

March 2022

Upcoming Events and Important Dates

Virtual Family Gatherings

Many thanks to the families who joined us for our virtual gatherings this winter. It was a pleasure to reconnect with those who were part of the gatherings last year and to welcome new families to our virtual circle. We're grateful for the conversation, the ideas shared and the feedback on work that's happening throughout the Division. We look forward to seeing you all again next school year—hopefully in person at some point!

If there's anything stemming from the gatherings you wish to discuss, please reach out to the lead teacher at your child's school or someone from the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education team directly:

- jeremy.albert@eips.ca
- harlee.mcarthur@eips.ca
- cheryl.devin@eips.ca

Planning for the 2022- 23 School Year

March and April are busy times for school lead teachers and the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education team as planning begins for next school year. Lead teachers and the team reflect on the successes and challenges of the past year, and the hopes for 2022-23. If you have ideas or feedback for your child's school or the Division in general, please reach out to the lead teacher or connect with the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education team.

Treaty 6 and Métis Nation Flag Raising | June 13

If you've driven by EIPS Central Services recently, you may have noticed the addition of two new flag poles. As a further commitment on the path of truth telling toward reconciliation, and as an affirmation as Treaty partners, EIPS will be raising the Treaty 6 and Métis Nation flag on June 13. Each school in the Division will also display the two flags and are busy planning staff professional development and student learning experiences to understand the significance of each flag. More information on the Central Services ceremony and the specific events at each school will be shared in the near future.

Opening of Central Services Land-based Learning Space | June 21

EIPS has been working closely with Elder Wilson Bearhead to design and build a land-based learning space at EIPS Central Services. With spring on its way, construction will resume on the space. As part of Indigenous Peoples' Day on June 21, EIPS will officially open the space, honour our ongoing relationship with Elder Wilson and affirm our commitment to deepen our relationship with the land that sustains us. We'll share details of the opening event as the date draws closer.

Direct Student Support

Study Help for Métis students Rupertsland Institute has secured access to Alberta ExamBank for K-12 Métis students to test their understanding through online practice. Métis students can sign up for the [RECC Room](#) to find the login for their MNA Region. Questions? Contact education@rupertsland.org.

Is your child in Grade 12 and looking to move on to post-secondary education? There are a [variety of scholarships, bursaries and grants](#) available to First Nations, Métis and Inuit students to attend trade school, college or university. Talk to your child's lead teacher for more information or support in filling out applications.

Virtual Family Gathering Discussions

We're thankful for observations shared and questions posed during our recent virtual gatherings and wanted to share the answers with all families:

- **Families shared a desire to see more land-based learning, outdoor learning and shared their thoughts that not all children learn best in the traditional classroom setting.**

A few years ago, schools across the Division—including [Bruderheim School](#), [Wes Hosford Elementary](#) and all [schools in Fort Saskatchewan](#)—worked with Elder Wilson to begin creating land-based learning spaces in their school yards. Elder Bert continues to work with [Woodbridge Farms Elementary](#) to develop their land-based learning space. Other schools within the Division are interested in creating land-based learning spaces of their own to help students deepen their relationship with the land, create spaces for Elders to share important teachings, bring meaning to the EIPS land acknowledgement and explore alternative ways of learning beyond the four walls of a classroom. Elder Wilson is also working to create a beautiful land-based learning space at EIPS Central Services in Sherwood Park. Reach out to the lead teacher at your child's school if you'd like to learn more.

Last school year, [Woodbridge Farms Elementary](#) partnered with the Strathcona Wilderness Centre and five generous Elders to offer a weekend-long culture camp on the land. It was an amazing experience for staff, students, families and Elders. We're working toward another camp in May and hope to include more schools, depending on how many families the Elders can comfortably work with. Our hope is to expand the project to include families throughout the Division and with multiple land-based sites throughout the area. We'll keep you informed as we continue on this amazing path of learning.

- **Families asked for the availability of smudging in schools.**

EIPS does have a smudging procedure and guiding document for schools, written with guidance from Elder Wilson—see [AP 159: Smudging in Division Facilities](#). After guidance from Elder Wilson or members of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education

team, some schools within EIPS offer regular smudging opportunities for students who wish to have access to the ceremony at school. Upon parent request, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education team members can work with other Division schools to ensure smudging is respectfully and freely available for any students wanting to do so at school. Reach out to Jeremy.Albert@eips.ca to chat further if you're interested.

- **Families expressed interest in Indigenous language experiences.**

The United Nations General Assembly has declared the period from 2022 to 2032 as the Decade of Indigenous Languages. The area that EIPS resides on is home to various groups of Indigenous Peoples with distinct languages. We're asking parents and guardians of self-identified First Nations, Metis and Inuit students to fill out a short, [online survey](#) about language learning. Many thanks to all those who've already done so. Findings from the survey will be used to guide the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education team in offering Indigenous language learning opportunities for students and families. We're excited to think of the possibilities for students and families and thank you in advance for your input and ideas. If you have any questions or comments, contact Harlee McArthur, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Family School Liaison Worker, at harlee.mcarthur@eips.ca.

And many thanks to two of our families who shared during the February virtual gathering about these direct student supports available:

- Free, online tutoring: In January, Alberta Education announced that students in grades 4 to 9 and their parents can access free, online tutoring through the new LearnAlberta's [e-Tutoring Hub](#) to catch up on important skills and learning. The Hub also includes online review videos, and more are being added as they're developed.

Resources of Interest

If you are interested in deepening your own understanding of Treaty and Treaty relationships, here are some excellent resources:

- [Treaty Talks](#) film
- [Elder in the Making](#) film series
- [Wind Spirit](#) film
- [Canadians Have Been Breaking Promises](#) video
- [Office of the Treaty Commissioner, Saskatchewan](#)
- Walking Together [Stepping Stones](#) (Treaties 6, 7 and 8) (English and French)

During our February virtual family gathering, Rupertsland Institute shared the many supports they have for Métis students and families. Here are some resources to help you learn more about the Métis story and the supports Rupertsland Institute offers:

- [Who are the Métis?](#) – Video from the Métis Nation of Alberta
- Métis Settlements ebook – [Making History: Our Land, Our Culture, Our Future](#)
- [Digital Storytelling](#) – Stories from Fishing Lake Métis Settlement
- Rupertsland [five Foundational Knowledge](#) electronic books

- [Google Form](#) to express interest in printed copies of the five Foundational Knowledge themes
- [Rupert's Land YouTube channel](#) with lots of excellent videos
- [Rupert's Land RECC Room](#) – connected online community (free signup required)
- [Métis Memories](#) – mural mosaic project to tell the story of Métis Survivors of residential schools
- [Tales my Kookum Told Me](#): Stories of Métis Women book – featuring the beautiful beadwork of Métis artist Krista Leddy
- If you're interested in learning about the Métis Access to Post-Secondary (MAPS) program from Rupert's Land to support high school success and the transition from high school to post-secondary, email maps@rupertsland.org Stay tuned for further information on the partnership between EIPS and Rupert's Land to support high school students.