

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education

Lakedell School: Collaborative Culture

Eliminating Achievement Gaps

Lakedell School has a long tradition of working with families to provide a welcoming and caring environment for all students.

Approximately 40 percent of students attending Lakedell come from the First Nations that make up Maskwacis. Wahkotowin Liaison workers visit all the First Nation families and foster relationships between families and the school. They also support classroom teachers with cultural learning that is curriculum specific. Staff at the school listen to students and community members and are responsive to what they hear. One example of this responsiveness is the opportunities for students to learn about their cultures and histories. Another is the inclusive and welcoming building that reflects the students and families that it serves.

This responsiveness has led to increased opportunities for students to be engaged in school through the forming of a variety of student clubs: Kindness Club, Play Leadership, Art, Yoga, Lego, Dance, Cree Language, Beading, Floor Hockey and Drum Group.

Staff members are united in supporting the success of each student. The strategy of providing multiple avenues of engagement applies to academic areas as well. Staff focus on getting students to school, and then they use multiple literacy strategies so that students have the greatest opportunity to be successful.



The achievement of Grade 6 students on the provincial achievement tests (PATs) has risen steadily since 2011.

Principal Trevor Van Someren attributes the gains to the high rate of collaboration amongst staff. This collaboration was designed so that teachers could work together to determine strategies that stimulate the most learning.

Teachers began to develop common goals, plan together, refine lessons, and observe each other's English Language Arts and Mathematics instruction. These are considered priority subjects and therefore are the focus of professional learning. Students are assessed regularly in each area, and are moved through groups that meet their needs in a variety of ways. Some classroom strategies include:

- Daily 5/CAFÉ
- Levelled Readers and Super Six Reading Strategies
- 6 +1 Writing Traits
- Empowering Writers
- Writing Folders
- Hands on Math
- Numberline/Numeracy connections
- Common assessments
- Flex block—small group intervention through targeted instruction.

Literacy Rates

The 2016 Accountability Pillar indicates that 83 percent of grade six students were at the acceptable level in the PAT's. This includes:

- English Language Arts
- Math
- Science
- Social Studies

16.7% of these students were also at the **excellence** level in Science and Social Studies.



The teachers have high expectations for their students and track progress constantly. Interventions are planned as soon as gaps are noted. Part of the collaboration time involves reflecting on student growth and sharing practices that have evidence of success.

The journey of Lakedell towards academic success began with listening and honoring the voices of the community. It demonstrates the power of having everyone work together.

Lakedell has many strategies to increase attendance and punctuality. First is making the school a place where students and families want to come. Students are welcomed as they come off the buses and breakfast is provided to start the day. Every person in the school community has a role outlined in the positive school environment plan.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education

Eliminating Achievement Gaps

Discussion Starters:

1. As they work toward closing the achievement gap, Lakedell Elementary School staff focuses first on getting students *to* school, using multiple approaches such as creating a warm and welcoming environment and creating student clubs based on student interest. What is your personal belief in providing extracurricular activities for all students, but specifically for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students? Does your school have a collective vision/belief regarding how to provide engaging activities for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students? What are the benefits in offering targeted activities and clubs for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students? What are the challenges? Who in your school community can assist in overcoming the challenges?
2. At Lakedell Elementary School, teacher collaboration is a key strategy in their work to close the achievement gap. This form of professional learning is an integral part of their work—not an add-on. Brainstorm how your school staff can ensure there is time and space to learn and work together to modify or adapt educational programming to meet the learning needs of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students.
3. The teachers at Lakedell Elementary School set high expectations, track student progress regularly and celebrate successes. Why are these strategies so important to closing the achievement gap?

For more information:

- [Empowering the Spirit! First Nations, Metis and Inuit Education](#) Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium
- [First Nations, Metis and Inuit Education: Promising Practices in Fort McMurray](#) Alberta Education
- [Fatty Legs Webinar Series, Grades 5 – 8](#) Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia
- [First Nations, Metis and Inuit Literacy and Numeracy Promising Practices Learning Guide](#) Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium
- [Aboriginal Collection A Thematic Listing of \[Student\]Resources with Aboriginal Content](#) Edmonton Public Schools

Lakedell School: Collaborative Culture

Lakedell has many strategies to increase attendance and punctuality. First and foremost is making the school a place where students and families want to come. Students are welcomed as they come off the buses and breakfast is provided to start the day. Wahkotowin Liaison workers visit all the First Nation families and foster relationships between families and the school. They also support classroom teachers with cultural learning that is curriculum specific. Every person in the school community has a role outlined in the positive school environment plan.