



## **Truth and Reconciliation Update – June 2022**

For those who might not be aware, after the uncovering of unmarked graves in May 2021 the Manitoba Catholic Schools Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Committee was established to further promote truth and reconciliation and continued learning between our Catholic schools and the Indigenous community. Made up of educators and parent volunteers of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous backgrounds, this committee has worked hard throughout the past year to listen to the needs of educators, implement important projects, and provide support for this journey toward reconciliation.

Our first accomplishment was developing a land acknowledgment for the Manitoba Catholic Schools homepage that acknowledged the ancestral lands of the Indigenous peoples in which we now live, work, learn, and play on. While many schools have developed their own land acknowledgements unique to their school communities, the one developed by the Advisory Committee offers schools guidance in the way we must respectfully acknowledge the homeland of Indigenous peoples.

Our biggest task this year was developing a survey for educators within the school community that anonymously asked where people felt they were at on their journey. This included asking what knowledge or formal training educators may already have, how comfortable or open they felt their school was towards the topic of reconciliation, and what areas they felt they needed the most support in. Overall, this survey helped us identify key areas of focus and determined the direction the advisory committee would take going forward.

From here, we developed a blog site for our school community where educators could pose questions, share resources, or even ideas for the Advisory Committee to review. Through this blog, those within our Catholic Schools community can share the literature their students are responding well to, or classroom speakers that provided valuable insight. All in all, the blog is set up to be a safe space for educators to learn from each other and share their experiences while also receiving the continued guidance of the Advisory Committee.

Overall, there has been an overwhelmingly positive response within the community for the work being carried out by the Advisory Committee, and the encouraging feedback we have received has helped shape and develop what our next steps going forward will be. We must point out however, that we have had many schools be champions within our community at setting up their own committees and developing their own forms of learning into several aspects of their school lives through P.D days, smudging ceremonies, classroom activities, and

more. We thank you for all the hard work that you are doing in promoting truth and reconciliation both in and out of our classrooms.

As a requirement of the archbishops, all employees in Manitoba Catholic school over the past two years have completed the online program *4 Seasons of Reconciliation* that was developed in partnership with the First Nations University of Canada. This program will continue to be required for all new employees and will also be available for others in school communities to complete.

Going forward, our focus for next year is to address some of the key areas identified by educators in the survey to best support the needs of our school communities. If you are interested in joining the Manitoba Catholic Schools Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Committee next year which meets monthly, please feel free to contact Robert Praznik, Superintendent at [mcsadmin@archwinnipeg.ca](mailto:mcsadmin@archwinnipeg.ca) for more information.

May God bless you with a happy and healthy summer!

Miigwech, Thank you

The MCS Advisory Committee for Truth and Reconciliation  
Robert Praznik, Superintendent