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Marrsî ôma kici kâmiyin

The St. Michael Métis School of Excellence

A Nomination by:

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools
Central Urban Métis Federation Inc.

In Collaboration with:

Métis Nation-Saskatchewan
Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program
Gabriel Dumont Institute

for the

**2020 Premier's Board of Education Award for
Innovation and Excellence in Education**

September 30, 2020

Board Chair: Diane Boyko
Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. President Shirley Isbister

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***Sons and daughters of my race,
Who are today gathered under one roof,
Follow in the steps of your ancestors,
Remain obedient to the faith,
Preserve the customs left by your ancestors,
And above all,
keep your language.***

Traditional Métis Blessing

Whenever I bring greetings as a Board Chair, I begin with a traditional Ukrainian Catholic blessing Slava Isusu Khrysty (Glory be to Jesus Christ). For me, this greeting grounds me in my Ukrainian identity. I've always been proud of my Ukrainian heritage and give thanks for my ability to speak my language and practice my culture. My wish is that every student grows up with a sense of pride in their identity and traditions and celebrates their family and community roots.

Through my role as Board Chair for Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, I've experienced a Board that maintains appreciation for First Nations and Métis peoples and education. We've always attended First Nations and Métis gatherings and celebrations, and worked hard to resource and promote Indigenous education initiatives. Over the years, the Board has built many positive relationships with First Nations and Métis community members and leaders. Many of these associations have turned into close friendships.

As our partners shared their dream of a time when their grandchildren could learn the Michif language in school, we began to understand what it means to love your language but have it slipping away due to factors beyond one's control. The thought of not being able to greet someone in one's first language motivates us to promote Métis education and to share the dream of a rich context of Michif language programming for generations of Métis children and youth. In fulfilling our commitment to a rich context of Métis education, we could not have imagined the gift that this advocacy would be and the richness of experience that came back to us individually, to our Board and to our organization as a whole.

When Administration and our First Nations and Métis education partners proposed the development of a Métis School of Excellence at St. Michael Community School, the idea captured our imaginations and prompted us to work hard to demonstrate our commitment and bring the concept to fruition. Our Board's vision is that Métis children and youth enjoy the gift of their language and culture and when they assume community leadership positions, that they can greet their constituents with Taansi, miyo nakiskawâw and create the conditions for generations of Métis children and youth to also enjoy the gift that is Métis culture and Michif language.

Diane Boyko, GSCS Board Chair

About the Project

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) has had a working relationship with the Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI) since 2005. A Memorandum of Understanding guided the relationship from 2010 to 2015, under the auspices of the *māmawohkamātowin* partnership. The expiration of the MOU in 2015 was intended to signal the beginning of more strategic work together. CUMFI and GSCS committed to addressing the needs of Métis students and enhancing the inclusion of Métis content and perspectives in a meaningful way.

On April 18, 2016, Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools signed the Education Alliance Agreement. This agreement solidified the relationship between the two organizations and formalized processes for working together, information sharing, consultation commitments, and future planning initiatives to ensure the inclusion of Métis content and perspectives at St. Michael Community School and throughout the school division.

The St. Michael Métis School of Excellence is a product of the Métis Education Alliance and ensures Métis curricular content is enhanced through the integration of Métis themes, content and perspectives in all subject areas. In addition, Michif language is promoted through core and bilingual language options. Students are immersed in Métis cultural learning opportunities through a fiddle program, a jigging dance group, and collaborations with Métis Knowledge Keepers, resource people and organizations.

CUMFI served as a catalyst to broaden the circle and bring in other Métis community partners to support the vision. The Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) has long been a source of rich learning about Métis history and peoples. GSCS prioritizes SUNTEP graduates in hiring professional teachers and relies on the quality of their teachers to enhance Métis education in all our schools. The Gabriel Dumont Institute is a highly supportive Métis community partner that provides quality Métis education resources and access to Métis Knowledge Keepers. Métis Nation-Saskatchewan offers language resources and strategic support to ensure authenticity and a thorough approach to Métis education. Along with CUMFI, all these partners have been instrumental in describing and achieving the vision.

The Métis School of Excellence represents the commitment of the Board to collaborate with Métis families and organizations to adapt the division to the needs and aspirations of the Métis community so that all students enjoy the richness of Métis history and culture, and so that Métis students achieve their full God-given potential.

Program Goals

The goals of the St. Michael Métis School of Excellence have been developed in partnership and are derived from the Education Alliance Agreement (Appendix A). The goals are comprehensive and are categorized to represent the diversity of aspirations and initiatives:

Relationship Goals: That the partners of the St. Michael Métis School of Excellence develop collaborative and cooperative administrative and governance structures, policies and procedures.

Métis Community Participation Goals: That the voices and participation of students, families, the community and Knowledge Keepers are facilitated and respected; That Métis community members are represented in all employment categories within the school and division.

Student Learning Outcome Goals: That students achieve participation and learning outcomes commensurate with their non-Métis peers in all schools and throughout the province.

Métis Inclusion Goals: That all students understand the Canadian constitutional obligations to Métis people; That all aspects of the learning program include and value Métis history, culture and ways of knowing.

Métis Student Support: That all Métis students enjoy an array of high quality and responsive educational supports, programs and services; That Métis students be supported to transition to high school, post-secondary education and employment training.

Métis Language and Culture Goals: That the learning program respect the unique language, identity, culture and history of Métis students; That partners work together to address the preservation, promotion and revitalization of Michif languages.

System Development Goals: That partners share information to enhance program, services and student wellness and learning and engage in research and evaluation to support high quality Métis education programming; That a process is adopted to ensure CUMFI involvement in GSCS staffing processes at St. Michael School; That the partners develop performance metrics to determine the success and effectiveness of the Métis School of Excellence.

Board Influence and Participation

The Board of Education has nurtured the St. Michael Métis School of Excellence through the Alliance development phase, as well as the implementation and sustainability of the school. Board influence and participation can be categorized as relational, participatory and strategic. A listing of the Board agendas and motions pertaining to the Métis Education Alliance and the Métis School of Excellence appears in Appendix B.

Relational: The Board routinely attends Métis organizational and community gatherings and celebrations, as well as ensuring our Métis community partners are invited to GSCS events. Board members are present at events such as the CUMFI Christmas open house that attracts many community partners who enjoy interacting with CUMFI leadership, community members and Knowledge Keepers. The Board also ensures a presence at the November 16 Louis Riel memorial

and the CUMFI Métis cultural celebration. Attendance at these events offers opportunities to strengthen relationships and deepen understandings of the history and aspirations of Métis people.

Participatory: The Board demonstrates its commitment to the Métis Education Alliance and the Métis School of Excellence through their active participation in the process. In addition to regular and planning meetings of the Board, the Métis Education Alliance is one of few official committees of the Board. Board participation in Métis education includes the presence of the Board Chair and two trustees on the Métis Education Alliance Governance Committee. Board and CUMFI representatives invest in Alliance planning, decision-making and program evaluation. Board representatives also link the business of the Alliance table back to the Board, which translates into the Board addressing issues pertaining to Métis education through their decision-making structures. Some of the routine business of the Board that has come to include Métis education priorities, accountability and planning reports, and Board linkage where our Métis education partners are invited to the Board table.

Strategic: The strategic support of the Board for the Métis Education Alliance and the Métis School of Excellence began with a longstanding Board priority for the development of reciprocal relationships with First Nations and Métis governance and organizations to contribute to student retention and improved student learning outcomes. This priority resides within the Board's strategic plan and has been a catalyst for the emergence and strengthening of Métis education partnerships and initiatives. The Board also commissioned the development of a plan to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. This structure ensures that Call to Action number 63, which calls for a commitment to Aboriginal education issues, creates an imperative for the Board in planning and resourcing programming and initiatives. In addition, the Board has also commissioned the negotiation of the Education Alliance Agreement and the accompanying planning and accountability reports.

Innovations

It is difficult to identify innovations when a specific Métis education focus should be a core component of publicly funded education in Saskatchewan. The innovation, then, is not the dedication to Métis education but the comprehensive approach to Métis education and the development of an incubation site to propagate the successful aspects of the model throughout the division. Aspects of the model that constitute the innovation include the following:

Ensnconced in Governance: The St. Michael Métis School of Excellence emerged from a Board priority and is stewarded by the Board program planning and evaluation cycle. While learning programs typically tie back to governance and administrative influence, the Métis School of Excellence is a project of the Board in a manner that serves to enhance the Board's awareness and investment in Métis education. The role of the Board in this project has fostered Métis community participation and influence in a manner that disrupts typical patterns and advances Métis participation to compensate for years of diminished Métis participation as a result of colonization and marginalization.

Supported by Infrastructure: The infrastructure that underpins the Métis School of Excellence is extensive and includes unique governance structures, supportive staff roles, and initiatives to foster the success of the model such as a Métis employment strategy. The matrix of support is a model not typical of other like initiatives that are usually more isolated and may be vulnerable to changes in specific supports that then have an unanticipated effect on key aspects of the model. All aspects of the supportive infrastructure are shaped by Métis influence, which has benefits for the Indigenization of major division functions.

Organized Under a Model: The Métis Education Model (Appendix C) has both emerged from, and sustains, the Métis School of Excellence. The model links program elements to curriculum and ensures a comprehensive approach to Métis integration in all aspects of the program. The Métis Education Model is an articulation of the partnerships and the characteristics of Métis culture that the partners articulated as the core of Métis identity. The model themes are organized within the Red River cart wheel as a graphic organizer. It incorporates Métis values from the book, *The Giving Tree* by Leah Dorion. The themes are embedded within a circle of life worldview incorporating themes from Dr. Martin Brokenleg's Circle of Courage.

Supported by a Recruitment and Hiring Strategy: The Métis Education Alliance and the Métis School of Excellence rely on the participation of Métis people in all aspects of the program. The Alliance supports the program by establishing priorities, strategies and targets for Métis hiring. The opportunity for CUMFI to influence who is hired to enact the model is an attribute not typical of like initiatives. The recruitment and hiring strategy have achieved a high proportion of Métis staff to support the Métis School of Excellence.

Inclusive of a Language Imperative: The Métis School of Excellence includes a priority for Michif language that fundamentally shapes the program. The Alliance aspires to a rich language context at St. Michael that fundamentally changes the way Métis education is supported and the role of Indigenous language education in Catholic education. Of the many commitments inherent in the Calls to Action, contributing to the retention and proliferation of the Michif language is key. The Métis School of Excellence includes core and bilingual Michif language programming, and is supported by a Michif speaking Elder, Language Keeper and teachers.

Sustainability

Ultimately, sustaining the St. Michael Métis School of Excellence will build a culture of expectation regarding the presence of enhanced Métis education, as well as delivery on results associated with program goals. The extensive community consultative component of St. Michael, along with the integration of Métis community and organizational partners is building the expectation of sustainability. The results are consistent with program goals and are progressing from process, infrastructure and program goals to student outcome goals in learning, culture and language. There are, in addition, strategic elements that predict and build toward sustainability, as follows:

Board Priority: Situating Métis education within a Board priority ensures that Métis education is prioritized and supported. The priority warrants that administration continue to provide the Board options to meet their expectations. The Board priority for Métis education also facilitates enhanced funding that the Métis School of Excellence requires. Additional staffing, material, and community development requirements are differentiated from other schools within the division and ensure the program is prioritized in budget deliberations.

Alliance Agreement: The infrastructure of the Métis Education Alliance, including the Governance Committee and Working Group, provides the Métis School of Excellence a comprehensive entity with a priority for Métis education that predicts sustainability. The Governance Committee provides vision and oversight while the Working Group actualizes those objectives. The Métis Education Alliance ensures that the committees are populated and that they conduct their business on a consistent and reliable schedule.

Métis Hiring Commitment: Indigenous professional and support staff are highly mission-driven in their work. The Board has committed to a robust Indigenous hiring strategy that fosters Indigenous voice and participation, and benefits from their desire to adapt the system to better support the needs and aspirations of Métis students and families. Métis administration, teachers and support staff ensures that Métis education will remain sustainable at St. Michael.

Division Supports: The Board's imperative for Indigenous education over many years has resulted in a division support infrastructure that lends to the sustainability of the Métis School of Excellence. This infrastructure includes a First Nations and Métis Education Coordinator, Consultant, and Program Leader. They coordinate a thorough Métis education program plan, resources and outcome measures. In addition, at the school level the Michif Elder and Language Keeper offer embedded language supports to ensure that the goals of the Métis School of Excellence are sustained.

Métis Education Model: The development of the Métis Education Model contributes to sustainability by situating Métis education priorities in program, curriculum and school culture. The Model precipitates resource production and strategic partnerships that contributes to the sustainability of the Model. The Métis Education Model is a living document that is used to launch complementary initiatives such as a Métis education assessment model and the development of specific curricular connections (see example in Appendix D).

Consultative Commitments: The Métis Education Alliance facilitates an annual slate of community consultations with families, community members and educational partners. St. Michael Métis School of Excellence hosts family consultations on matters related to the concept school, such as language programming. The Catholic School Community Council also reviews and contributes to program goals. The school also co-hosts a Métis Education Think-Tank with Saskatoon Public Schools to invite voice and participation of the broader Métis community and partners.

Cost-benefit Analysis

Cost-benefit analyses typically develop complex measures of projected benefit. With the Métis School of Excellence, the inputs and immediate outcomes are known, while the long-term outcomes and benefits are subject to many complex factors. The current inputs for the Métis School of Excellence largely fall within typical provincial education funding, with additional inputs from CUMFI and MN-S for Michif language programming. The outcomes are also known and measured through participation and outcome measures. While outcomes in these areas are reported below, the narrative is that outcomes have stabilized and are beginning to improve.

Cost-benefit also needs to be considered given the broader context of Indigenous education in Canada. Educational outcome disparities are well-known and drive many system initiatives. The Board has adopted a *must do, can't fail* approach to Indigenous education programming to change the typical trajectory of Indigenous student outcomes. St. Michael programming is viewed largely as an upstream graduation initiative. Ultimately, cost-benefit must be viewed as a collection of proven high-yield strategies applied to make the most significant impact downstream. Eric Howe's 2017 report *SUNTEP: An Investment in Saskatchewan's Prosperity*, illustrates this effect with his analysis that one SUNTEP grad contributes \$11 million to the Saskatchewan economy, with up to a \$1.2 billion economic impact on the students potentially impacted by the students of a SUNTEP grad.

Client Support for the Innovation

The following indicators evidence client support in enrollment, participation rates and attitudinal surveys. In addition, we have brought forward representative student and parent voices for the Métis Education School of Excellence.

Enrolment: St. Michael Community school has long been a small school given the demographics of the geographic area in which it resides. The school is in a light industrial area with substandard housing in the immediate neighbourhood. The Métis School of Excellence was not conceived as a response to shrinking enrolments, but as a program adaptation that resonated with the local community. Currently nearly 70% of students at St. Michael self-declare as First Nations or Métis. Since the inception of the Métis School of Excellence, enrolments have grown. The implementation of the MN-S funded Michif Early Learning Pilot Project has also contributed to a recent boost in enrolment, with a dozen students currently registered in the Michif Bilingual Kindergarten Program.

Community Participation: The St. Michael parent community fully participates in school events and celebrations. Pancake breakfasts, learning fairs, seasonal celebrations and consultative events routinely attract up to 90% of families. In April 2019 an information letter was sent home with all our students asking for feedback on the establishment of a Core Michif program at St. Michael Community School. 94% of respondents supported the proposal for a Core Michif language program. Parents in attendance at a community event were also asked to complete a survey to express their opinions regarding Core Michif programming. 121 families, representing

86% of families enrolled in the school, responded to the survey at the event with 97% providing their support for the program proposal.

Our Schools Survey: The average for the sense of belonging indicator on the Our School Survey for St. Michael Community School is about 70%. Of that nearly 80% of Indigenous students at the school are reporting a positive sense of belonging whereas our division data shows nearly 70% of Indigenous students report a positive sense of belonging.

Stakeholder Voices: St. Michael students and parents are highly supportive and offered the following perspectives on the Métis School of Excellence:

Student 1: “I like that I feel I belong. I see me in others, I like Kokum, I like learning about my people. I play fiddle, I play for others back home. I am proud of who I am.”

Student 2: “I’m happy. I go home and teach mommy new Michif words: *Api, Naki* and *Nitotim*.”

Parent: “When I first had them there, the teachers were friendly there. They keep my kids safe. I’m happy that they are at the school. The Michif program is pretty good for the kids because they speak their words to me at home. It is very impressive for me. It is a caring place; I see the school working together as a team to support my kids.”

Grandparent: “It is good to hear the teachers use our language. I am so proud of my granddaughter learning the fiddle! I chose to drive my family to this school everyday because they feel they belong, and the staff are welcoming.”

Partnerships

The strength of the St. Michael Métis School of Excellence is that it is founded on partnerships. The Board is grateful for the endorsement of the partners and the supports that they offer. Their genuine commitment to the success of Métis students, and all students learning about Métis peoples and cultures, is motivation to ensure authenticity and effectiveness of the Métis School of Excellence.

Métis Nation–Saskatchewan: MN-S has emerged as a strong supportive partner of the Métis School of Excellence. Most recently, they have resourced the Métis Early Learning Pilot Project at St. Michael. The MN-S funding provided a teacher and Michif Knowledge Keeper to staff a full day, every day Michif Bilingual Kindergarten classroom at St. Michael. In addition, MN-S has provided for student transportation, professional learning and resource production, as well as collaboration with the other school divisions in the Pilot Project.

Central Urban Métis Federation Inc.: CUMFI is a signatory to the Métis Education Alliance and a founding partner of the Métis School of Excellence. They are active participants in the Alliance Governance Committee and Working Group. CUMFI offers strategic support for all initiatives at

the school and for the division. In addition, CUMFI provides grant to support Michif language instruction at St. Michael. CUMFI also provides access to Métis Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program: In addition to providing quality teachers who are grounded in Métis history, culture, language and ways of knowing, SUNTEP faculty and students attend school events and assist with special projects and initiatives. SUNTEP teacher cohorts come and assist us in running the Métis New Year's celebrations while education methods classes come to observe and work with our students.

Gabriel Dumont Institute: GDI promotes the renewal and development of Métis culture through design, development and delivery of Métis-specific educational programs and services. As a partner with St. Michael Community School, GDI supports Métis-specific educational programs in funding Métis artists and Elders in our school, as well as numerous professional development opportunities. In addition, GDI collaborated with our school to produce Métis Education Model posters, illustrations for Taanishi Books and other Métis publications and resources.

Evidence of Improved Student Achievement

Métis Education Alliance outcomes are measured within the categories of Program Outcomes, Facility and Resource Outcomes, and Governance Outcomes (Appendix E). Student achievement outcomes are categorized as Participation Outcomes and Learning Outcomes.

Participation Outcomes:

Mobility Rates: Mobility is measured by the percentage of all admissions and withdrawals. Mobility has been reduced by half since 2016. The 2016-2017 mobility rate was nearly 100%, while the 2019-2020 mobility rate was 52%.

Attendance: The percentage of students attending 90% of the time grew from 30% in 2015 to 70% in 2019.

Michif Language Program Participation: While all students experience integrated Michif language programming, the number of students participating in core and bilingual Michif language programming has doubled from 40 students in 2019 to 80 students in 2020.

Fiddle Program Participation: The number of students participating in the fiddle program has grown from 32 students in 2017 to nearly 50 students in 2020.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Literacy Outcomes: Between 2016 and 2019, the percentage of grade 1 to 3 students reading at or above grade level grew by 11%. In addition, a reading intervention teacher is working with our grade 1-3 students to augment their access to quality core learning opportunities to support our early readers using culturally responsive materials.

Grade 3 Reading: In June 2019, the percentage of Grade 3 students reading at or above grade level was the highest it has been in five years. At 77% of students reading at or above grade level we are close to the division average and provincial expectations. In June 2019, the percentage of Grade 3 FNMI students reading at or above grade level was 67% which was above the division average for the same group of students.

Grades 5-8: Since 2018, our graduating classes have met the provincial target of 80% of students reading at or above grade level. This is a great improvement from what we have achieved in previous years (i.e. 44% in 2015 to 90% in 2019). When we follow a cohort of St. Michael's middle years students over a 4-year period we see a 53% increase in the number of students reading at or above grade level. In comparison, the division cohort growth shows a 7% increase year over year.

Conclusion

The St. Michael Métis School of Excellence is a partner and Board inspired learning community that prioritizes the history and aspirations of Métis people. Through collaboration with Métis Elders, Knowledge Keepers and leadership, every aspect of the program is imbued with Métis content and ways of knowing. Emphasis on Michif language is intended to build pride in Métis identity and to provide students with a foundation built on positive self-image. Through relationships and partnerships, the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Board of Education is learning and growing as a proponent of Métis education and an ally in building strong and courageous children, youth, families and communities.

Appendix A: Métis Education Alliance Agreement



EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE AGREEMENT

Between

Central Urban Métis Federation Inc and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools

Preamble

Building on shared interests expressed in the 2010 Memorandum of Understanding between Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, the parties agree to strengthen their partnership in education by developing and implementing actions to address the following areas:

1. Recognizing and celebrating common interests and unique elements of each party, including the role of spirituality within the respective communities, informed by a sincere interest in social justice and equity.
2. Development of collaborative and cooperative administrative and governance structures to promote equity, stewardship and accountability in decision-making.
3. Developing a protocol to share information, research and evaluation for the purposes of improving outcomes for Métis students.
4. Enhancing increased understanding of Canadian constitutional obligations to Métis people for all students.
5. Respecting the unique language, identity, culture and history of Métis students in the delivery of educational programs and support services.
6. Collaboratively working on specific programming to address the preservation, promotion and revitalization of languages for Métis students.
7. Engaging all students in academic and school programs that include and value Métis ways of knowing, learning and being.
8. Providing professional support for teachers to build capacity to meet the spirit and intent of the agreement.
9. Working together to enhance and design an array of educational supports, programs and services for Métis students from Pre-Kindergarten to grade 12 and their transition to high school, post-secondary education and/or employment training.
10. Working together to enhance the voice and participation of Métis students, family and community members, including Elders and Knowledge Keepers in the educational process.

11. Working together to address both educational and employment equity for Métis students and staff employed by Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools.

The alliance members agree that the foundations for co-governance are implicit in the constitutional obligations and existing relationships with Métis people by the Crown, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the education, social and human service related statutes enacted by the Government of Canada,, Government of Saskatchewan, the bylaws of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools and Central Urban Métis Federation Incorporated. Therefore nothing in this agreement will diminish the mutual responsibility and respective authority or jurisdiction of the parties to the agreement.

Spirit and Intent of the Agreement

Sharing a mutual concern for the well-being of all students, the parties agree that the main purpose of this agreement is to enhance holistic educational outcomes for Métis students. Holistic academic programming and student supports will recognize students' unique language/cultural heritage, identities, shared histories and relationship with all Canadians.

Principles and Values Guiding Relationships

1. To ensure its success, the partnership will be guided in its relationships, communications and actions by the following principles:
2. Respect for the rights and authorities of each organization.
3. Reciprocity—shared responsibility and accountability through openness, and transparency.
4. Consensus orientation in planning, decision-making and renewal.
5. Interdependence—mutuality, cooperation and collaboration.
6. Efficacy—a capacity to make a difference through our work together and willingness to take responsibility to do so.
7. Flexibility—a willingness to develop options as possibilities for our work together, and a willingness to demonstrate respect and empathy of diverse perspectives.
8. Building and creating on strengths/gifts of all.
9. Advocacy for excellence in the delivery of education and support services to Métis children and youth.

Signed in good faith with the commitment to pursue all aspects of this agreement.

Signed this 18th day of April, 2016 at Saskatoon, SK

Shirley Isbister
President
Central Urban Métis Federation Inc.

Diane Boyko
Board Chair
Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools

Appendix B: Evidence of Board Influence and Participation

Date	Item	Detail
2010	māmawohkamātowin Partnership 2010-2015	Board formalized partnerships with Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC) and Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI)
December 17, 2012	Regular Meeting of the Board	First Nations and Métis Education Plan 2012-2015
January 21, 2013	Regular Meeting of the Board	CIAF Executive Summary – Partnerships
February 10, 2014	Regular Meeting of the Board	First Nations and Métis Education Partnership Planning
March 9, 2014	Board Retreat	First Nations and Métis Participation in Catholic Education
November 24, 2014	Regular Meeting of the Board	First Nations and Métis Education Partnership Monitoring Report RE: māmawohkamātowin Education Alliance
March 30, 2015	Regular Meeting of the Board	First Nations and Métis Education Partnership Monitoring Report RE: māmawohkamātowin Education Alliance
June 8, 2015	Regular Meeting of the Board committee report	māmawohkamātowin Education Alliance
January 25, 2016	Planning Meeting of the Board	Review of Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) and Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI) Educational Alliance draft agreement
April 11, 2016	Regular Meeting of the Board	Approval of GSCS and CUMFI Educational Alliance agreement

April 18, 2016	Board Event	Signing of Educational Alliance at St. Michael Community School
June 6, 2016	Regular Meeting of the Board	Building Relationships and Partnerships Monitoring Report RE: transitioning St. Michael Community School to a Métis school of excellence.
September 12, 2016	Regular Meeting of the Board	Truth and Reconciliation: Potential Calls to Action RE: Michif language initiatives at St. Michael Community School
November 28, 2016	Regular Meeting of the Board	First Nations and Métis Education Partnership Monitoring Report
June 15, 2017	Governance Meeting	CUMFI/GSCS Educational Alliance
June 26, 2017	Regular Meeting of the Board	Building Relationships and Partnerships Monitoring Report
August 28, 2017	Planning Meeting of the Board	Truth and Reconciliation Response from Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools
February 5, 2018	Regular Meeting of the Board	First Nations and Métis Education Partnership Monitoring Report
March 11, 2018	Board Retreat	Exploring Co-Governance in First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education
May 14, 2018	Regular Meeting of the Board	Building Relationships and Partnerships Monitoring Report
May 23, 2018	Think Tank Day	CUMFI/GSCS Educational Alliance
November 26, 2018	Governance Meeting	CUMFI/GSCS Educational Alliance
February 4, 2019	Regular Meeting of the Board	First Nations and Métis Education Partnership Monitoring Report
June 19, 2019	Governance Meeting	CUMFI/GSCS Educational Alliance

June 24, 2019	Regular Meeting of the Board	Core Michif Language Program
November 14, 2019	Governance Meeting	CUMFI/GSCS Educational Alliance
December 2, 2019	Planning Meeting of the Board	First Nations and Métis Partnerships Planning 2019-2020
June 2, 2020	Governance Meeting	CUMFI/GSCS Educational Alliance
June 22, 2020	Regular Meeting of the Board committee report	Michif Early Learning Pilot Project Information
September 14, 2020	Regular Meeting of the Board	Michif Early Learning Pilot Project Approval

Appendix C: Métis Education Model



Based on Dr. Brokenleg's Circle of Courage Framework of four universal needs and values essential to young Indigenous people's growth: belonging, mastery, independence and generosity, St. Michael Community School's Métis Education model was co-created by the Métis community, our staff and our school community. The ten monthly themes are visually represented in and around the Red River Cart wheel and painted by Métis Artist and former GSCS teacher Kat Moon.

September's focus is Community and is represented by the Red River Cart Wheel. In building positive relationships within our classrooms, our school, our families and our community organizations, we can begin our journey through the school year feeling connected to those around us. As a community of faith, we are connected and supported in our kinship.

October's theme of family is represented by the strong pack animal the Wolf/Roogaroo. The pack is an extended family supporting each other to meet the needs of the family and they stand together to raise the young, to protect each other, to travel and to hunt together. The wolf represents the relationships within our families.

The Métis flag represents November's theme of Leadership. The Métis Nation has many symbolic flags which evolved over time. One such flag has a blue background with a white infinity symbol that has two meanings: 1) the joining of two cultures and 2) the existence of a people forever. This symbol was chosen for the month of November to represent strong leadership and the ability to unite people for a greater cause and aligns with Saskatchewan's Louis Riel Day on November 16 which celebrates one of the Métis people's biggest heroes.

The December theme of Celebration is symbolized by the Fiddle and Moccasins for music and dance as they play an Important role when Métis people gathered to celebrate Christmas and New Years! The fiddle represents the old-time music of the Métis when a fiddle, a guitar and a set of spoons was all you needed to get a celebration started. The moccasins remind us of the importance of Métis dancing of jigging and square dancing.

The buffalo is a powerful representation of January's theme of kindness. The buffalo provided plains people with almost everything they needed to survive. Through their sacrifice and kindness, we are reminded to be kind and generous to others. Some people say that Education is our new buffalo.

The Buffalo was chosen for January because the Métis people celebrated New Years in a big way coming together to celebrate, share food and focus on a positive and productive new year. Since the buffalo provided so much for Métis people, he is our symbol for the month.

February's theme of storytelling is represented by the eagle. The Eagle is the traditional messenger that helps deliver our prayers to the Creator. During storytelling month, we honour the Eagle and the role he plays in sharing important messages.

The Red River Cart represents March's theme of balance. Throughout their travel, the Métis used the Red River Cart to transport their belongings. As they travelled it was important to balance their items on the cart to ensure a safer journey. One of the great sacred laws in the traditional Métis worldview was the great law of Harmony and Balance. According to Métis law, an individual must place an offering before they took something. Often, a prayer or tobacco was made before harvesting animals, plants and other resources from the land in order to maintain balance in creation. Living in balance mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually was stressed.

April is when our attention focuses on the springtime and we see Mother Earth waking from winter slumber. Therefore, the bear is an apt representation of the theme of Nature and Mother Earth. It is a time of renewal and birth. The frog announces the coming of spring and we hear its song. Hibernation ends, animals and birds return from their winter homes and plants begin to grow again. April is also the time for Easter, and we prepare ourselves to celebrate the resurrection of our Saviour.

May's theme of Marian devotion is represented by the image of a rosary. The Métis have a long-standing devotion to Mary and the Shrine at Our Lady of Lourds in Duck Lake is a gathering spot with a rich Métis tradition in Saskatchewan. In May of 2002 Pope John Paul II said, "Today we begin the month dedicated to Our Lady a favorite of popular devotion. In accord with a long-standing tradition of devotion, parishes and families continue to make the month of May a 'Marian' month, celebrating it with many devout liturgical, catechetical and pastoral initiatives!"

In June we return to the outside of the wheel and focus on community through an appreciative lens. We think about those who have helped us on our journey this year and show our appreciation in a variety of ways. We also need to say *M'wstas* to students and to staff members.

Outside the circle are Dr. Brokenleg's themes of belonging, mastery, independence and generosity. Within the wheel are the colours of the circle of life that remind us of our grandparents' teachings. The themes help focus our efforts to include Métis perspectives and the Michif language throughout the school. Teachers use these themes to make curricular connections, identify resources and support school themes and celebrations.

Appendix D: Métis Education Inclusion – Social Studies Outcomes K-3

Curricular Outcomes and Indicators	"I Can" Statements
Kindergarten	
<p>INK.1 Demonstrate an understanding of similarities and differences among individuals in the classroom</p> <p>a. Identify and categorize the attributes that make an individual unique (e.g., physical features, cultural interests, personality characteristics).</p>	I can identify Métis cultural symbols such as the fiddle, sash, flag, flower beadwork design, buffalo.
<p>INK.2 Describe the diversity of groups represented in the classroom</p> <p>a. Investigate the diversity of languages and cultural traditions represented in the classroom and school, and recognize the role language and culture play in an individual's unique identity.</p> <p>b. Describe various cultural traditions, festivals, and celebrations recognized by children's families and communities, and discuss the importance of these cultural traditions, festivals, and celebrations.</p> <p>c. Identify individuals and groups that are important in children's lives, and explain why these individuals and groups are important to them as individuals (e.g., family, Elders, senior citizens, friends, storytellers, classmates, members of activity groups to which children belong).</p>	I can recognize Métis people as distinct from other groups by their language, celebrations, music, foods, and heroes.
<p>DRK.3 Analyze ways in which place and physical systems influence daily life, including the influence of place on the daily life of First Nations and Métis people.</p> <p>a. Name, and describe the physical characteristics of, the four seasons.</p> <p>b. Give examples of how daily life is influenced by environment (e.g., work, play, clothing).</p> <p>c. Identify how weather affects everyday life, and describe how adaptation for seasonal change is evident in daily life</p>	I can explain that Métis people have a close relationship to the land which influences how they make a living, acquire food, design their clothing and is reflected in their art.

<p>(e.g., clothing, food, home construction, recreational and sporting activities, transportation).</p> <p>d. Investigate ways in which place influences identity (e.g., leisure activities, sports, arts, and culture are all influenced by place).</p>	
<p>RWK.2 Develop and demonstrate stewardship of the environment in daily actions, in an effort to promote balance and harmony.</p> <p>a. Demonstrate environmentally responsible behaviours in the classroom and school (e.g., take only what is needed in order to provide for future needs, reduce consumption, practise water conservation, turn off lights when leaving a room, recycle, compost).</p>	<p>I can recognize that the Métis respected Mother Earth and valued how they used resources in a respectful manner.</p>
Grade 1	
<p>IN1.1 Describe the diversity of traditions, celebrations, or stories of individuals in the classroom and school.</p> <p>a. Generate questions about family traditions and celebrations (e.g., Are special clothes worn? Is there special food? Are there special dances, songs, music? Are there other special cultural traditions?).</p> <p>b. Describe behaviours, actions, or activities that are part of students' family traditions or celebrations.</p> <p>c. Gather information regarding traditions, celebrations, or stories of others by identifying and accessing various resources (e.g., family members, Elders, teachers, neighbours, library books, video clips).</p>	<p>I can describe Métis celebrations and know when they are held throughout the year i.e.: Back to Batoche Days – July (third week) Feast of St. Joseph – July 24th Louis Riel Day – November 16th New Year's – first week of January</p>
<p>DR1.1 Relate family events and stories of the recent or distant past to the student's place in present day family life.</p>	<p>I can recall a traditional story about Métis life and celebrations. It may be about the past,</p>

a. Provide oral examples of traditions and celebrations that connect people to the past, and consider why these traditions and celebrations are important today.	community or family traditions or celebrations.
DR1.2 Describe kinship patterns of the past and present and describe according to traditional teachings (e.g., Medicine Wheel teachings). a. Identify people who are connected to the basic family group through hereditary or cultural family relationships (e.g., grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, other significant adults).	I can explain how Métis families might differ from other families through hereditary or cultural family relationships.
DR1.3 Demonstrate awareness of humans' reliance on the natural environment to meet needs, and how location affects families in meeting needs and wants. a) Retell stories that explore the relationship between humans and nature. b. Identify ways in which use of resources to meet needs and wants of individuals affects the natural environment, and recognize individual and group responsibility towards responsible stewardship of the natural environment.	I can summarize a story that I heard about Métis people and how they use nature or explain how something in nature came to be.
Grade 2	
IN2.1 Determine characteristics of a community. a. Compile a list of various communities to which students belong (e.g., cultural, recreational, faith, sports, arts). c. Compare characteristics of other communities to which students belong with those of the school community, identifying the similarities in meeting needs and achieving common purpose.	I can explain that Métis people are often members of a Métis local like Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI).
IN2.2 Create a representation of the diversity of cultural groups in the local community.	I can explain that Métis people are one of the cultural groups in our city and have

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Describe diverse characteristics within the school and local communities, and describe similarities within and between diverse groups. b. Retell the shared experiences and stories of members of the local community experienced through active listening, viewing, and reading of stories in various formats. c. Identify the significance of a variety of cultural traditions, festivals, and celebrations in the school and local communities. 	<p>similarities and differences to other cultural groups.</p>
<p>DR2.1 Investigate stories of significant events and persons in the local community's history to describe the contribution of those who lived in the community in earlier times.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Research and represent the history of the local school and the local community (e.g., events, people). 	<p>I can identify historical Métis heroes and role models and how they made contributions to our community.</p>
<p>PA2.1 Analyze how decisions are made within the local community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Give examples of leadership in the local community, and describe ways leadership is demonstrated (e.g., mayor, reeve, chief, Elders, community volunteers). b. Identify decision makers in the local community in government, economic, community, faith, and cultural organizations, and the roles of each. 	<p>I can identify a Métis organization that advocates for Métis people in the community. An example would be Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI)</p>

RW2.2 Analyze various worldviews regarding the natural environment. a. Investigate traditional Métis worldviews of the natural environment.	I can explain how Métis people have a traditional worldview that respects the natural environment.
Grade 3	
IN3.1 Analyze daily life in a diversity of communities. a. Describe characteristics of daily life in communities studied, and compare the ways in which the needs are met by individuals in diverse communities (e.g., housing, tools, work, use of the land, games, education). b. Give examples of how culture is reflected in daily life in various communities, and examine why these cultural elements are important (e.g., language, stories, cultural traditions, religious traditions, recreation, art, architecture, clothing). c. Compare life of a child in the local community to life of a child in one of the communities studied (e.g., family, housing, education, recreation).	I can describe how Métis people live in communities around the province and compare it to how I live in my community.
IN3.2 Analyze the cultures and traditions in communities studied. a. Give examples of traditions and practices that have endured over time in communities studied, and discuss why these are important.	I can identify Métis cultural practices and tell why they are important.
DR3.2 Assess the degree to which the geography and related environmental and climatic factors influence ways of living on and with the land. a. Identify the influences that geography has on societies (e.g., location of settlements, transportation of goods and people, types of industry such as farming,	I can describe a northern Métis community like Ile-a-la Crosse and explain how the environment affects their daily lives.

<p>ranching, forestry, mining, tourism, and manufacturing).</p> <p>b. Recognize how environmental and climatic factors are influenced by location (e.g., proximity to water bodies influences precipitation and temperature; mountainous terrain influences soil formation, precipitation, and temperature).</p>	
<p>DR3.3 Compare the beliefs of various communities around the world regarding living on and with the land.</p> <p>a. Research the view of land as held by indigenous peoples in communities studied.</p> <p>b. Identify ways in which people in communities studied interact with the land (e.g., meeting needs and wants, how land is protected or neglected).</p> <p>c. Identify local environmental issues that affect life in communities studied.</p>	<p>I can discuss the environmental issues that affect Métis communities like Ile-a-la Crosse.</p>
<p>PA3.1 Compare how decisions are made in the local community and communities studied.</p> <p>a. Identify examples of decision-making structures where leadership is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inherited • elected • communal. 	<p>I can identify the decision-making structures of a Métis local like Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. (CUMFI)</p>

Appendix E: Métis Education Alliance Outcomes

Program Outcomes	Facility and Resource Outcomes	Governance Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Métis Education Model for the inclusion of Métis content and perspectives. • Core Michif Program for K-4 classrooms. • K-12 Teacher lesson and unit plans developed and shared division wide. • K-12 Co-planning, co-teaching support provided to teachers within the division. • PD system in-service developed to support the inclusion of Métis content and perspectives. • Establishment of a core Michif language program. • Establishment of a Métis Education Model. • Métis flag raisings at various schools. • After-school fiddle program to support E.D. Feehan students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Michael Métis Education Program. • Michif Cultural Room. • Consolidation of Métis learning resources. • Templates developed to support and report on the inclusion of Métis content in all grade levels. • One FTE Elder on site at St. Michael School • Fiddle Program for Gr. 6-8 students. • Jigging group open to all students. • One F.T.E. position to support Métis initiatives and the work of the partnership. • One ½ time position funded by CUMFI to support Core Michif at St. Michael School for Gr 5-8. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual community consultation process in place to receive feedback from Métis community members regarding the goals for Métis education. • Semi-annual governance meetings. • Quarterly Working Group committee meetings. • Collaborative support of community Métis events and celebrations such as Métis Days, Louis Riel Day. • Staffing reports submitted regularly. • Newsletters to share the accomplishment of the program. • Métis staff recognition supper. • A division imperative for Métis education. • The establishment of St. Michael school as a dedicated Métis school of excellence. • Each year, one new Michif cohort is added.

Appendix F: Métis Nation Saskatchewan Letter of Support



September 23, 2020

2020 PREMIER'S BOARD OF EDUCATION AWARD FOR INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

To the Selection Committee for the Premier's Award for Innovation and Excellence,

Re: Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools

For many Métis families, colonization, land loss, and cultural decimation has eliminated Indigenous language usage. As Elders and 'Old Ones' pass on, the Métis Michif language is rapidly dying. In partnership with Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, the leadership at Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools is revitalizing our proud Métis language through the Michif Early Learning Pilot Project. Recognized by the Government of Canada as the government of Saskatchewan's Métis people, Métis Nation – Saskatchewan is guiding and overseeing the program through its Ministry of Early Learning and Childcare, and supporting its development through its ELCC funding agreement.

Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools is among six school divisions that are working collaboratively with Métis Nation-Saskatchewan to ensure Métis children know who they are as a people and to help them understand why their unique language is important. To do so, language programs for both Michif and Dene have been established for children aged three, four, and five in select schools in Regina, Saskatoon, Ile-a-la-Crosse, and La Loche.

During the summer of 2020, the team at St. Michael School in Saskatoon contributed to the development of 'Year One Michif Programming' and actively engaged parents and community partners in this endeavour.

Métis Nation-Saskatchewan appreciates the support from Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools as an early adapter of the Michif Early Learning Pilot Project. With their leadership and dedication to Métis citizens, our children will know *Awaana Nîiyaa*: "Who I Am – Proud, Confident, Métis."

Maarsii,

Dr. Earl Cook
Minister of Education
Métis Nation-Saskatchewan

Appendix G: Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. Letter of Support



Central Urban Métis Federation Inc.
315 Ave. M South
Saskatoon, SK S7M 2K5
Tel: (306) 975-9999 Fax: (306) 975-9156
Email: cumfiadmin@sasktel.net

September 23, 2020

RE: ST. MICHAEL MÉTIS SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE AND PREMIER'S BOARD OF EDUCATION AWARD FOR INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of Central Urban Métis Federation Incorporated (CUMFI), I am pleased to provide a letter of support to the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, seeking a nomination for the St. Michael Métis School of Excellence, for the *Premier's Board of Education Award for Innovation and Excellence in Education*.

In 2016, CUMFI signed an official partnership agreement with Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS), establishing the "*Central Urban Métis Federation Incorporated and Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools Education Alliance Partnership*." This agreement was a key milestone in a partnership that began 10 years earlier, whereby the partners sought to increase academic outcomes for Métis students within GSCS schools, and to enhance and revitalize Métis (Michif) culture within K-12 education, and throughout Saskatchewan.

To date, we have shared the work and the outcomes, and our partnership has flourished. We have accomplished our original goals, and many more. The Alliance Partnership has established a strong leadership structure; working as a co-governance entity, providing strategic leadership and oversight of shared projects, creating innovative and new culture and language programs, supporting Métis employment initiatives, and growing Métis family participation in the education sector.

One of our most significant outcomes has been the establishment of the St. Michael Métis School of Excellence, located in the neighbourhood of Kelsey Woodlawn. At this site, the Alliance has collaborated to develop one of the most cutting edge and innovative Michif cultural programs, where Métis children have access to their inherent language and culture, are taught by Métis teachers and knowledge keepers, and are given the opportunity to develop strong identities as strong and proud Métis citizens of Saskatchewan, and Canada.

In Saskatchewan, CUMFI is a leader in the efforts to achieve reconciliation between the Indigenous community and the rest of the province. We see this partnership and the St. Michael Métis School of Excellence as one of our most significant achievements, and certainly a school that reflects the values and spirit of the Premier's Board of Education Award for Innovation and Excellence in Education.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Shirley Isbister', with a stylized, flowing script.

Shirley Isbister, President

Central Urban Métis Federation Incorporated

Appendix H: Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program Letter of Support



Saskatchewan Urban Native
Teacher Education Program
SUNTEP Saskatoon
Room 7, McLean Hall,
106 Wiggins Road,
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, SK S7N 5E6
Phone 306-934-2201
Fax 306-975-1108
sheila.pocha@usask.ca



September 25, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

It brings me great pleasure to write this letter in support of the nomination of St. Michael Community School for the Premier's Award for Excellence in Education. The school is central to Indigenous families as we seek to improve our children's ways of knowing and affirm their strength and pride in their cultural identity. The work the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) and its staff do in many schools to promote our language, culture and ways of knowing is very important to us, especially because we have waited so long for it to arrive.

As a SUNTEP alumnus, and now as the Program Head of SUNTEP Saskatoon with the Gabriel Dumont Institute and the University of Saskatchewan, I have had many opportunities to observe and work closely with St. Michael Community School beginning with when I was a student teacher working with teacher, Joyce McLean, who is now retired. I am pleased to see the positive growth that has created learning environments in which SUNTEP student teachers have the opportunity to have pre-service experiences at St. Michael's and other schools and to graduate feeling positive about obtaining employment with GSCS. I have observed the professional implementation of positive learning and enriched outcomes through the efforts made to include First Nations and Metis knowledge and culture. I know this creates a sense of belonging in Indigenous students and this helps improve their achievement at school. SUNTEP student teachers have been a part of the school's focus on Métis culture and they have had the opportunity to deliver Metis-focused learning experiences. This focus helps them understand the importance of culture, language and reconciliation in their own lives and in the work they will do as teachers.

I am very impressed with the Métis fiddle program, the Michif language program, the inclusive Métis Education Model, and the immense contributions created in-house with folks such as Cort Dogniez and Samuel LaMontagne. During the *Think Indigenous Conference* on the university campus in 2018, delegates were delighted by the music the school's fiddle students brought to the conference. Their music created immense pride and joy among all of us. This kind of cultural implementation at the school level must be recognized and celebrated!

If you wish to contact me about this letter of support, I can be reached by telephone at 306-934-2201 and by email at sheila.pocha@usask.ca.

Sincerely,

Sheila Pocha
Program Head, SUNTEP Saskatoon
sheila.pocha@usask.ca
Direct: (306) 934-2201
Office: (306) 975-7095

The Gabriel Dumont Institute promotes the renewal and development of Métis culture through research, materials development, collection and the distribution of those materials and the development and delivery of Métis-specific educational programs and services.

Appendix I: Gabriel Dumont Institute Letter of Support



GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE of Native Studies and Applied Research

917 22nd Street West, Saskatoon, SK S7M 0R9

September 23, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I am pleased to provide this letter of support for the nomination of St. Michael Community School, a school within Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS), for the *2020 Premier's Board of Education Award for Innovation and Excellence in Education*. The school personnel, the school division and its leadership, and the partners to the program are all to be commended for making St. Michael Community School a Métis-focused school.

The Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI) has been supportive of St. Michael's focus on Métis history, heritage, culture, and languages since the GSCS chose to implement this focus at St. Michael Community School in 2016. This aligns well with the mission of the Institute and reflects a long-held dream. This dream is that non-Métis know more of the positive information about the history, culture and contributions of the Métis while Métis students have their cultural identity affirmed in a setting that further supports their cultural renewal and reclamation.

The Institute has supported the inclusion of Elders, performing artists, and Métis knowledge keepers in the schools such as John and Vicki Arcand, Phil and Dallas Boyer, Tristen Durocher, Jess Lee and Norman Fleury. We have invited St. Michael staff to various events including those with professional development. We act as a resource for the school when they are seeking additional information that can inform the accuracy of Métis history, culture, and traditions.

We have also had the pleasure of collaborating with St. Michael School on several projects such as the Métis Education Model posters and on having students illustrate several of our books for young readers.

We are pleased to provide the school a substantial discount on the purchase of resources because of their focus and our informal partnership. We also carry the fiddle music CD the school produced to celebrate the student fiddlers and their progress.

The Institute values the commitment made by the GSCS Division and the St. Michael Community School staff. They face the challenge of having both the student body and the staff complement comprised in part by people from other backgrounds and ethnicities. It is admirable that the Métis focus is overtly deemed of value to all students and not just those who are Métis. There is a clear expectation that non-Métis staff also value this perspective. I am sure there have been queries from non-Indigenous parents and teachers, and perhaps even some pressure to change, but the school and division have remained steadfast in their resolve.

When one enters St. Michael Community School, several strong impressions come to mind. One is that the students seem happy to be there and there is a clear indication that they feel they belong. This is an important one to me personally as I whole-heartedly believe in "The Circle of Courage" model in which belonging is noted as a fundamental need for human development. The second noticeable impression is the family atmosphere in the school and the pride the students have in knowing, experiencing, and expressing Métis culture and language.

It is for these many reasons that I can confidently support the nomination of St. Michael Community School for this award because of their outstanding effort and achievement. If you wish to contact me about this letter, I can be reached by telephone at 306.657.5710, and by email at karon.shmon@gdi.gdins.org.

Sincerely,

Karon Shmon,
Director, Métis Culture and Heritage
Gabriel Dumont Institute

The Gabriel Dumont Institute promotes the renewal and development of Métis culture through research, materials development, collection and the distribution of those materials and the development and delivery of Métis-specific educational programs and services.

Appendix J: Saskatchewan Polytechnic Letter of Support

Monday, September 28, 2020

Dear Selection Committee:

My name is Brian Gallagher. More than thirty years of my career in Education have been as an employee of Saskatchewan Polytechnic. One of the most uplifting components of this have come from a partnership agreement with St. Michael's Community School and the subsequent involvement in shared programming.

The atmosphere at St. Michael's Community is difficult to describe. The student are growing up in an environment where they believe they are a valued and integral part of Canadian society. This is a direct result, of the impact of everyone involved, creating a unique and empowering environment. With the Indigenous population being the fastest growing sector of the population forward thinking, sustainable, out of the box initiatives like this one are deserving of recognition.

Visiting the school and partaking in their community events leaves you with a confident feeling that the experience for these young people will have a profound impact on our society. The student present themselves as proud and confident members of their school and community. The teachings they receive are shifting paradigms creating better ways to viewing themselves and their fellow beings.

The "Calls to Action" are requesting that Canada work to rebuild relationships. The model created at St. Michael's is doing this. It is one that needs to be recognized and copied. It directly addresses many of the "Education" calls. Education being one of the foundations of our society leads the way influencing the areas of health, Justice language and culture.

Please accept this letter supporting the nomination for St. Michael's Community School. It is an honour and a privilege to speak on their behalf. Thankyou, for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Brian Gallagher



Appendix K: Artist in Residence Letter of Support



KARRNEL
FIDDLE | PRODUCER | COMPOSER
306.717.2013
www.karrnel.com
www.thefretless.com

Re: SSBA Premier's Board of Education Award For Innovation and Excellence in Education

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Karrnel Sawitsky and I am a Juno Award winning musician, fiddle player, composer, educator, and producer from Saskatoon, SK. I am writing this letter in support of the Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools (GSCS) submission to the Saskatchewan School Boards Association Premier's Board of Education Award For Innovation and Excellence in Education – specifically with regards to the Métis fiddle program at St. Michael Community School Métis Education School of Excellence in Saskatoon, SK.

I am very fortunate to be the artist involved with the Métis fiddle program at St. Michael Community School for the last 3+ years and have witnessed first-hand the power and positive effect this program has had on these kids.

Beyond teaching traditional fiddle tunes to these students, the focus of my work with the Métis fiddle program has been centered around creativity and empowering these young artists with the freedom to create. This could be a fiddle tune, a folk song, a Métis fiddle tune/song, a rap song, a story, or any creative outlet. The goal is not to restrict the form of creation, but rather encourage the freedom of creation and assist with the process after the initial spark. Obviously, this has resulted in an abundance of new music / art since my time working with the kids and we have shared it through performance and recordings. However, in my opinion this 'quantity' of created art should not be the key measure of success of this Métis fiddle program.

When a person creates a piece of music (or any art) there is a sense of pride attached to that accomplishment. A sense of ownership almost beyond description. They want to share their creation with friends, family, mentors, etc.. They want to create again. And where did this creative output come from? At its core, it comes from that person's background, experiences, and culture.

Combining the teaching of traditional Métis and Indigenous fiddle tunes with the creativity of new repertoire not only grows the program's strength student by student, but also with the student's family/community in how each student shares these traditional tunes and new fiddle tunes. Every piece of music is written by a person or group of people and their background, experiences, and culture not only shape the music, but often times become identities of that music.

Fiddle is such a big part of the indigenous and Métis culture in Saskatchewan. Giving these young fiddle players at St. Michael Community school the outlet opportunity to create new Métis music is an incredibly innovative and pioneering idea to engage these students.

I highly recommend this submission for the Premier's Board of Education Award For Innovation and Excellence in Education.

Respectfully,

Winter, 2020



Métis Education

St. Michael Community School



"It is important to understand our history, to acknowledge the oppression we have suffered, and recognize the significance of our emergence as a people known as Métis."

Tom McCallum, Métis Elder

Celebrating Métis Culture

At St Michael Community School we endeavor to incorporate Métis culture and perspectives in everything we do in our building. Our locally developed Métis Education Model provides us with monthly themes that focus our initiatives in all classrooms while we support and participate in community events that celebrate our culture. In the past few months we have commemorated Louis Riel Day and researched and acknowledged historical and contemporary leaders and role models. We partnered with École St. Paul School during our annual staff retreat to build understandings and opportunities in learning about Métis ways of knowing, being, and doing. We were privileged to host the GSCS Indigenous Employees Network gathering celebrating Métis culture. We honoured New Year's with a school wide celebration of storytelling, food, games, and music.



Congratulations to The Gabriel Dumont Institute who are celebrating their 40th anniversary!!

We had many guests including students from SUNTEP, delegates from the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan’s Early Learning and Child Care Gathering, Métis Elders including our principal, Cristin Dorgan Lee’s auntie Sophie, who is a fluent French Michif speaker. We were excited to be invited by the Saskatoon Blades to the book launch of *A Prairie Boy* by Bill Brownridge. It’s the story of a Métis boy and his passion for hockey. February is storytelling month and our students are busy writing their own stories incorporating Michif nouns and verbs wherever possible. Sam LaMontagne presented at the GDI conference to share some of his strategies he uses in teaching the Michif language. Our student fiddlers have performed at a few community events but were thrilled to get a standing ovation at the Métis Nation –Saskatchewan’s ELCC conference banquet!



CUMFI offers free Michif classes every Thursday night from 6:00-8:00 pm at the CUMFI office. Norm Fleury, Maureen Belanger, Sam LaMontagne, and Vanessa Gardiner provide the leadership in Northern, Heritage, and French Michif. Everyone is welcome!!

We are proud of our new St. Michael Métis Education Model and are happy to share information about it.

Additional information can be found on our school website:
www.gscs.ca/studentsandfamilies/schools/MIC

Core Michif Language Program

Sam LaMontagne and Vanessa Gardiner continue to lead instruction in our Core Michif Language program for all our K-8 students. They are using well-respected instructional strategies such as Accelerated Second Language Acquisition (ASLA) and Total Physical Response (TPR) to make learning Michif fun, interactive, and purposeful. Students are enjoying the games, songs, puppets and stories. We are also grateful for the continuing support of our community Métis Elders who provide their guidance and insight.



Out and About in the Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division

Sam LaMontagne has been quite busy supporting schools in our division as they incorporate Métis perspectives into classroom lessons and school activities. Whether it is teaching jigging and playing spoons at St. Anne, teaching Michif at École St. Paul, or storytelling at St. Lorenzo Ruiz, Sam has a broad repertoire of skills to share with staff and students. He has been investing blocks of time at various schools as they build understandings that have culminated in Métis flag raising ceremonies at St. Mark and St. Edward Schools. He also supported the staff and students at Pope John Paul II School to celebrate the New Year in true Métis style!



Flag raising at St. Edward School



Flag raising at St. Mark School

Bulletin board display at École St. Paul School



