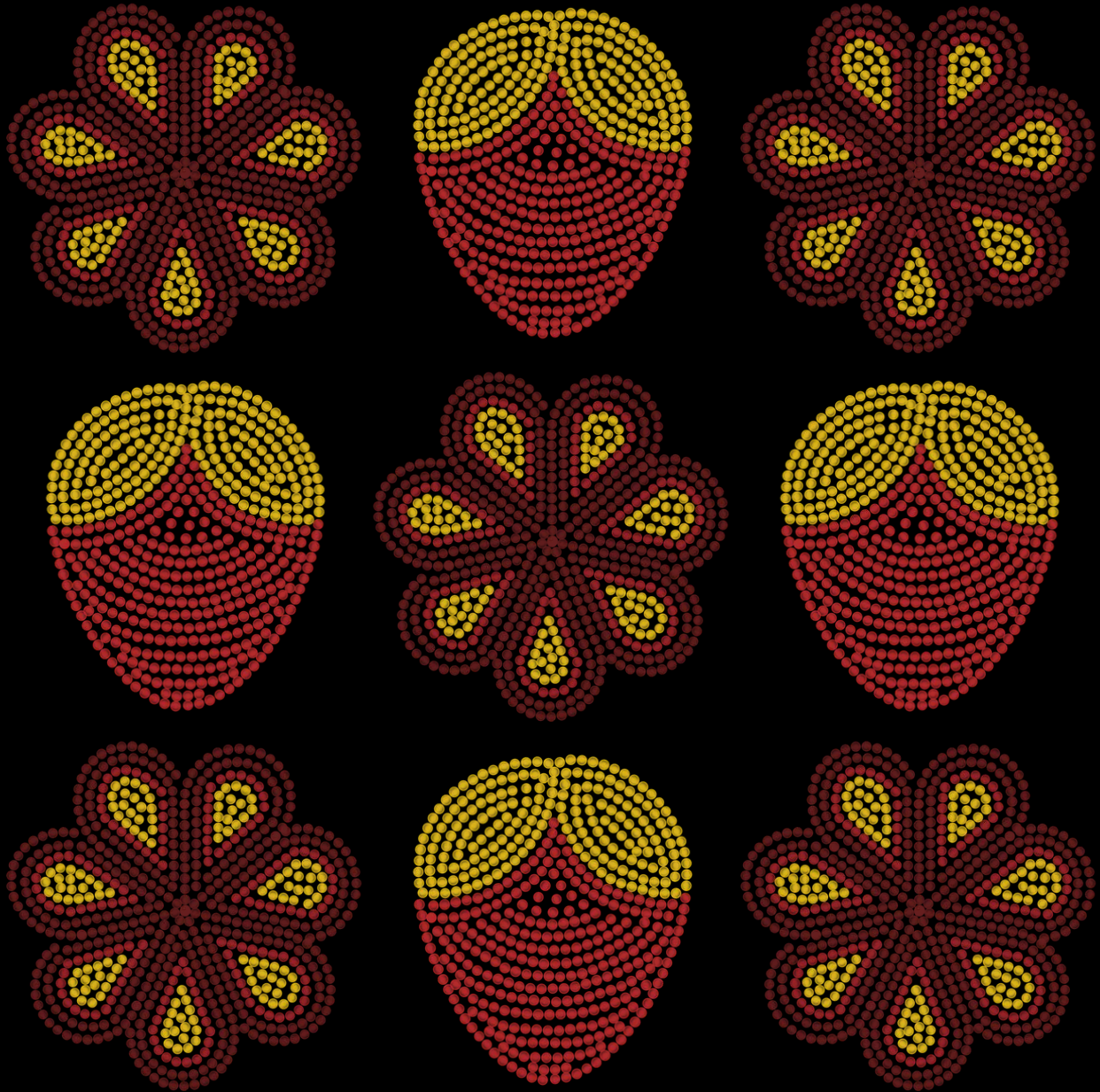


**Kaanawapahta  
maytress/maytr d'ikol  
daan li niikinaahk:  
Taking a look at the  
experiences of Métis  
teachers in the  
homeland**

Dr. Laura Forsythe &  
Dr. Lucy Delgado

2025



# Acknowledgements

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We would like to thank research assistants Carly Lawton, Katie Anderson, and Rahul Kanwal for their excellent work on this project. We would also like to thank Indigenous Insights, led by Dr. Gladys Rowe, Amanda Burton, and Taylor Wilson for their environmental scan, which has been reproduced in part in this report, and Amy Jackson, who is responsible for dreaming up the beautiful design and layout of this report and the accompanying infographics.

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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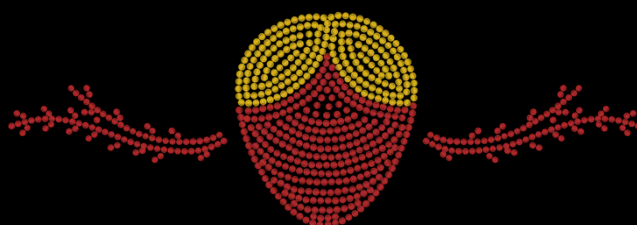


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# Table of Contents

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- Researcher Positionality Statements
- Research Questions
- Why Métis-specific Matters
- Geographical Scope
- Environmental Scan
- Interview Methodology and Analysis
- Recommendations
- References



# Research 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

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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

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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.

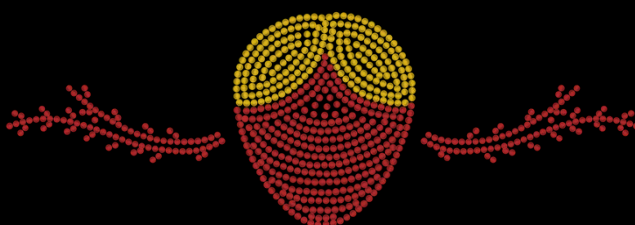
This project specifically looked at the experiences of Métis teachers. Although numerous studies have documented the shared experience of all Indigenous teachers, there is a lack of Métis-specific experience. Simply having research on all Indigenous nations does not tell the story of how Métis educators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

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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: 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: Manitoba

In Manitoba, data on Métis educators is sparse and unevenly reported. Of 45 PEBs contacted, only six responded, with Winnipeg School Division providing the most concrete information—reporting 223 Métis teachers. Other divisions either lacked data or failed to follow up. The Manitoba Métis Federation acknowledged the request but has not yet shared detailed information. Among PSIs, none responded, and no Métis-specific supports were evident on their websites. Broader Indigenous data at institutions like the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg was more accessible, but again, this information was not disaggregated by Indigenous identity within the different faculties. This lack of specificity obscures the experiences and contributions of Métis educators and students, making it difficult to craft responsive policies or supports. Despite efforts like the More Indigenous Teachers Initiative (MITI), the mismatch between Indigenous student populations and educator representation underscores the need for stronger, Métis-specific recruitment, tracking, and support. Manitoba must deepen its responsibility to act in good relation with Métis peoples through transparency, resource allocation, and institutional reform.

## Métis Governing Body

The Manitoba Métis Federation responded to an initial request for information on January 31 referring to their research department. A response from the research department has not been received as of the writing of this report. The MMF website does not indicate any supports or resources offered specifically to Métis teachers.

### Public Education Bodies (PEB): Métis-Specific

Out of 45 PEBs scanned, responses were obtained from 6. Winnipeg School Division reports 223 Métis teachers, and the remaining 5 responses stated that they do not track this information, that they required further information, or they were looking into it but then did not respond with information.

## Post-Secondary Institutions (PSI): Métis-Specific

Four PSIs offering Bachelor of Education degrees were scanned (University of Manitoba, University of Winnipeg, Brandon University, and University College of the North). No responses were received. According to their websites, none of the PSIs offer Métis specific supports or resources.

# PSIs – General Indigenous Data

In Manitoba, Indigenous students account for a significant portion of post-secondary enrollment. The University of Manitoba reports that 9.6% (2,994 students) of its total student body identifies as Indigenous, with 78 students (14%) enrolled in Indigenous education programs (University of Manitoba, 2024). The institution employs 50 Indigenous scholars, with three Indigenous faculty members in education, according to their website (University of Manitoba, 2025a). Additionally, the university offers extensive Indigenous-focused programs, such as the Ongomiizwin Education program, which supports Indigenous learners pursuing health-related careers (University of Manitoba, 2025b). The University of Winnipeg has 12% (1,070) Indigenous students, with 30% (57 degrees conferred in 2023-24) in education programs and 56 Indigenous faculty members (6% of all staff) (University of Winnipeg, 2024). This institution emphasizes Indigenous student success through tailored support services, including the Indigenous Student Services Centre (ISSC), which offers academic, cultural, and financial assistance (University of Winnipeg, 2025). Brandon University demonstrates a strong Indigenous presence, with 168 out of 772 education students and 451 out of 3,263 students institution-wide identifying as Indigenous (Brandon University, 2025). However, data on Indigenous faculty and staff remains unavailable, highlighting a gap in institutional reporting. University College of the North, while lacking specific data, is known for its strong Indigenous focus, particularly in its programming and student supports designed to cater to Indigenous learners (University College of the North, 2025). There is currently no available provincial data on Indigenous post-secondary student enrolment in Manitoba.

## 37 Public School Divisions and Additional Education Bodies – General Indigenous Data

According to Manitoba Education and Training's 2017 survey, Indigenous teachers accounted for 11.2% of the total teaching workforce in Manitoba. Out of 10,152 teachers in the province, 1,136 self-identified as Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, or Inuit), while non-Indigenous teachers were 88.8% (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017). The distribution of Indigenous teachers varied by school type. In First Nations-operated schools, all 282 teachers identified as Indigenous. In provincial schools, 9.3% (922 teachers) identified as Indigenous out of 9,870 teachers. This survey highlighted that Indigenous teachers are more concentrated in First Nations schools than in provincial schools. A second survey was conducted in 2022 to update these findings, but the data has not yet been publicly released.

However, in a report released by the Winnipeg Indigenous Executive Circle in 2023, Indigenous teachers accounted for only 5.8% of all educators in Winnipeg public schools during the 2021-22 school year despite Indigenous students representing 19.1% of the student population. The Winnipeg School Division (WSD) had the highest proportion of Indigenous teachers at 8.9%, while other divisions lagged behind (Winnipeg Indigenous Executive Circle, 2023). To achieve proportional representation, an estimated 854 additional Indigenous teachers must be hired across the city's school divisions (Winnipeg Indigenous Executive Circle, 2023).



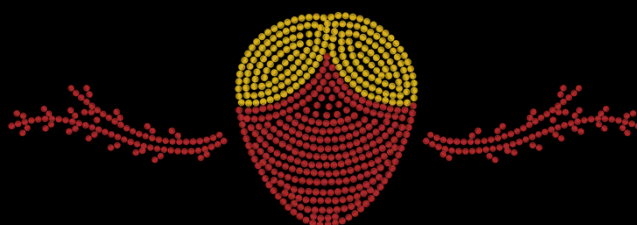
# Interview Methodology

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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

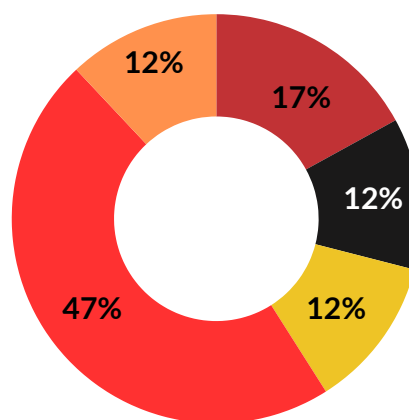
## Post-secondary Education

The Manitoba Métis Federation has 54,717 citizens, of which 24,352 live in the Winnipeg region. The University of Manitoba, the largest university with a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program in the province, does not currently have a specialized Indigenous B.Ed. program nor an active, public-facing Indigenous student recruitment strategy. The University of Winnipeg, a smaller university in Winnipeg, offers a community-based Aboriginal Teacher Education Program designed to ladder Educational Assistants to become English teachers in Early and Middle Years (K-8) classrooms. Brandon University runs the PENT Indigenous Teacher Education Program seeking to ladder paraprofessionals into middle years math and science teachers.

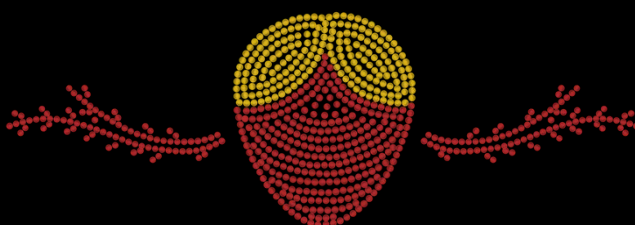
Only the University of the North offers a comprehensive program, the Kenanow B.Ed. Program, a northern teacher education program with a Middle Years focus.

Despite their enrollment in a Bachelor of Education, none of the eighteen educators interviewed were actively recruited by an academic institution or encouraged by a school division to become an educator.

- Out of Province
- Brandon University
- University of Winnipeg
- University of Manitoba
- Université de Saint-Bonif...



Bachelor of Education Institution Attended (%)





## Funding

One of the most fundamental supports for students is funding to attend post-secondary. Hearing from Métis in Manitoba, there is a deficit in funding sources to support the five-year journey to become an educator. Although 55% received funding from the Manitoba Métis Federation through either the Louis Riel Bursary, the Métis Employment and Training Department, or the Post Secondary Education Support Program, none received national or federal funding or scholarships designed for Indigenous students. With only 11% receiving other types of financial sponsorship, resulting in \$600 or less, the stories heard spoke of the struggle to fund their education.

## Hiring and Employment

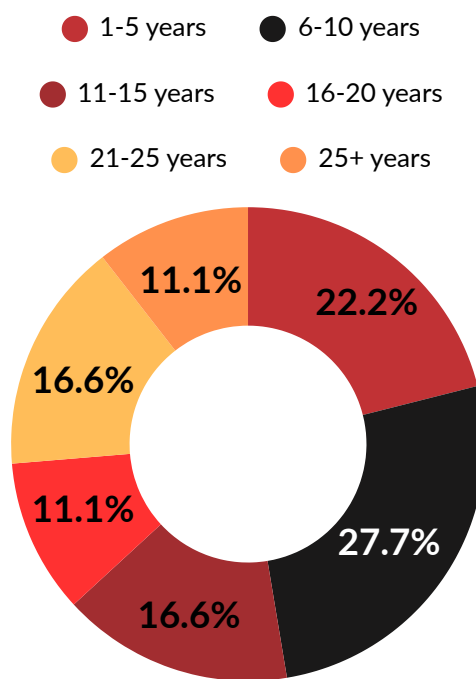
Manitoba Métis Federation Citizens who became educators spoke of their journey into their first roles in school divisions across the province and in other jurisdictions, making no mention of any targeted hiring or DEI streams to employment. None of the educators were recruited or courted by the Province of Manitoba Education or by individual divisions to meet the need of Indigenous representation in the classroom. Despite not actively seeking Métis applicants, 44% of those interviewed in Manitoba spoke about opportunities that arose once their employers realized they were Indigenous, such as requests for land acknowledgments, teaching Indigenous perspectives to all classes and creating curriculum.

# Retention

## Challenges to Retention

Due to a lack of recruitment efforts, Métis educators in Manitoba are isolated in their schools and divisions. The largest school division in Manitoba – the Winnipeg School Division employs 2500 educators, only 223 (.09%) are Métis. The low inclusion of Métis educators results in tokenism and feelings of isolation. This results in numerous educators being called upon to create content and implement Indigenization efforts with little emotional or tangible support.

Manitoba Métis Federation citizens who participated in interviews also spoke to experiencing backlash from colleagues and non-Indigenous parents following the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and its implementation. With push back to bringing Indigenous ways of knowing and being into the classroom, including language, many were disheartened. Still other participants spoke to overt and direct racism that they had endured while in the K-12 system. Despite numerous challenges, over 40% of those interviewed had worked as educators for over 10 years. Their commitment to the profession speaks to their tenacity and perseverance while enduring challenges of racism, tokenism, isolation, underfunding, and lack of administrative support.



Years of Teaching

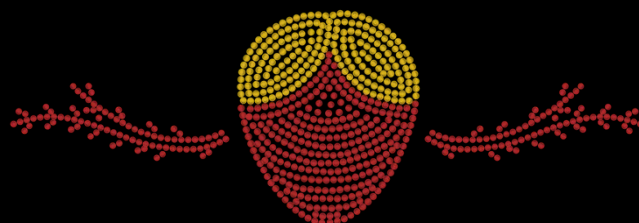


# Retention

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## Motivation to Stay

Educators who have stayed in the K-12 system shared their motivation to be role models in the school for Indigenous students. Seeing the lack of representation when they attended school, many felt their presence could positively affect learners. Others spoke of a passion for learning that they wanted to share and inspire in Indigenous students in areas like language, science, art, and mathematics. All Manitoba Métis Federation citizen educators interviewed shared a sense of collective responsibility as Métis to give back to the broader community.



# Recommendations

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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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