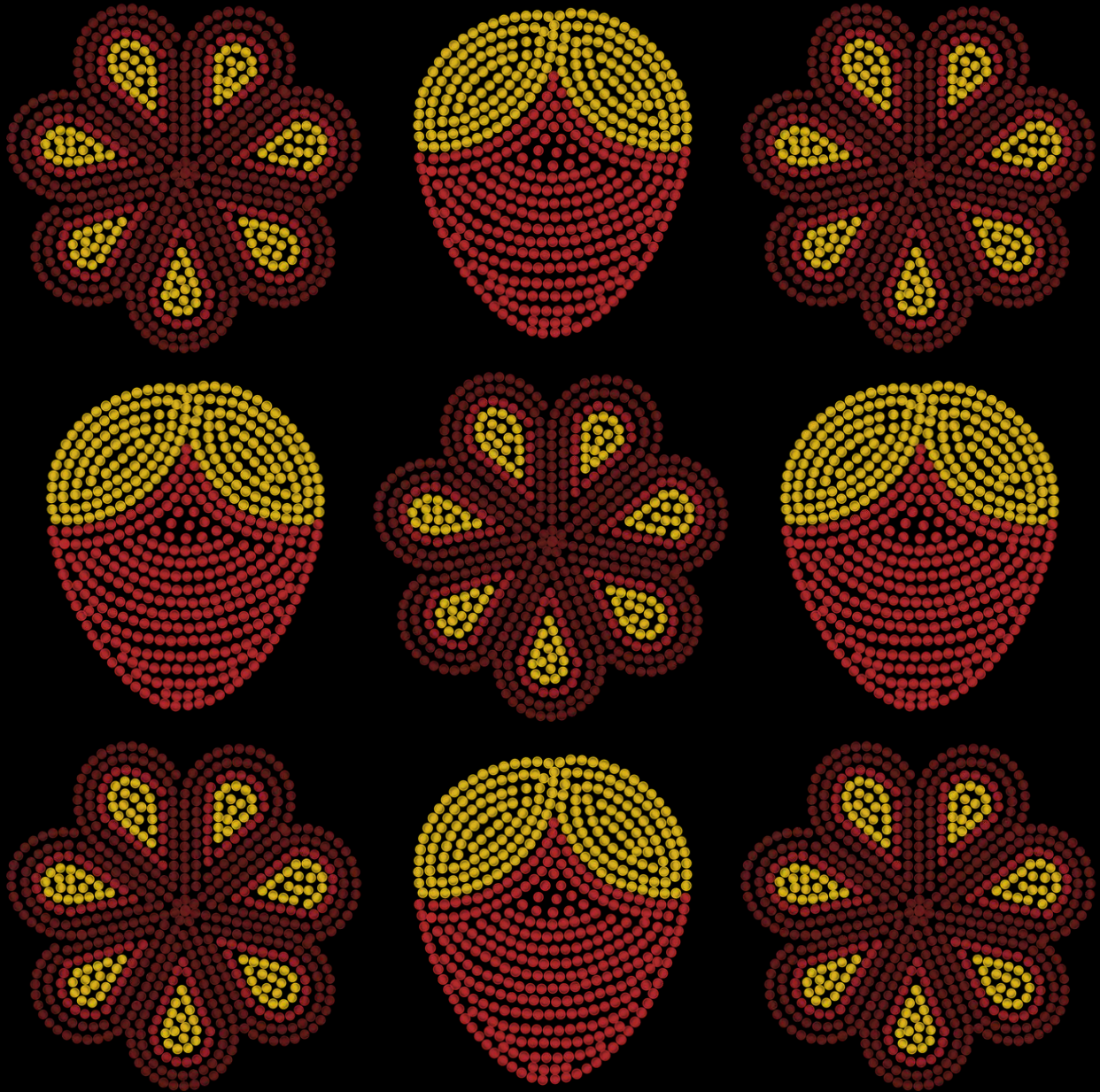


**Kaanawapahta
maytress/maytr d'ikol
daan li niikinaahk:
Taking a look at the
experiences of Métis
teachers in the
homeland**

Dr. Laura Forsythe &
Dr. Lucy Delgado

2025



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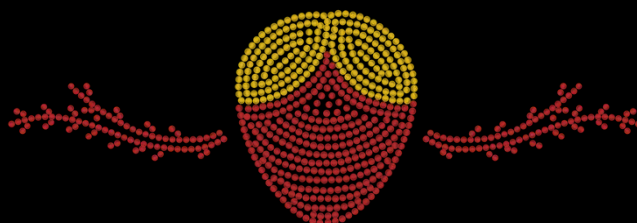
Finally, we would like to thank the 41 Métis participants in this research who generously shared their stories and insights with us and allowed us to share our findings now with you. We hope their stories inspire change and better nation-specific representation of Indigenous teachers across the country.



THE UNIVERSITY OF WINNIPEG

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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

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.

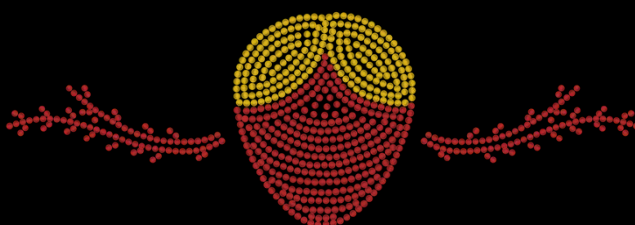
This project specifically looked at the experiences of Métis teachers. Although numerous studies have documented the shared experience of all Indigenous teachers, there is a lack of Métis-specific experience. Simply having research on all Indigenous nations does not tell the story of how Métis educators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



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: Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan provided more detailed insights into Métis educator representation compared to other provinces, but gaps remain. The province estimates 750 self-identified Métis teachers, with some divisions like Saskatchewan Rivers reporting over 160. Programs like SUNTEP and NSITEP demonstrate strong Indigenous-focused teacher education pathways, including significant Métis-specific supports, land-based learning, and Michif language revitalization. However, many post-secondary institutions did not respond to inquiries, and only those explicitly linked to Métis-led institutions offered visible Métis-specific programming. While these specialized programs are models of culturally grounded education, their impact is constrained without broader systemic alignment across mainstream institutions. The lack of formal data collection across many PEBs and PSIs diminishes the ability to assess progress and identify strategic investment points. The province demonstrates potential for transformative change, but it must be met with a systemic commitment to relational accountability and resourcing Métis-led educational pathways.

Public Education Bodies (PEB): Métis-Specific

Out of 32 PEBs scanned, information was obtained from 6. The Government of Saskatchewan estimates 750 self-identified Métis teachers across 27 school divisions, Prairie Spirit reports 18 Métis teachers, and Saskatchewan Rivers reports 164 (SaskToday, 2024). The Saskatchewan School Boards Association and Prairie South School Division responded saying they do not collect this information. Regina School Board referred questions to the Gabriel Dumont Institute.

Recruitment

Four PSI bodies were contacted: Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program, (SUNTEP), Northern Saskatchewan Indigenous Teacher Education Program (NSITEP), University of Saskatchewan and University of Regina. No responses were received. According to their websites, NSITEP offers Michif language, land based learning, and land based and culture based pedagogies (Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2025a). SUNTEP offers a strong emphasis on Métis history, Michif language, culture, social justice, and anti-racist/anti-oppressive education, Métis ways of knowing and being, and Michif language and land-based learning. SUNTEP sponsors self-declared Métis applicants for all tuition and required fees during the four years of pre-service teacher-training (Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2025b). The Universities of Saskatchewan and Regina do not offer Métis-specific supports (other than partnering with the SUNTEP and NSITEP programs).

TPSIs – General Indigenous Data

Saskatchewan's institutions display high Indigenous student enrollment, particularly in specialized Indigenous teacher education programs. The Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) and Northern Saskatchewan Indigenous Teacher Education Program (NSITEP) collectively enroll 234 Indigenous education students, with 38 Indigenous faculty and staff (55% of Gabriel Dumont Institute staff) (Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2024a). Since 1980, SUNTEP has graduated over 1,500 Indigenous educators, demonstrating its impact on Indigenous teacher training (Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2024b). These programs continue to play a crucial role in ensuring Indigenous representation in the teaching profession, equipping graduates with culturally relevant teaching methods and knowledge. The University of Saskatchewan has 3,307 Indigenous students (12.38%) but lacks specific data on Indigenous education students (University of Saskatchewan, 2024). However, 217 Indigenous faculty and staff were reported in 2019, signifying an important level of Indigenous representation in faculty ranks (Métis Nation—Saskatchewan & University of Saskatchewan, 2019). The University of Regina has 129 Indigenous education students (22.6%) and 2,377 Indigenous students (13.7%) overall, with Indigenous faculty and staff making up 4.4% of its workforce (University of Regina, 2024a; 2024b). Institutional support for Indigenous students includes the ta-tawâw Student Centre, which provides culturally responsive academic and personal support (University of Regina, 2025). Provincial totals indicate 8,480 Indigenous students enrolled in post-secondary institutions, but inconsistent faculty data hinders full analysis (Government of Saskatchewan, 2025).

27 Public School Divisions and Additional Education Bodies – General Indigenous Data

The Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division (SRPSD) reported that 181 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) educators were employed during the 2022-23 school year, accounting for approximately 31.9% of the division's total teaching workforce. This figure represents an increase from 164 Indigenous educators in 2015-16 but a decline from the peak of 189 in 2020-21 (Saskatchewan Rivers Public School Division, 2024). The Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA) reported that Indigenous representation among school board trustees increased from 11% before the 2020 elections to 14% following the elections (Saskatchewan School Boards Association, n.d.).

Interview Methodology

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.

Recruitment

Post-secondary Education

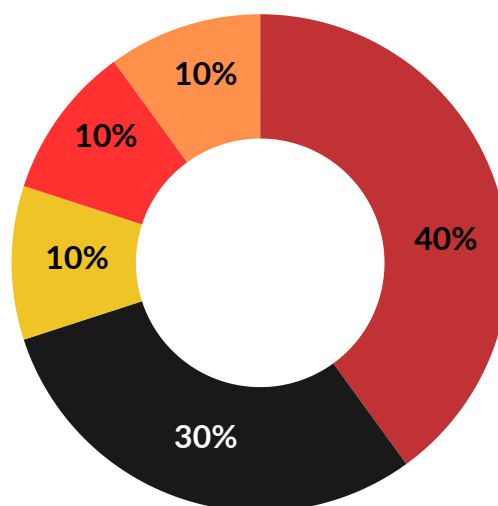
Saskatchewan is a unique case, with a significant amount of Indigenous student and educator data and Métis-specific educator graduation data, due to the existence of SUNTEP. SUNTEP has graduated over 1500 students since its inception, creating a critical mass of Métis teachers working in divisions across the province. Post-secondary institutions unfortunately do not track Métis-specific enrollment data, but rather Indigenous student data, and only the University of Regina tracks how many Indigenous students there are in education. Outside of SUNTEP programming, neither the University of Saskatchewan nor the University of Regina report any additional Métis-specific student supports.



Participants who had attended SUNTEP programs raved about the experience, both in how much it prepared them to teach Métis content in the classroom and in the transformative nature of the program for them as Métis people themselves. SUNTEP provided a strong sense of community for attendees and broke down perceived barriers between instructors and students by facilitating relationship building and providing small class sizes. The Métis-specific programming, Michif language learning, and ancestral connections were all cited as reasons why the program was so effective. At the University of Saskatchewan, mandatory sections of anti-racism courses were designated for SUNTEP and ITEP students exclusively, so they could discuss their experiences with race and racism without worrying about non-Indigenous students in the room. These intentional changes had a significant impact on students who attended these programs.

Bachelor of Education School Attended

- University of Saskatchewan (SUNTEP)
- University of Regina (SUNTEP)
- NORTEP
- University of Saskatchewan
- University of Regina



Funding

The majority of Métis Nation Saskatchewan educators who participated in this research attended SUNTEP and all acknowledged the extensive financial support provided to all who enrolled in the program. One participant said “the financial barrier doesn’t exist as hard as it did, if you want to like go to education and go through SUNTEP ... they like set you up for success.” While SUNTEP covers tuition costs, participants reported utilizing student loans, scholarships, employment and lines of credit to cover additional costs-of-living. The Métis Nation Saskatchewan, through the Gabriel Dumont Institute, supported 90% of participants through either SUNTEP or final year tuition payment. The one participant who did not receive support attended school in the 1970s before such funding was available.

Hiring and Employment

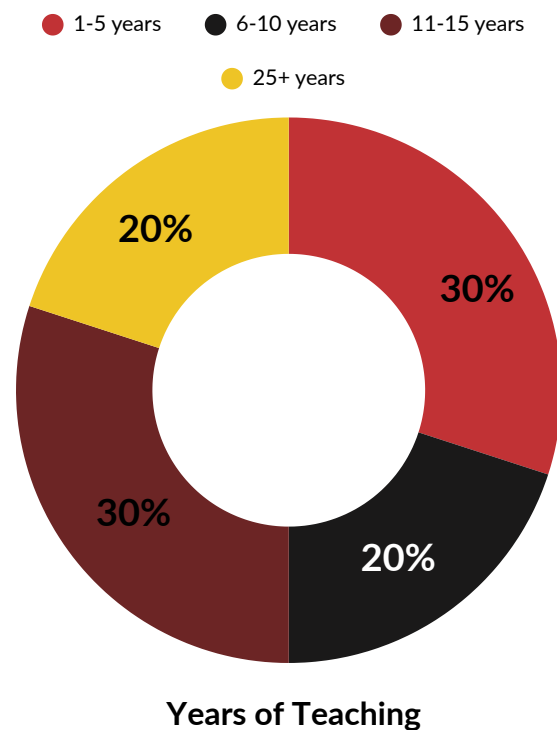
Most participants had wanted to be teachers from a young age, while two also had positions as educational assistants and were encouraged to become teachers by their administrators. Métis Nation Saskatchewan citizens, upon graduating from their B.Ed. programs, felt prepared for the job market and those who attended SUNTEP programs noted that they had built relationships with school administrators during the time in their programs which led to permanent employment. 90% of participants were hired within six months of graduation from their education programs into term or permanent positions.

Retention

Challenges to Retention

Despite a high number of Métis graduates, and an estimated 750 self-identified Métis working as teachers in the province, most Métis Nation Saskatchewan citizens who participated in interviews reported being the only Indigenous educator at their school. This created the additional challenge of being seen as a resource for all other educators and administrators, with 80% of respondents indicating that they had to do all Indigenous inclusion (not only Métis inclusion) in their schools because of their identity. The 20% of participants who did not have this role taught with First Nations colleagues and were faced with being told they were not Indigenous enough or that their Métis teachings were wrong.

Participants spoke to tensions with Saskatchewan provincial government, who have been reducing Indigenization efforts, preventing MNS from developing curriculum in grades 1 to 9, and downsizing community schools in favour of large, amalgamated schools. While there are some programs, like the Michif Kindergarten program, that are seen as successful by participants, the lack of advancement in the creation of other permanent programming throughout the rest of K-12 was seen as detrimental to participants.



Retention

Motivation to Stay

Some participants spoke to a number of Métis-specific initiatives that occurred in different schools across several divisions, including the aforementioned Michif kindergarten program. Some participants, depending on their school division, also reported support from administrators to do Métis-specific inclusion, and credited this support to the proliferation of SUNTEP graduates who were now in administrative positions and able to make significant change in school norms. Other participants spoke to the feeling of pride at being able to see tangible change over their time in a school and authentic Métis representation where there had not been any before. Two participants spoke to wanting to use their privilege as white passing Métis people to reach racist students and colleagues and change their minds.



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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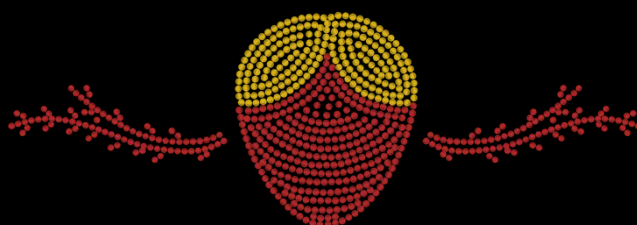
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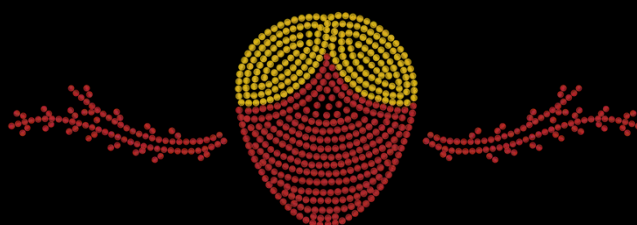
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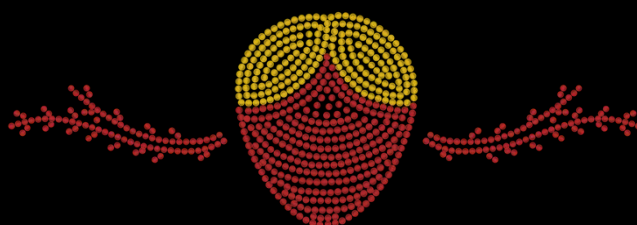
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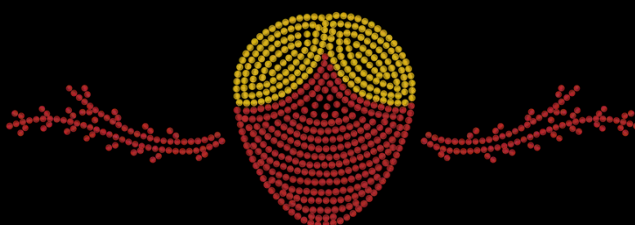
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