

**Kaanawapahta
maytress/maytr d'ikol
daan li niikinaahk:
Taking a look at the
experiences of Métis
teachers in the
homeland**

Dr. Laura Forsythe &
Dr. Lucy Delgado

2025

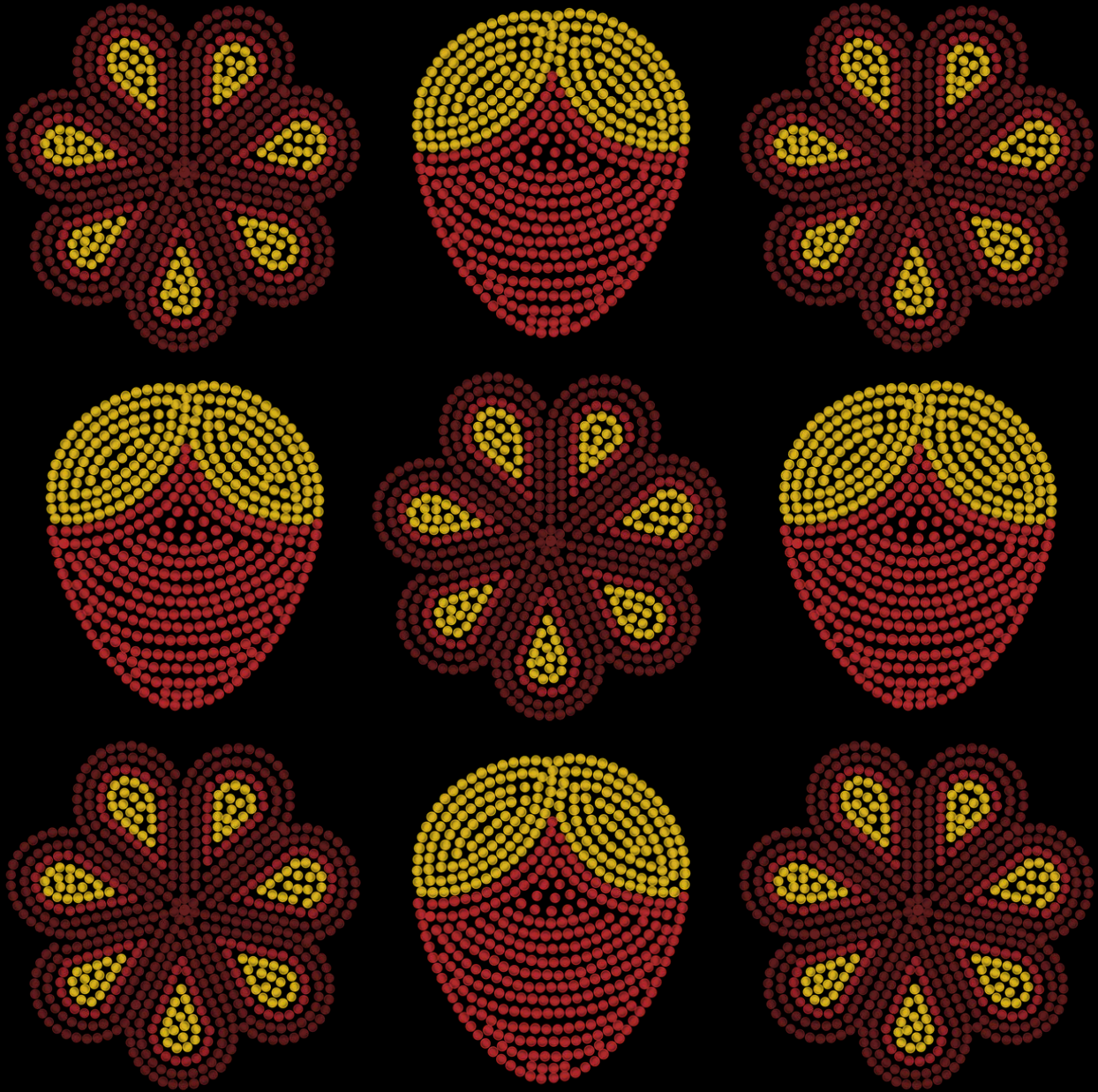
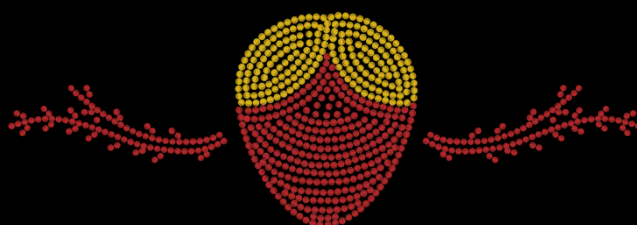


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Finally, we would like to thank the 41 Métis participants in this research who generously shared their stories and insights with us and allowed us to share our findings now with you. We hope their stories inspire change and better nation-specific representation of Indigenous teachers across the country.



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Researcher Positionality Statements

Laura Forsythe d-ishinikaashon. My name is Laura Forsythe. Ma famii kawyesh Roostertown d-oshciwak. My family was from Rooster Town a long time ago. Anosh ma famii Winnipeg wikiwak. Today, my family lives in Winnipeg. Ma Parentii (my ancestors) are Huppe, Ward, Berard, Morin, and Cyr. My ancestors worked for the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company. My ancestors once owned Lot 31, the site of Rooster Town. I am descended from buffalo hunters. I am descended from voyageurs. I am descended from the victors at Frog Plain. I am descended from farmers, ranchers, teamsters, seamstresses, and tradesmen; I come from the working class that built Manitoba and the Métis Nation. I am a Manitoba Métis Federation citizen and elected chairperson of the Bison Local. I am an assistant professor in the education faculty at the University of Winnipeg. I hold two Education-specific degrees: a Bachelor of Education from Simon Fraser University specializing in Indigenous Perspectives and a post- baccalaureate in early learning. As a high school educator, I taught English, Social Studies, and Indigenous Studies in mainstream and alternative settings.

Dr. Lucy Delgado. I am a Two-Spirit Métis woman, born and raised in Winnipeg, Manitoba. I am a citizen of the Manitoba Métis Federation. My family were Sinclairs, Cummings, Prudens, some of whom took scrip in St Andrews and St Johns, and I also have other family and ancestors from Red River, Oxford House, Norway House, and Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, and settler family from Ireland and the Orkney Islands. I am a community organizer, involved in a variety of local and national groups, and actively involved with the Two-Spirit Michif Local of the Manitoba Métis Federation. I am Canada Research Chair (Tier 2) in Michif and Two-Spirit Education as Wellness and Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba, with a research and teaching focus on Métis youth identity and Indigenous education. I am also a trained teacher, holding a Bachelor of Education and Master of Education (with an Indigenous Education focus) from Lakehead University and a doctorate in Educational Foundations from the University of Saskatchewan. I have additional previous teaching experience in primary and secondary classrooms both as a homeroom teacher and substitute.

Research Questions

The lived realities of Métis educators require exploring on multiple fronts: recruitment and retention. The driving research questions for this study were:

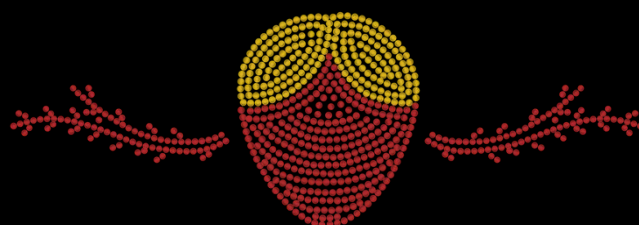
1. What motivated these educators to pursue teacher education?
2. What supports, if any, were available to ensure success?
3. Post-graduation, what supports were offered to help secure employment?
4. How have their institutions impacted their ability to produce and share Métis knowledge in the classroom?
5. What advice do they have for those following in their footsteps?

Why Métis-Specific Matters

Métis scholars have criticized the academy for its pan-Indigenous approach (Anuik & Gillies, 2012; Campbell-Chudoba, 2019; Forsythe, 2022; Gaudry, 2013; Scott, 2020, 2021a, 2021b). Moreover, when not homogenous, there are also issues of misrepresentation with scholars such as Logan (2008) stating that “the colonizer’s voice dominated Métis research, especially in the areas of history, anthropology and socio-political analysis” (p. 88). Gaudry and Hancock (2012) affirm that non-Métis scholars have broadly defined Métis scholarship to meet Canadian interests, bringing Haig-Brown’s (2018) question of whom this serves to the fore. Maud (2021) states that “contemporary scholars, academics and government agencies continue to use the generic term Aboriginal or Indigenous when, more often than not, their work is First Nations specific” (p. 5), which highlights how Métis do not see themselves labeled as such in research or wonder whether a given use of a term applies to them.

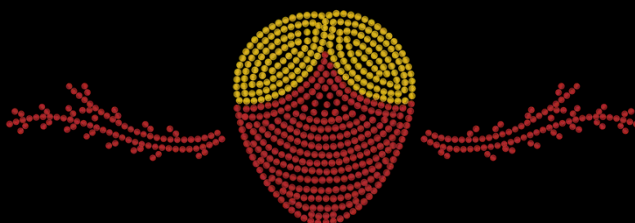
This project specifically looked at the experiences of Métis teachers. Although numerous studies have documented the shared experience of all Indigenous teachers, there is a lack of Métis-specific experience. Simply having research on all Indigenous nations does not tell the story of how Métis educators experience K-12 education and employment.

The literature regarding Métis-specific teacher experience is scarce, and what is available is limited regionally. Two Métis scholars and educators, Carmen Gillies (2017) and Melanie MacLean (2004), have completed graduate studies research documenting and reflecting on Métis teachers’ experiences in Saskatchewan. Gillies’ (2017) dissertation approaches Métis educators’ experiences as students and then as staff through a critical race theory (CRT) methodology, argues that “the racist practices and ideologies identified in the data structurally determine Whiteness and racialized academic outcomes in Saskatchewan schools” (p. ii) and suggests Indigenous student integration as a better alternative to ineffective Indigenous content integration. MacLean’s (2004) thesis also relays the stories of Métis educators’ experiences as students and staff, arguing that as Métis are minority teachers who have been schooled and must teach in white hegemonic educational systems, those who wish to challenge this hegemony receive little support and face resistance.



Gillies has published subsequent articles that further critique cultural integration and institutional racism in education. Gillies critiques cultural integration as a strategy to promote Indigenous student success in “Curriculum Integration and the Forgotten Indigenous Students: Reflecting on Métis Teachers’ Experiences,” citing Métis teachers' experiences with a refusal of individual teachers to teach Indigenous curricula, the objectification of Métis teachers, fractured teaching approaches of Indigenous content, and lack of anti-racist institutional attitudes as reasons for content integrations relative failure (2021). Gillies's (2022) article, “Seeing whiteness as property through Métis teachers’ K-12 stories of racism,” situates Métis educators racialized experiences within the CRT framework of “whiteness as property.” Specifically, Gillies (2022) examines the “absolute right to exclude” content and practices outside of institutional comfortability, specifically Indigenous culture and, more specifically, Métis culture, worldviews, and practices, and the advantage it provides to white students and teachers (p. 149). They explain further that white educational systems reward Indigenous students and staff for conforming to white cultural norms and Western educational views and, in turn, directly and indirectly reprimand them for non-conformance (2022). While these works are invaluable insights into the realities and struggles of Métis teachers and students, they are limited in region (Saskatchewan only) and participant numbers, with thirteen and four interviewees (Gillies, 2017; MacLean, 2004).

The Canadian Teachers’ Federation published a study called “Aboriginal Teachers’ Professional Knowledge and Experience in Canadian Schools,” which tells the stories of Indigenous educators’ experiences nationally, proposing many meaningful recommendations about substantive issues that need to be addressed in the education system, but lacks any Métis-specific analysis (St. Denis, 2010). With only two scholars exploring Métis-specific teacher experience on a regionally limited basis and other substantive works on Indigenous teacher experience lacking First Nations, Inuit, and Métis-specific breakdowns of data, it is clear there is a gap in the literature on, and therefore a need for, research regarding Métis teachers’ experience across the Métis homeland.



Geographical Scope

The research project invited Métis educators currently teaching in K-12 from throughout the Métis homeland to participate. Criteria included citizenship with one of the following four governing bodies: Métis Nation British Columbia, Otipemisiwak Métis Government, Métis Nation Saskatchewan, or Manitoba Métis Federation.

Forty-one Métis educators participated in the interview process: five registered with Métis Nation British Columbia, eight registered with Otipemisiwak Métis Government, ten registered with Métis Nation Saskatchewan, and eighteen registered with Manitoba Métis Federation.



Figure 1 Métis Homeland Map 2019

Environmental Scan

Indigenous Insights, led by Dr. Gladys Rowe with research assistants Amanda Burton and Taylor Wilson, conducted an environmental scan looking at the numbers and experiences of Métis teachers across Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. In conducting the scan, post-secondary institutions, school divisions, and school boards were contacted to obtain Métis-specific data, and public-facing websites were also reviewed.

This environmental scan detailed a persistent and systemic gap in the representation, recognition, and support of Métis educators across Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. While some promising data points and initiatives exist—particularly within Métis-led institutions and programs like SUNTEP and NSITEP—the overall picture is one of fragmentation, opacity, and insufficient institutional responsibility. Public education bodies and post-secondary institutions routinely failed to provide data, often citing privacy concerns or the absence of disaggregated tracking systems. When data was shared, it was typically generalized under the category of “Indigenous,” making it impossible to assess the specific experiences and needs of Métis educators and learners.

This lack of specificity and transparency is not neutral omission; it is a barrier to justice, equity, and informed action. Métis educators remain largely invisible in mainstream data systems, hiring processes, and program supports. Most post-secondary institutions reviewed in the scan offer no Métis-specific supports or programming in teacher education, and few demonstrate meaningful partnerships with Métis governments or communities. In many cases, institutions failed to respond to inquiries at all, reflecting not only gaps in knowledge but deeper gaps in relational accountability and systemic prioritization.

Provincially, there is a mismatch between the high representation of Indigenous (including Métis) students in public schools and post-secondary programs, and the underrepresentation of Indigenous teachers and faculty—especially in urban and provincial systems. Some school divisions, such as Winnipeg School Division and Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division, provided data that reflects stronger commitments to tracking Indigenous staff; however, in nearly every case, disaggregated Métis-specific data was limited or absent. Without accurate, transparent, and culturally informed data collection, institutions cannot meaningfully respond to the needs of Métis peoples or measure progress toward reconciliation and systemic transformation.

Environmental Scan: British Columbia

In British Columbia, the scan revealed limited and inconsistent data on Métis and Indigenous educators. Of 314 public education bodies (PEBs), only eight responded, and none provided Métis-specific data, citing privacy or data collection limitations. While Métis Nation BC offers resources such as bursaries and Métis-specific feedback on provincial policy, there is no system-wide tracking of Métis educators. Post-secondary institutions (PSIs) were similarly nonresponsive, and Métis-specific supports were not identified on their websites. Although institutions like UBC report some Indigenous faculty and provide Indigenous programming, the continued aggregation of Indigenous data obscures Métis presence and needs. The lack of disaggregated data and systemic mechanisms for recognizing Métis educators reflects an institutional failure to make Métis peoples visible, thus undermining the potential for relational accountability and responsive program development.

Métis Governing Body

Métis Nation British Columbia responded to the inquiry and stated that they provide the following supports: Métis-specific classroom resources (K-12 educational posters, provide suggestions for resources), education-specific bursary for teachers, and their Skills Training, Employment and Post Secondary (STEPS) program offers \$5000 towards education (not specific to an education program). They also provide Métis specific feedback on provincial policy development, implemented the 9th professional standard for BC educators which explicitly included respecting Métis culture and history, and have a seat on the Career Pathways working group.

Public Education Bodies (PEB): Métis-Specific

Out of 314 PEBs scanned, responses were obtained from 8. The British Columbia Government Indigenous Post-Secondary Education and Training department responded stating that they do not disaggregate their Indigenous teachers and therefore could not provide data on Métis teachers specifically. Mission School Division stated that they anecdotally have a “number” of Métis teachers, they do not track this data due to “privacy issues.” They have an Indigenous Education department that is “Métis-oriented” but not Métis specific (Siwal Si’wes Digital Library, 2024). Southeast Kootenay does not track Métis teachers. Langley Christian School Society reported 2 Métis teachers. Valley Christian School Society, Claren Academy Society, and Squamish Waldorf School Association do not have Métis teachers on staff. Selfdesign Learning Foundation does not track Métis specific data but reported 2 Indigenous teachers.

Post-Secondary Institutions (PSI): Métis-Specific

Nine PSIs were contacted (University of British Columbia, Simon Fraser University, University of the Fraser Valley, Thompson Rivers University, University of Northern British Columbia, University of Victoria – including the Indigenous Education program, Vancouver Island University, and Trinity Western University). No responses were received. According to their websites, none of the BC PSIs offer Métis-specific supports or resources.

PSIs – General Indigenous Data

British Columbia's post-secondary institutions display a range of Indigenous student enrollments and faculty representation. The University of British Columbia (UBC) reports 2,385 Indigenous students, and according to their website, 12 Indigenous faculty in education and 58 Indigenous faculty overall (University of British Columbia, 2024a; 2024b). Indigenous-focused initiatives at UBC include Indigenous student engagement programs, Indigenous research centers, and culturally relevant curriculum integration (University of British Columbia, 2025a; 2025b). Simon Fraser University (SFU) does not publicly disclose Indigenous student enrollment, but state they have 7 Indigenous faculty members in education and 91 Indigenous faculty and staff institution-wide on their website (Simon Fraser University, 2025). University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) reports 938 Indigenous students (8.18% of FTE) and 54 Indigenous faculty and staff (5.54%) (University of the Fraser Valley, 2024a; 2024b). Thompson Rivers University (TRU) has 2,797 Indigenous students overall and 7 Indigenous faculty in education (Thompson Rivers University, 2024; 2025). University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) reported 459 Indigenous students in 2021, though faculty data is unavailable (University of Northern British Columbia, 2025). University of Victoria (UVic) has 130 Indigenous education students and 1,543 Indigenous students overall (University of Victoria, 2024). Vancouver Island University (VIU) has 1,514 Indigenous students, comprising 11% of enrollment (Vancouver Island University, 2024). No data was available for Indigenous student enrollment, faculty, or staff at Trinity Western University. Overall, 13,098 Indigenous students (2.8% of the post-secondary population) are enrolled in British Columbia institutions, though faculty and staff data remain inconsistent (Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training, 2018).

60 Public School Districts and Additional Education Bodies – General Indigenous Data

The Fraser-Cascade School District (SD78) maintains an Indigenous Education Department that includes First Nations Support Workers (FNSWs), language instructors, and Indigenous mentors. However, there remain vacancies for key language instructor positions, highlighting the ongoing challenge of recruiting Indigenous educators (Fraser-Cascade School District 78, 2020). The Comox Valley Schools (School District 71) also support Indigenous education through a dedicated Indigenous Education Department comprising over 40 staff members such as Indigenous Support Workers (ISWs), curriculum support teachers, and cultural coordinators to promote Indigenous student success and cultural integration (Comox Valley Schools, 2025).

Recruitment

Métis Educators were interviewed using Forsythe's (2022) Intertwined Michif Methodology, which intertwines three Métis methodologies theorized by Métis women: Keeoukaywin, Lii Taab di Faam Michif, and Kishkeeyihtamaaniwan Kaa-natohtamihk. Intertwining is inherently Métis, as witnessed through the creation of our own language, Michif, which has French nominal and verb stems combined with nêhiyawêwin nouns dependent on each and cannot be separated (Bakker, 1997). The method intertwines visiting, Métis kitchen table theory, and listening to learn in a conversational method of inquiry. The method intertwines visiting, Métis kitchen table theory, and listening to learn in a conversational method of inquiry.

Interview Analysis

We conducted an analysis of the interviews with the research questions in mind, and have consolidated stories based around the themes of recruitment and retainment.



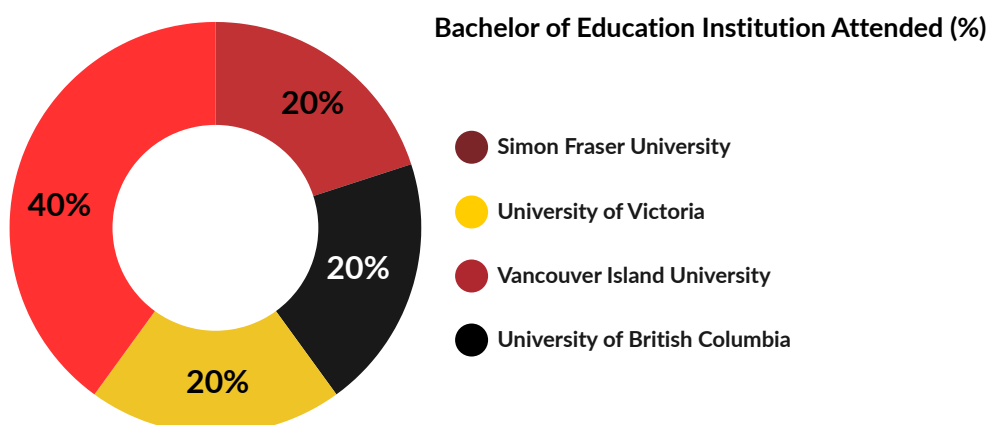
Interview Methodology

Recruitment

The Métis Nation of British Columbia has 27,135 registered citizens and advocates for over 98,000 self-identified Métis in the province. As indicated in the environmental scan, none of the PSIs in BC publish their Métis enrollment in their programs.

The largest PSI in the province, the University of British Columbia, has offered the Indigenous Teacher Education Program for over 40 years, educating pre-service teachers in all grades and subjects. In the capital city, the University of Victoria provides a specialized Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) in Indigenous Language Revitalization. Both Simon Fraser University and the University of Victoria host an Indigenous post-degree professional program for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students that focuses on Indigenous pedagogy and worldview. In contrast, Thompson Rivers University offers a B.Ed. Indigenous cohort for all years. Vancouver Island University and the University of Northern British Columbia do not provide an Indigenous focused B.Ed. Program.

Despite enrolling in a B.Ed., none of the educators interviewed were actively recruited by a post-secondary institution or encouraged by a school division to become educators. All the teachers interviewed taught for over 10 years; however, many of these programs existed during their pre-service training, demonstrating a disconnect between the Métis community and B.Ed. program recruitment efforts.



Funding

With the Métis Nation Post-Secondary Education Strategy coming into effect in 2019, only 20% of those interviewed indicated funding directly from the Métis Nation of British Columbia (MNBC), due to the years of their enrollment and the lack of a formalized mechanism to award monies from the nation. Like many first-generation university students, 80% interviewed shared being unaware of additional funding streams to help with their tuition, attending university between 2005 and 2014. Today, the MNBC offers part-time and full-time students funding for multiple degrees.

Hiring and Employment

Métis Nation of British Columbia citizens seeking employment in the province of British Columbia spoke of spending years on the Teacher on Call (TOC) list before finding a term or permanent placement. The range of service on the TOC list is 7-20 years. Only 20% spoke of an immediate hire into a division and noted their existing relationships as key. None of the educators who spoke of DEI hiring practices or initiatives during their job search were recruited or courted by the British Columbia Education and Training or by individual divisions to meet the need for Indigenous representation in the classroom. Unlike participants from other provinces, the MNBC educators were not recruited to Indigenous-focused roles after employment.

Retainment

Métis educators in British Columbia are isolated due to the low numbers of other community members in their places of work – none of the educators interviewed work with other Métis educators in their schools. With most initiatives being driven by the district, experience can significantly vary. One educator noted that most learners did not know who Louis Riel was, versus another who stated that everyone was aware due to the Louis Riel Day celebration in their district. 60% noted the First Nations-centric atmosphere in British Columbia while also noting the lack of Métis inclusion in their divisions' taught curriculum.

The level of employment satisfaction among participants was dependent on where in the system and which district educators are currently employed. Those in supportive districts or in mainstream leadership themselves were content with progress and pace, whereas others in classroom settings or in the Indigenous Education Department spoke about struggle and discontent. According to those interviewed, the reality for all learners in British Columbia is a lack of funding, staffing, counselling and increased stressors for families due to inflation, resulting in teacher burnout.



Recommendations

After hearing from 41 Métis citizens who are or were employed as educators, we offer the following recommendations.

Moving forward, education systems must move beyond broad commitments to Indigenous inclusion and toward nation-specific (including Métis-specific) action, grounded in relational accountability. We urge all post-secondary institutions, school divisions, and boards to:

- Establish standardized, disaggregated data collection practices that recognize the distinct identities and rights of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples;
- Invest in Métis-specific recruitment, mentorship, and retention strategies for teachers and faculty;
- Develop sustained partnerships with Métis governments and educators to co-design culturally grounded and community-led programming;
- Expand financial, academic, and cultural supports for Métis teacher candidates across all post-secondary institutions; and
- Embed Métis knowledge systems and worldviews into the fabric of institutional policy and practice

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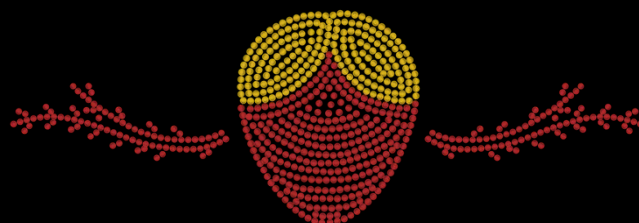
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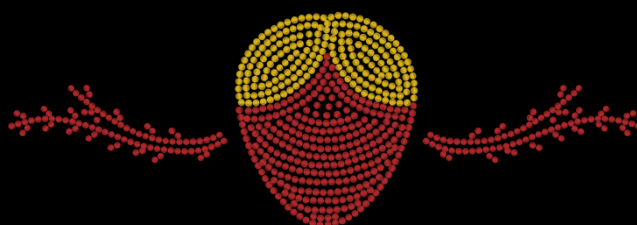
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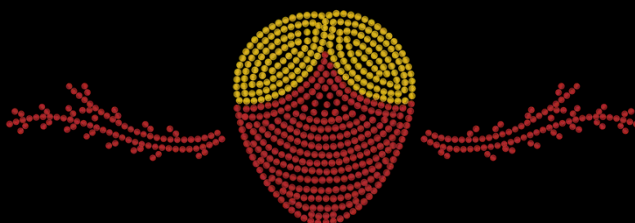
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