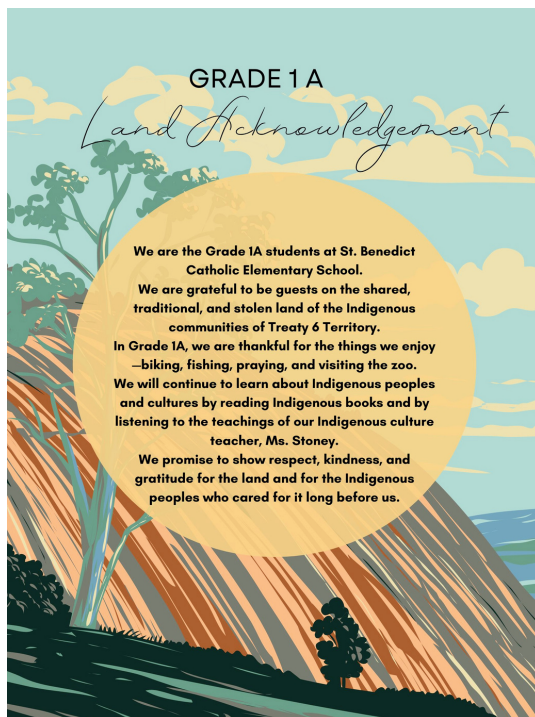
Student, Mary Bigcharles was selected as an honoree in the National Truth and Reconciliation 'Imagine a Canada' contest. She was incredibly proud to share her experience with her school community, and will be attending the conference in Winnipeg. This recognition is a powerful affirmation of her voice, her story, and the importance of creating spaces where Indigenous students feel seen and celebrated.






“Our professional development, resources, and Gathering/Wellness Circles have strengthened communities of belonging, encouraging students to act with kindness and stand up for others. Students now lead peer support initiatives, showing increased empathy and responsibility. Through Land Acknowledgments, smudging ceremonies, and discussions about Indigenous Medicines, we are advancing Truth and Reconciliation while inspiring both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to embrace diverse worldviews. Inspired by these experiences, we plan to create medicinal gardens in our courtyard, giving students a tangible way to honour Indigenous knowledge and continue building a safe, inclusive, and respectful school community.”

Truth and Reconciliation Lead Teacher




Communication to Division Staff

Each week, through the Week at a Glance, the Truth and Reconciliation Consultant ensures that Division staff receive information and opportunities to advance their Foundational Knowledge.



Imagine a Canada - NCTR

The Imagine a Canada program invites Canadian youth from K-G12 and CÉGEP to envision a Canada reconciled. Youth who participate in the art and essay stream can submit an art piece, essay, or other representation to express their vision of a reconciled Canada and what they hope others will learn from their submission. Up



Indigenous Learning Services Presents
Wayi Wah! Book Club


Register here!

Open to all ECSD Staff!

ECSD EVENTS: Digital

In this practical and insightful book, you will have the opportunity to learn, reflect, and take action for reconciliation. Our gatherings will take place on Teams from October 22, October 29, November 5, and December 3.

Upon registration, you will be sent a copy of *Wayi Wah! An Act for Reconciliation and Anti-Racist Education*. We ask that, in the spirit of reciprocity, you commit to attending meetings as an active member of our learning community.



Indigenous Learning Services Presents
INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND CURRICULUM (K-6)

Join us on Teams on select Tuesdays (3:30-3:50) to help you accurately and respectfully address Indigenous-specific KUSPs in your classroom. All K-6 teachers are invited to attend!

Register today at events.ecsd.net

October 7 Introduction/Q & A
October 14 Terminology and Worldviews
October 21 Pedagogies and Environment
October 28 Resource Selection

Questions? Email Shannon.Louis@ecsd.net



Edmonton Catholic Schools - Indigenous Learning Services
YOUR DIRECTIONS WELLNESS PRESENTS
Indigenous Youth WELLNESS SYMPOSIUM

Junior High | Grades 7-9
MARCH 26, 2026
9:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Lumen Christi Catholic Education Centre

We are thrilled to host and invite Indigenous students, within the Edmonton Catholic School Division, from grades 7-9 to share, learn and participate in inspirational, health and cultural experiences!

Wellness and cultural sessions are facilitated by Indigenous speakers on topics that support holistic health among Indigenous Youth.

ENTER TO WIN A CHROMEBOOK OR OTHER PRIZES!

- Door Prizes!
- Draw for a Brand New Chromebook
- Lunch Provided!
- FREE to attend!

For more information contact Donna Large, Four Directions Wellness Specialist at Donna.Large@ecsd.net

Professional Learning Opportunity Two Worlds Approach to Introductions:

March 12 1:00-2:30 This professional learning session explores how language, culture, worldview, and communication styles influence interactions with Indigenous Peoples. Participants will develop a deeper awareness of how historical context, cultural protocols, and traditions shape meaning, interpretation, and relationships in conversation. This session will provide participants knowledge on: how Indigenous and mainstream ideologies of introductions vary; how introductions are connected to identity; how to assist Indigenous students to explore their Two Worlds Introduction (age appropriately); how to create your own introduction based on positionality; what is Indigenous self-identification versus legal/political status.

[ECSD EVENTS: Event Registration](#)

Are you curious about how Indigenous knowledge relates to AI? AI lacks spirit which means, from Indigenous perspectives, it is not an appropriate tool for creating prayers or land acknowledgments. Imagery generated by AI is also problematic, as it often relies on outdated and inaccurate stereotypes of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. To learn more about digital colonialism, check out this article: <https://theconversation.com/digital-colonialism-how-ai-companies-are-following-the-playbook-of-empire-269285>

Braided Journeys staff provide individual and group programs to increase school engagement, cultivate a sense of belonging, build mastery, share generosity, and encourage independence. Students can gather to study, pray, learn, create, and support one another in a culturally safe space. Visit the SharePoint [BRAIDED JOURNEYS](#) to learn more.

Orange Shirt Day Curricular Resources Visit the ECSD SharePoint to learn more about, and find resources regarding, the tragic and painful history and legacy of residential schools which remain a vital component of the reconciliation process.

PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Teachers/Staff may choose to focus their professional growth this year on learning about the history of Edmonton (amiskwaciwâskahikan) and our shared responsibilities as Treaty 6 people. It is not just about reading a land acknowledgement; it is more about acknowledging the land we live on. This goal invites educators to explore the local connections to this land, deepen understanding of the histories of Edmonton and area, and participate in meaningful learning opportunities such as land-based exploration in the River Valley or visiting the Indigenous Peoples Experience at Fort Edmonton Park. By building this knowledge and taking the Land Acknowledgement Professional Learning, teachers can strengthen their classroom practice, create more intentional land acknowledgements, and support yourself and students in learning accurate and respectful Treaty 6 and Indigenous histories. It is a way forward or next steps in Truth and Reconciliation, Calls to Actions.

Trail Tales: Looking for a versatile way to improve indigenous winter storytelling, physical activity and improve literacy at your school?

The indigenous Truth and Reconciliation consultant has created some storyboard kits called Trail Tales to place along the school grounds to be read during outdoor learning classes to promote physical literacy.

Trail Tales was adopted as an initiative with Ever Active Schools Physical Literacy Mentorship project and has other books as well.

Talk to your schools TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION LEAD TEACHER or contact Tess tess.cossey@ecsd.net to book your Trail Tail Kit. Some sample lessons will be available to the lead teachers from Tess.

The work being undertaken across Edmonton Catholic School Division demonstrates a meaningful commitment to advancing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action through learning, reflection, relationship-building, and action. The Indigenous Learning Services team continues to play a vital role in supporting students, staff, schools, and communities in deepening understanding of Indigenous histories, perspectives, and ways of knowing.

We are proud of the collective efforts and accomplishments of the entire Indigenous Learning Services team, whose dedication and leadership continue to foster growth and meaningful change throughout the division. We celebrate the work of the Council of Elders, Manager, Knowledge Keeper, Braided Journeys Supervisor and staff, staff Nehiyaw Pimatisiwin Cree Language and Culture programs, the Indigenous Education Consultants, and Four Directions Wellness leaders. We also recognize the guidance and support provided by the Truth and Reconciliation Consultant that has helped empower school communities to engage in meaningful, site-based work that reflects the unique needs and journeys of their students and staff. Through collaboration with school leaders and educators, important work is taking place across school sites to encourage authentic engagement, respectful dialogue, and ongoing learning connected to reconciliation.

At the same time, we recognize that reconciliation is not a destination, but an ongoing journey. While we are proud of the progress being made, there is still important work ahead as we continue to listen, learn, build relationships, and respond to the Calls to Action in thoughtful and meaningful ways. Together, we remain committed to creating learning environments where Indigenous voices, cultures, and histories are honoured and respected for generations to come.

