

**Indigenous Perspectives at the Cultural Interface: Exploring Student
Achievement through Centralized and Decentralized Interventions**

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Executive Summary

In the autumn of 2012, the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) established the ECHO programme—a secondary school educational programme that was intended to support the academic journey of Indigenous students. This programme was one of a number of initiatives developed and employed by the division’s Indigenous Education Department in cooperation with other teachers and administrators with the intention of supporting the learning of Indigenous perspectives for all LRSD students in all grade levels. In creating these opportunities for improved learning, the LRSD developed policies that would govern improved programming and affect its orientation toward hiring appropriately.

With an interest in high school achievement in the area of Indigenous education, our team collaborated with the LRSD in order to investigate student achievement over the time in which ECHO has been active. In order to support this investigation, student achievement data has been acquired and analysed over the period of 5 school years (2014/15 – 2018/19) – 89,466 reports of 6,664 secondary school students over all available academic areas. Interviews with teachers, educational assistants, and administrators were also conducted.

This study sought to respond to the following issues:

- Describe student achievement in a limited number of the LRSD’s Indigenous high school education programmes;
- Identify trends in Indigenous student achievement, over the course five schools years, in these high school programmes;
- Identify corresponding issues or environmental factors that may be reflected in these trends.

This study found that the LRSD’s Indigenous education programming, in many of its English language high schools, has been performing quite well and has also been well supported

compared to other public school divisions in Canada. A set of seven recommendations covering numerous areas of institutional concern are offered at the end of this report.

A Note about Terminology

The term *Indigenous* is used herein to refer only to the First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples of Canada. This term is used whilst acknowledging the diversity of nations, languages, and ancestry resident in this term. Where necessary, reference to particular Indigenous groups (e.g., the Anishinaabe, the Oji-Cree) will be cited. There will be portions of this report in which the term *Aboriginal* will appear in order to refer to governmental legislation, policy or other academic or grey literature. The term *Native* will also occasionally appear in this report as this term is still employed by many such as academic units and some writers.

Herein the terms *Indigenous*, *Aboriginal* and *Native* will be used interchangeably to refer to the First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples of Canada. In keeping with current prevailing use in Canada, the term *Indigenous* will be one of principal use.

Indigenous Education in Canada: An Overview

Indigenous schools across Canada are venturing to improve educational programming in an effort to do one or more of the following:

- Indigenize¹ content and improve student success in programmes,
- Integrate Indigenous perspectives, cultural knowledge, and related aspects of Indigenous consciousness into teaching, pedagogies, and philosophical approaches to education, and
- Better support Indigenous students and families.

In an effort to realize such goals, many schools, school divisions/districts, and Provincial Education authorities in Canada are collaborating with Indigenous communities to develop new opportunities to improve their programming. Indigenous education as a field of practice is not looking to walk back in time, but rather trying to improve and renew the current way of institutionalized education in their communities (Battiste & Henderson, 2009).

Communities of educators across Canada have been working to affect the field of Indigenous education as an instrument of opportunities. Initiatives that have emerged from these efforts are believed to be important as a means of supplanting and replacing out-dated (in some instances assimilationist) educational programmes that, however intended, adversely affected Indigenous language use, education of Indigenous moral values, and sharing and celebration of cultural aspects of Indigenous people across Canada. Secondary schools play a significant role in Indigenous communities since most post-secondary institutions are in the urban centres in Canada. Consequently, secondary schools may be the only opportunity to get

¹ The term *indigenize* is used cautiously here. In the context of this report, this term refers to the appreciative inclusion of Indigenous perspectives into the educational programming of a school for the benefit of student learning and cultural celebration.

formal education inside the community as a means of preparation for post-secondary studies. According to the Senate Report (Germain & Dick, 2011), “lacking critical educational support, First Nations are the only segment of Canadian society who, today, do not benefit from a modern system of education” (p. 56). However, there are different institutions and programmes looking forward to improving the participation of First Nations in current initiatives to approach the secondary schools in a manner that would help the development of those schools. To bring together students and community in a collective relationship is one of the main goals of post-secondary institutions—goals for which community empowerment and sustainability are of paramount importance (Cranston, 2014).

The relationship between Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and what may be regarded as standard educational practices in schools has become a challenge for teachers, students, school administrators, and communities. The process of integrating IK into standard curricula based on provincial requirements has been shown to be a slow process that requires multiple investment of funding and efforts of academics and community (King & Schielmann, 2004). According to the Association of Canadian Deans of Education (2010), there is a movement amongst those in the field of Indigenous education to challenge the existing curricula in a way that facilitates the incorporation of IK in a manner that represents the holistic ways of knowing of Indigenous people. Leanne Simpson (2004) argued that “Indigenous Knowledge must be lived, and so we must think very carefully about how we are preparing our children to live their cultural knowledge in the coming generations” (p. 381). However IK is manifest in school programming, it may be imperative to consider how this knowledge is not just resident in academic study, but also in how students have experiential opportunities to learn of Indigenous perspectives.

It is important to emphasize that while IK may have unique influences upon how schools develop Indigenous initiatives as well as how they approach/deliver Indigenous content inside the classrooms, schools may also do well to consider how to decolonize programmes and in doing so become more sensitive toward the challenges imposed by the society upon Indigenous families and communities. The focus with this caveat is its importance upon hiring issues: an emphasis upon including Indigenous knowledge, heritage, consciousness and tradition into school programming through the recruitment of qualified Indigenous teachers who have experiential knowledge of IK may be an necessary development in some schools. As schools and school divisions venture to incorporate IK in the curricula of their educational systems, effective recruitment of qualified Indigenous staff might be essential toward arresting the now undesirable trend of “the assimilation of EK [European Knowledge] to Aboriginal students” (Battiste & Henderson, 2009, p. 15).

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) Calls-to-Action remind various levels of government about the need to improve educational levels and success rates of Indigenous students in primary and secondary schools across Canada (TRC, 2015). The currently understood trends are alarming when considering the success as shown by comparative secondary school graduation rates between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in many schools (Government of Manitoba, 2018). The graduation rates in Indigenous schools on-reserve are of serious concern and is problematic because First Nations youth face, in large part a consequence of these graduation rates, more difficulties to get into the labour market. Chronic underemployment and low levels of education have been shown to lead individuals with such backgrounds toward states of vulnerability to serious and undesired social issues such as poor health and poverty. According to Anderson and Richards (2016), four of ten Indigenous

students on-reserve will complete secondary education (p. 3). It is important to note that secondary schools on-reserve are situated in the bottom line of Canadian Educational statistic; on-reserve students are more likely to not be on track for a timely graduation than students' off-reserve. There are several aspects that contribute to this low graduation rate:

- The lack of integration of Indigenous perspectives in schools programming—without recognition and the feeling of belongingness students do not recognize schools as a safe and respectful place.
- The gap of federal funding to on-reserve schools is considerable—because on-reserve schools are usually small and have a reduced number of students (less than fifty students), the amount of money that the federal government sends is also reduced. That said, there is also an important relationship between funding and success graduation rates in Indigenous schools, even though it is not the only cause of the low number of graduates.
- Literacy and numeracy amongst Indigenous students are challenges that schools must address as they have direct association with general achievement of students. Indigenous peoples in Canada show a lower level of literacy and numeracy in comparison to non-Indigenous population (Arriagada & Hango, 2016). Furthermore, the skills of literacy and numeracy are essential to increase the participation of Indigenous people in the Canadian economy. The relationship between high skill levels and higher education is a constant in the current labour market. However, it indicates that the aforementioned graduation rates, literacy and numeracy gaps, and secondary schools' opportunities are intertwined.

Concerns of Indigenous student achievement in secondary schools in Canada seem to be structural and many efforts might be necessary to close multiple existing gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. In addition to literacy and numeracy issues, the necessity of increasing teaching programmes that incorporate Indigenous perspectives in post-secondary levels is urgent. Kerr (2014) points out that epistemic dominance is an important determinant to limit the Indigenous perspectives in Eurocentric educational spaces. As schools scramble to incorporate Indigenous content and pedagogies and ways of knowing in their respective programming, students who are going to learn of the Indigenous experience in Canada should be provided opportunities to apprehending these important topics and explore

“...a complete picture of [Indigenous] culture and the peoples and histories that these perspectives represent” (Deer, 2014). Some efforts are being done in Nunavik regarding language maintenance where students have an educational system created to acknowledge Inuit culture. Since 1978, Inuit in Nunavik run their own school board and work to incorporate Inuit culture and language in the curriculum. As in any other Indigenous community, language is a crucial point to relate different cultural aspects and it must be empowered inside the schools (Savard, Manuel, & Lin, 2014). The example of Nunavik may be one of a number of valuable models for school-based language programmes in other regions of Canada.

Pedagogical issues that are relevant to Indigenous education are recurrent issues in primary and secondary schools in Canada. The necessity of understanding the relationship between community and students appears to be a crucial point in educational institutions, and the development of strategies to approach this relationship is one challenge with which schools must deal. Central to the development of potential pedagogies that are related to community experiences is an appropriate understanding of the community ethos that may be resident amongst Indigenous students. The process of understanding the community ethos may require a further understanding that “family and community are important and meant to be nurtured and protected” (Wuttunee, 2004, p. 92). Family and community play a significant role in the education process inside primary and secondary schools and it is important to incorporate these perspectives in order to support success in integrating IK inside the classroom. Innovative approaches to different pedagogies are frequently necessary. Scholars and researchers in Canadian institutions are becoming more aware of how this may work with different pedagogies inside the classroom in order to “recognize and affirm that the Canadian Indigenous experience embodies emotive, cultural, spiritual, traditional, and language-based dimensions

[that] may be a crucial step for school and classroom leaders in the provision of such learning opportunities” (Deer, 2015, p. 39).

The integration of Indigenous content in the learning opportunities of primary and secondary schools gives opportunities for important cultural elements such as Elders participation, land-based education programmes, storytelling, and holistic approaches of curriculum (Wildcat, McDonald, Irlbacher-Fox, & Coulthard, 2014). The importance of creating safe spaces for learning in which cultural learnings can be adequately explored and celebrated may require the participation of Indigenous community knowledge-keepers such as Elders (Davidson, 2015). The inclusion of Elders into school and classroom programming is still relatively new to modern primary and secondary education and thus the manner in which Elders are invited and included is, to a large extent in many areas, still being negotiated depending upon where the school is located and the purpose that Elders’ knowledge may serve. The fundamental hope with the inclusion of Elders in classrooms is to enhance the educational approach and transform the school environment in a space more fluid, respectful, to acknowledge that “Elders of our time are the heart of [our] cultural existence” (Big Head, 2011, p. 5). The inclusion of Elders may, among other things, offer a proxy for community consciousness in the classroom through which students, school staff, and teachers may learn of the IK and create a learning space that recognizes the particularities of specific communities. As Goulet (2014) pointed out, “a compassionate and respectful approach is a prerequisite to teaching students who have direct experience with the demoralizing and destructive effects of racism and colonization” (p. 86).

Indigenous Education in Canada & Manitoba: A Statistical Survey

We used the Statistics Canada 2016 Census report (Statistics Canada, 2018) as well as Government of Manitoba reports of the last 5 years in order to survey patterns of Indigenous students' achievement both in Canada and Manitoba. These sources offered comparative (e.g., Indigenous compared to non-Indigenous) data representations in order to demonstrate Indigenous student achievement.

Indigenous Educational Achievement in Canada

We first used 2016 Canadian Census data to determine achievement across Canada. Figure 1 illustrates achievement in terms of highest attained level of education for Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. The percentage of the Indigenous population, who did not receive a diploma, degree, or certificate was much higher compared to the portion of the non-Indigenous population. Additionally, the percentage of Indigenous population who received at least a bachelor's degree was much lower than the portion of the non-Indigenous population.

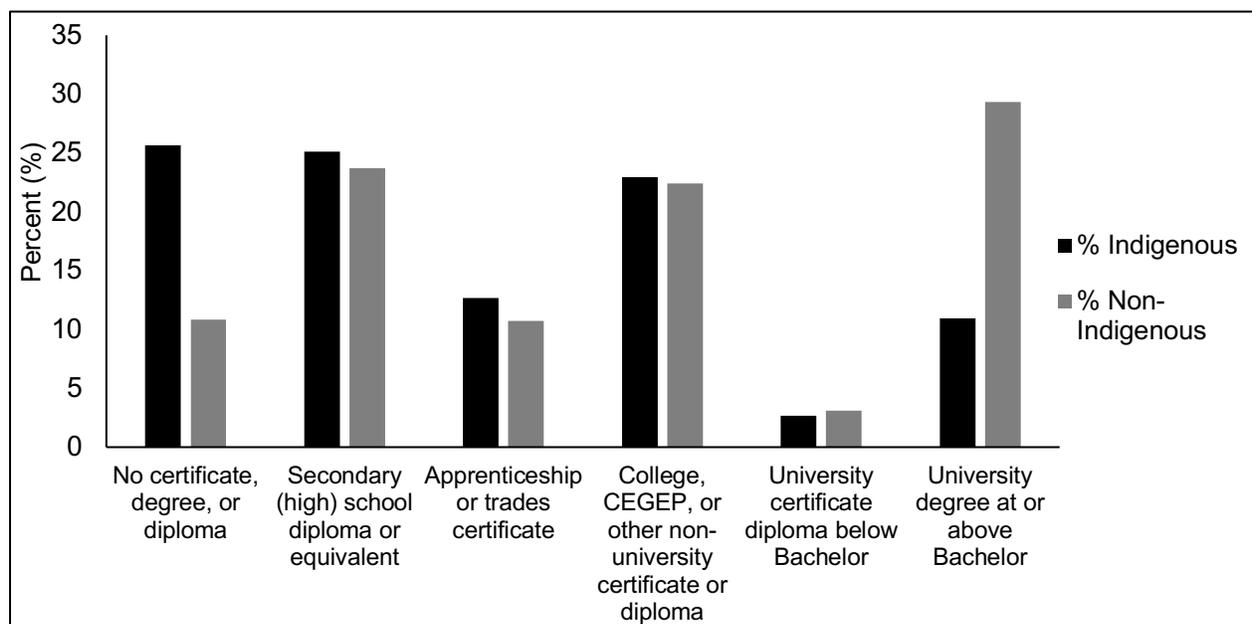


Figure 1. Percentage of completion of highest education for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada, ages 25-64 (Statistics Canada, 2018).

Figure 2 shows those who did or did not obtain a minimum of a high school diploma in particular Indigenous groups as well as the non-Indigenous population. As shown in the figure, approximately half of the Indigenous group did not obtain a diploma while the majority of non-Indigenous people did. Further, the pattern was most noticeable among the Inuk (Inuit) group, of which a large majority did not obtain a diploma. Indigenous Peoples, therefore, graduated from secondary school and post-secondary school less often than non-Indigenous people.

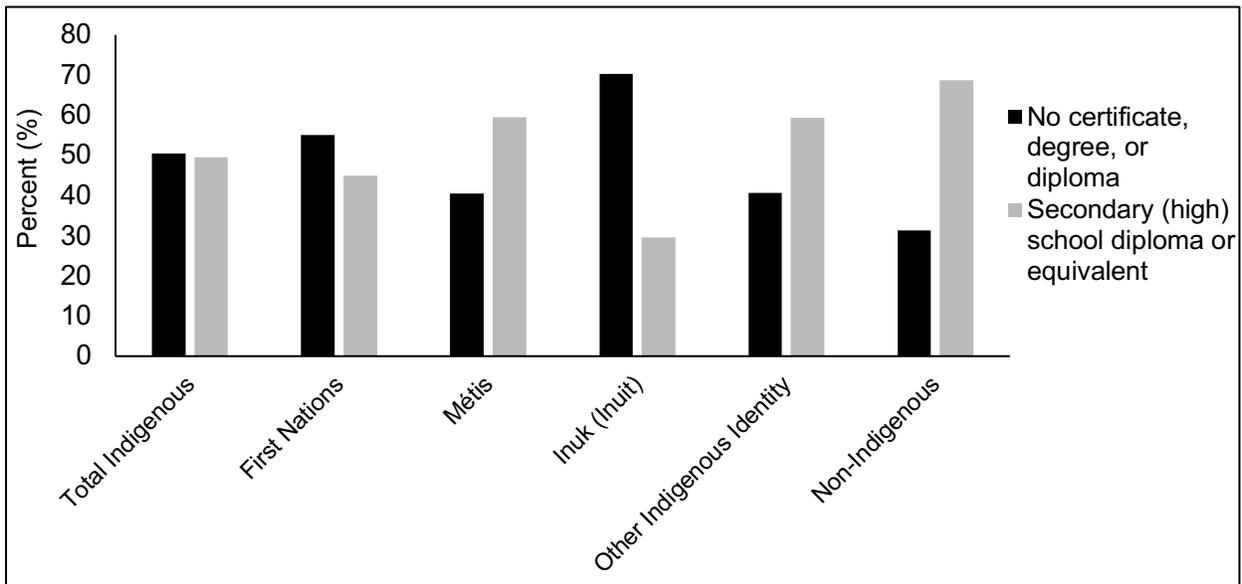


Figure 2. Percentage of completion of high school diploma or equivalent for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada, ages 25-64 (Statistics Canada, 2018).

Figure 3 focuses upon those who attended high school. As shown in this figure, even after attending school, Indigenous students were still less likely than non-Indigenous students to complete a high school diploma, though this pattern was less pronounced.

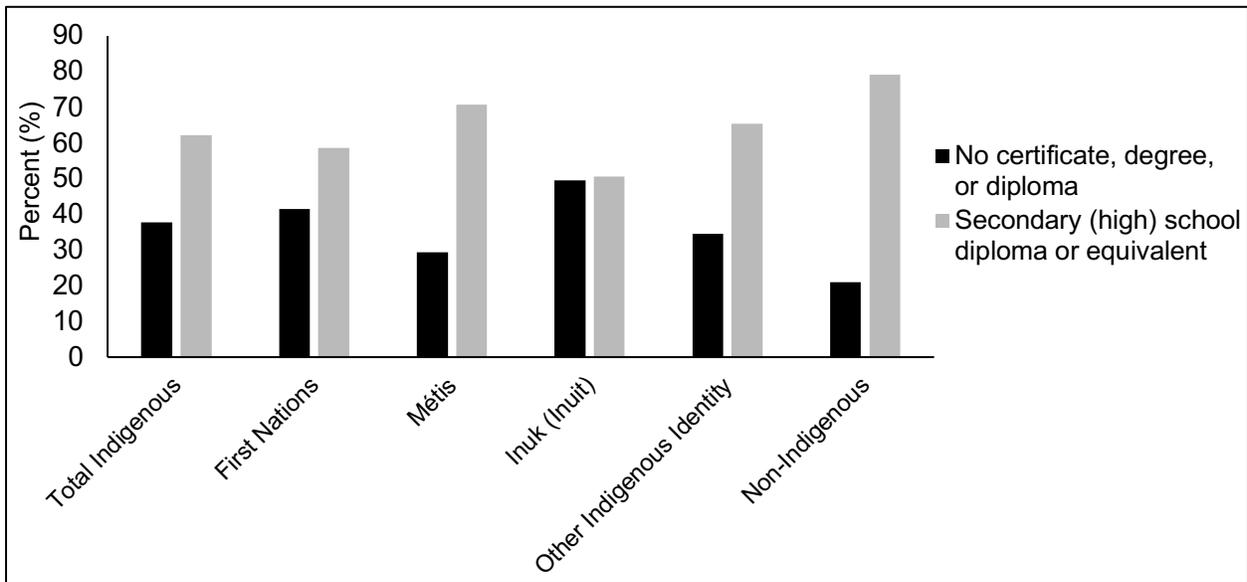


Figure 3. Percentage of completion of high school diploma or equivalent for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who attended high school in Canada, ages 25-64 (Statistics Canada, 2018).

Overall, statistics of educational achievement in Canada demonstrate a marked discrepancy between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Particularly, the proportion of Indigenous students who receive a bachelor's degree or a high school diploma was lower than this proportion of non-Indigenous students. These findings emphasize the need for programmes that assist and engage Indigenous students in school.

Indigenous Educational Achievement in Manitoba

In order to develop an understanding of a more regional nature, we assessed the trends of Indigenous achievement in Manitoba using, among other sources, the 2016 Census (Statistics Canada, 2018). The patterns presented in Figures 4-7 that reflect trends in Manitoba replicate patterns found for Canada as a whole. As Figure 4 shows, the proportion of the total Indigenous population who did not receive a diploma, degree, or certificate was greater than this proportion of non-Indigenous students. Comparing this with those who received a bachelor's

degree or higher, the proportion of Indigenous peoples in this group was lower than the non-Indigenous group.

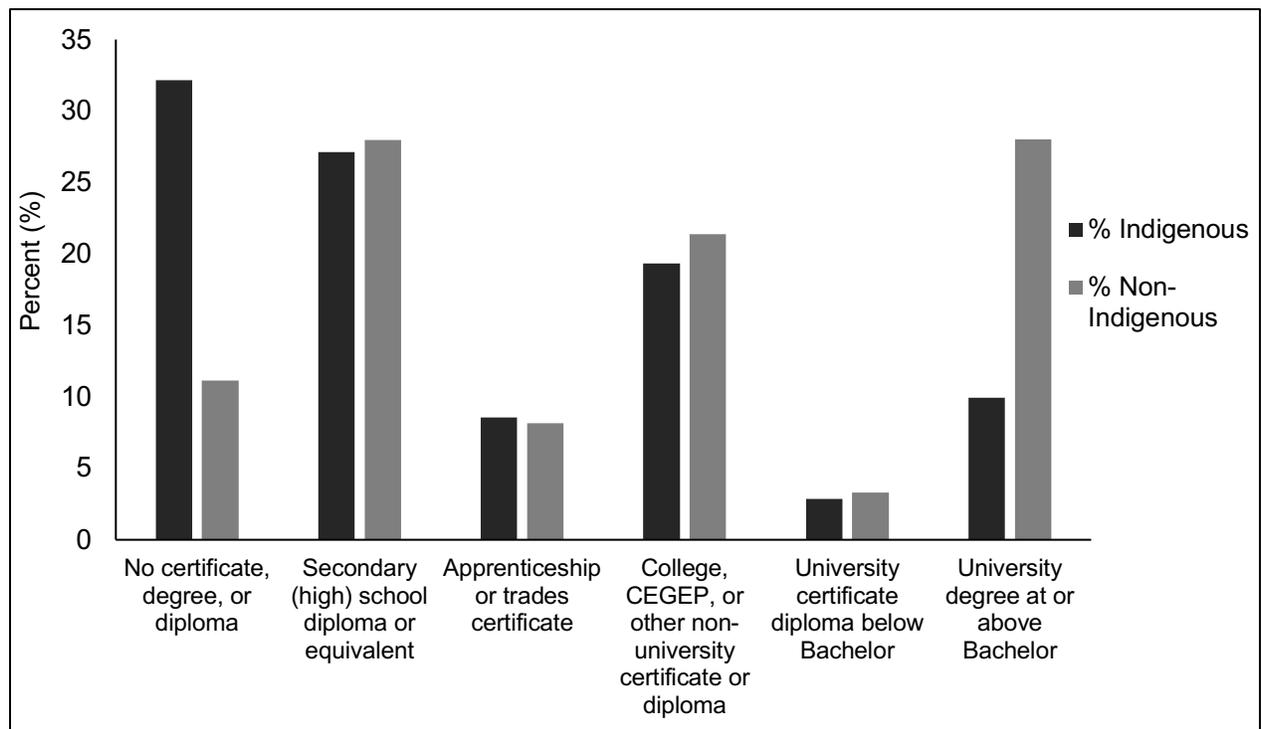


Figure 4. Percentage of completion of highest education for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Manitoba, ages 25-64 (Statistics Canada, 2018).

Figure 5 below shows the comparison between those who received a high school diploma and those who did not. As the figure shows, Indigenous Peoples were less likely to receive a high school diploma than those who are non-Indigenous. This pattern was more pronounced for First Nations groups and Inuk (Inuit) groups.

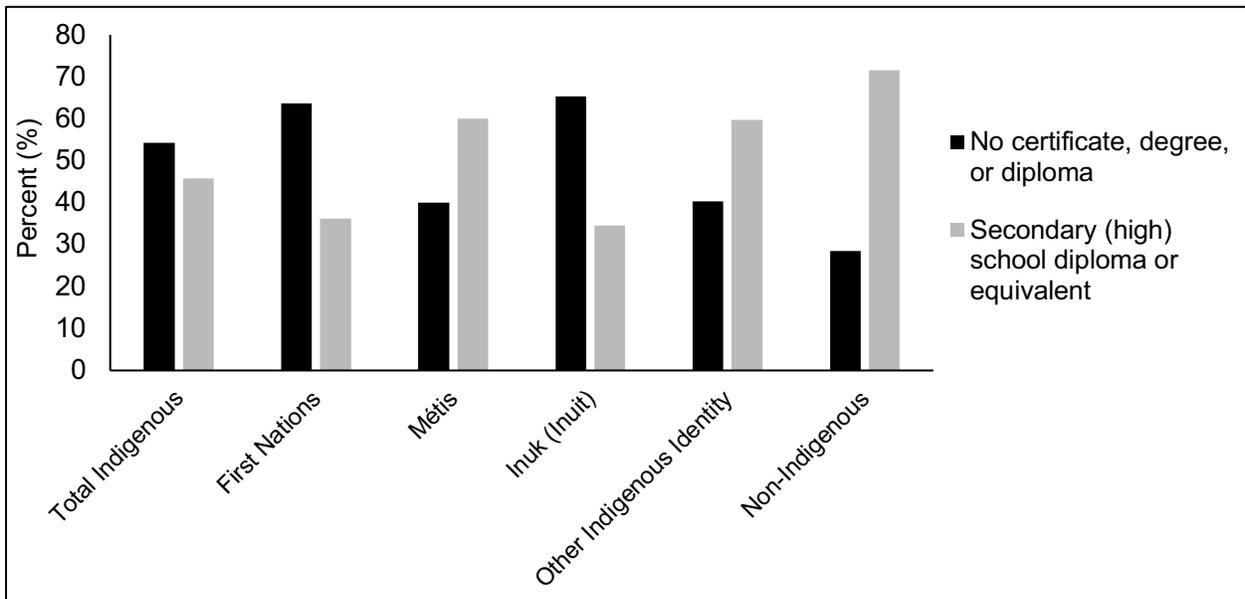


Figure 5. Percentage of completion of high school diploma or equivalent for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Manitoba, ages 25-64 (Statistics Canada, 2018).

Figure 6 shows the data from Figures 4 and 5 only for those who attended school. As shown, the Indigenous group was less likely to receive a diploma than the non-Indigenousone. In particular, the majority of the non-Indigenous group had received a high school diploma. Though more Indigenous Peoples received a diploma, there was a sizable amount who did not.

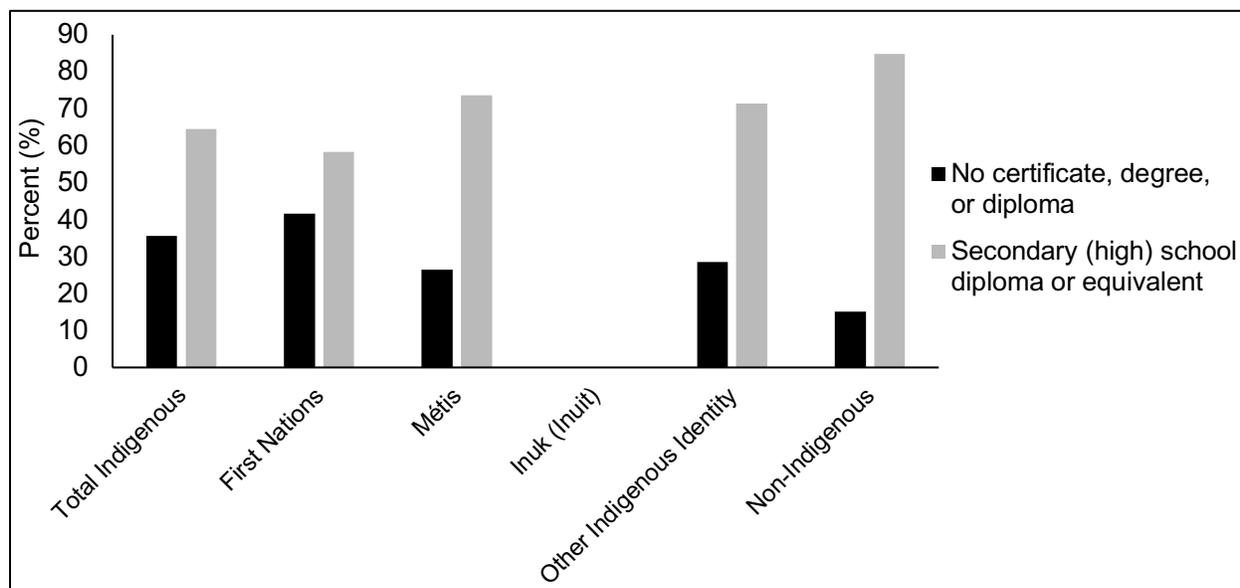


Figure 6. Percentage of completion for of high school diploma or equivalent for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people who attended school in Manitoba, ages 25-64. No data available for Inuk (Inuit) (Statistics Canada, 2018).

In Manitoba, student achievement is defined by high school graduation rates (Manitoba, 2019). Specifically, whether a student completes high school “on time” (i.e., within four years of beginning high school) is the metric for determining achievement gaps. As shown in Figure 7, for the cohort of those who began high school in Fall of 2012, the rate of on-time graduation in 2016 for non-Indigenous students was 86.0%, the rate for Indigenous students was 47.4% (the provincial rate was 78.1%). The provincial rate for students in this cohort who graduated in 2017 (taking five years to complete high school) was 82.4%. The rate was 89.4% for non-Indigenous students and 55.1% for Indigenous students, indicating a difference from on-time graduation of 3.4% for non-Indigenous people and 7.7% for Indigenous peoples. Finally, the provincial rate for students in this cohort who graduated in 2018 (taking six years to complete high school) was 84.0%. The rate was 90.4% for non-Indigenous students and 58.8% for Indigenous students, indicating a difference from on-time graduation of 4.4% for non-Indigenous people and 11.4% for Indigenous Peoples. This shows that the rate of Indigenous

students who complete high school in more than four years exceeds the rate for non-Indigenous students. Non-Indigenous students are much more likely than Indigenous students to complete high school in the regular four years. Indigenous Peoples are also below the provincial average of high school graduation.

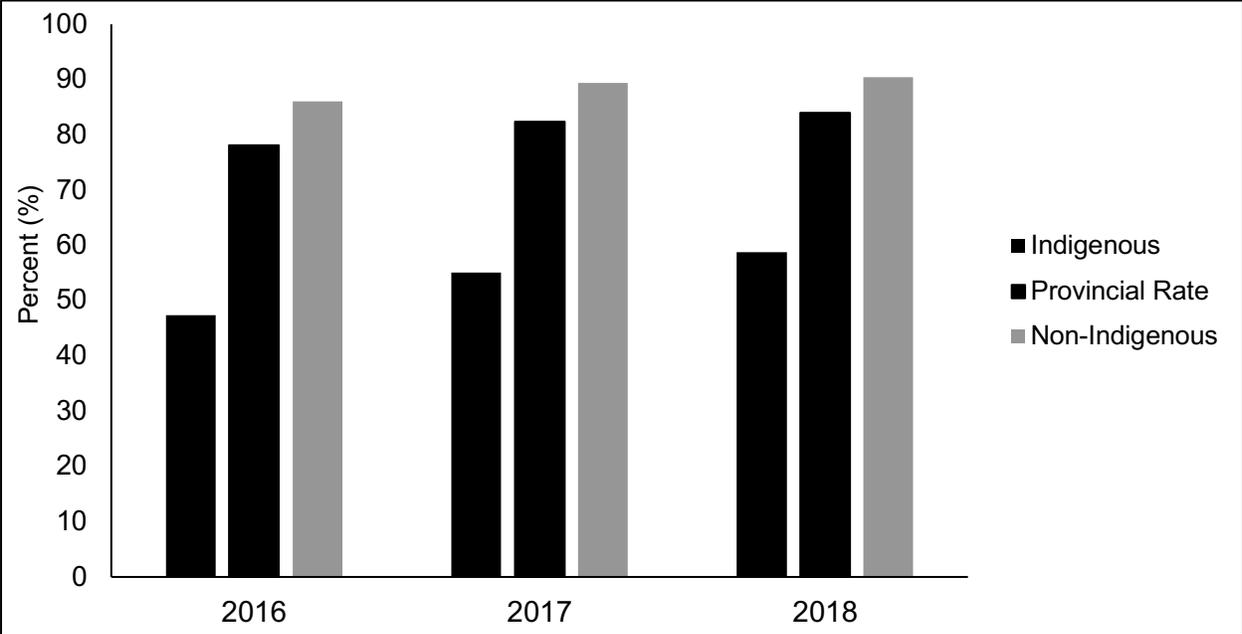


Figure 7. Percentage of students in the 2012 cohort who graduated from high school between 2016 and 2018 (Government of Manitoba, 2019).

In summary, the data from Statistics Canada shows that Indigenous student achievement is below achievement for non-Indigenous students. The patterns found in overall Canadian data replicate in Manitoba. Many Indigenous students do not attend recognized high schools and, among those who do, many do not receive diplomas or equivalency certificates. These findings highlight the need for programmes in schools to support Indigenous students and improve their achievement outcomes.

The Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate Indigenous student achievement in high schools of the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) over five years up to June of 2019. More specifically, this study sought to:

- Describe Indigenous student achievement in LRSD high schools for which formal Indigenous education programming has been established;
- Identify trends in Indigenous student achievement over the course of this particular high school programme;
- Identify corresponding issues or environmental factors that may be reflected in these trends.

With an interest in high school achievement in the area of Indigenous education, our team collaborated with the LRSD in order to investigate Indigenous student achievement over the time in which Indigenous education programming—principally but not exclusively through the ECHO programme (described below)—has been active. In order to support this investigation, student achievement data has been acquired and analysed over the period of 5 school years (2014/15 – 2018/19) through the survey of 89,466 reports² that reflect the course achievement of 6,664 high school students over all available academic areas. Interviews with teachers, educational assistants, and administrators were also conducted.

In attempting to explore contemporary Indigenous education as an emergent field of practice in public school divisions, the institutional and communal contexts were deliberately selected by the research team. In regard to the institutional context, the establishment of an Indigenous education grant for this school division by its respective provincial government

² The term *report* refers to a statement of the academic performance of a particular student in a particular course. A more detailed description of these reports may be found on page 20.

represents the first bona fide attempt by the school division in question to institutionalize Indigenous education that prioritizes the discipline. In regard to the communal context of this study, the presence of a large number of Indigenous families in this school division's catchment area, many recently arrived to the area from First Nations, has provided opportunities for community-school discussions where language and culture have been important topics. Virtually none of the Indigenous families associated with this school division's area have members who speak their respective languages (school division administrator, personal communication, 2013).

Indigenous Education: The LRSD Context

In the LRSD, Indigenous education and initiatives are serviced through numerous means. There is a centralized department that supports curriculum development and instructional support whilst offering resources for cultural learning and Indigenous initiatives that may not be curricular in nature. Comprised of numerous itinerant teachers and other support staff, this office has been led by a Coordinator of Indigenous Education³ during the course of this study—a position that has existed in the LRSD since 2011. As stated earlier, a high school programme was initiated in 2012 called ECHO that served Indigenous students in the larger English-speaking high schools in the division. Although this programme continued to operate during the temporal period of this study, other initiatives were also undertaken to support Indigenous education in high schools. The centralized Indigenous education department served to support

³ When this position was established, it was originally referred to as “Coordinator of Aboriginal Education” until the end of the 2013-14 school year.

all schools, including high schools, and represented the main source of support outside of the ECHO programme.

In certain high schools in LRSD, Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in Grade 9 have the option of participating in a programme that incorporates Indigenous perspectives into the existing curricula in a strength-based learning approach.⁴ The purpose of the programme is to support students' learning of Indigenous perspectives with credits offered in English, social studies, science, mathematics, and other areas. The ECHO programme—introduced in 2012 as a means of integrating Indigenous perspectives into school programming in LRSD schools—is the most significant secondary school curricular initiative in the division. Although ECHO was introduced in three high schools in the division at its outset, initiatives outside of the ECHO programme were developed at other high schools. At the time when this data was collected, there were 5 staff (teachers and other instructional support workers) associated with the centralized Indigenous education department and 6 teachers working in high schools with responsibilities toward Indigenous education programming (ECHO or otherwise).

Analysis of Quantitative Data

We analysed Indigenous and non-Indigenous student achievement in the four high schools described above to investigate student achievement for Indigenous students. For confidentiality, we will not use names of the schools but instead the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4, to refer to each school.

⁴ Four English-language high schools were the principal focus of the study as a result of their deliberate programmatic focus on Indigenous education. The fifth English-language high school in the LRSD was not a part of the quantitative branch of this study because it did not, at the time of the study, host any programmes such as those of the other English-language high schools.

Demographics

We conducted analyses based on data from four schools⁵ over five years (2014-15 to 2018-19) - 89,466 reports of 6,664 secondary school students: School 1 ($n_{\text{students}} = 2,488$), School 2 ($n_{\text{students}} = 2,517$), School 3 ($n_{\text{students}} = 614$), and School 4 ($n_{\text{students}} = 1,045$). In our analyses, we used the number of reports retrieved from the schools, rather than the number of students; each report shows the students' scores in all of their courses for each year.⁶ We analysed the reports of students who have and have not participated in the programme. Initially, School 1 had a total of 33,220 reports, School 2 had 34,785 reports, School 3 had 7,735 reports, and School 4 had 13,726 reports. Some students who withdrew from a course in the first semester and retook the course in the second semester. To avoid having duplicate reports of their scores in this course, we used only the most recent reports. In the case of missing values and missing final scores, we excluded the cases from analyses. After exclusions, we were left with 20,269 reports at School 1, 20,094 reports at School 2, 4,084 reports at School 3, and 7,937 reports at School 4. All demographic information is presented in Tables 1-7 of Appendix A.

Tables 1-4 in Appendix A present the demographic information of identity (First Nations, Métis, Inuk/Inuit, other, identified as two or more of these categories, did not identify, and non-Indigenous) and gender (male, female, and unidentified) for each school (School 1, 2, 3, and 4, respectively). In every school, there was a higher composition of males than both females and unidentified students, and a higher composition of non-Indigenous than

⁵ School Coding: School 1: Glenlawn Collegiate; School 2: Dakota Collegiate; School 3: Nelson McIntyre Collegiate; School 4: Windsor Park Collegiate.

⁶ Example of a report: Year: 2014/15; Student ID: XXXXXXX; Grade: 9; Gender: F; School: 01; Subject Area: ELA; Subject Name: English Language Arts 0001-10F; Midterm: 92; Final: 91; Identity: Indigenous; Indigenous Identity: First Nations

Indigenous students. This is significant when comparing groups based on gender and Indigenous identity because differences in the size of each group may skew analyses. For example, smaller samples typically have greater variance⁷ (Aron, Coups, & Aron, 2013) which means scores may be more scattered for Indigenous students and less fluctuating for non-Indigenous students. Indeed, male, female, Indigenous, and non-Indigenous distributions in final scores were not normally distributed⁸. With all groups, grades were usually more concentrated in the upper end. Males and Indigenous students consistently had lower means⁹ and greater variability in scores than females and non-Indigenous students, respectively.

Every school had a greater number of students who identified as First Nations and Métis students than the other Indigenous categories (i.e., Inuit, Other, or identifying under two or more categories). Table 5 (Appendix A) presents the reports broken down by grade level and Table 6 (Appendix A) shows the number of reports broken down by subject across each year and school. Each school had multiple courses that were categorized under the broad subjects: social studies (SS), sciences, mathematics, English language arts (ELA), and physical education (PE)—e.g., “essential mathematics” and “calculus” were both considered math courses. We only included required courses. Therefore, we did not include Grade 11 and 12 physical education courses because, although a PE course was required, students had options of which PE course they could take. The same is true for science courses as students had the option between

⁷ Variance is a measure of the “spread” of data. For instance, if final scores fluctuate between scores of 0 to scores of 100, they have higher variance than if they were to fluctuate between scores of 40 to scores of 70.

⁸ A normal distribution is the most common distribution function for independent, randomly generated variables. This sort of distribution is sometimes referred to as a *bell curve*.

⁹ Mean refers to the average score (total scores divided by the total number of reports).

Biology, Chemistry, and Physics in Grades 11 and 12 and, therefore, these courses were not included. Table 7 (Appendix A) shows the mean number of reports per student in each school, including all years of the study.

Main Analyses

In order to determine the patterns of Indigenous and non-Indigenous achievement in the schools over the course of the study, we examined median final scores and performed a logistic regression.¹⁰ Primarily, we examined (a) how the scores varied between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students as a function of year of study, grade level, and school; (b) whether we can predict Indigenous identity based on gender, grade level, subject area, school, year of study, and scores; and (c) whether the indigenization programme had an effect on students' scores.

Medians across schools

We first examined how the median¹¹ final scores varied between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Overall, medians were highest in School 1 (overall median = 80) and lowest in School 4 (overall median = 73). As shown in Figure 8, in all schools, non-Indigenous students' marks were higher than Indigenous students. Non-Indigenous median scores were also more stable over the five years than Indigenous scores. In School 4, Indigenous students showed a steady increase in their academic performance over time, with scores in the 2018/19 year seven points higher than the 2014/15 year. Schools 1 and 3 also showed an increase in

¹⁰ A type of association analysis that determines how factors can predict outcomes—a more detailed description is on page 25

¹¹ Median refers to the middle number in a series. In this case, median is more useful to use than mean (average) performance as the average can be skewed by consistently high- or low-performers.

Indigenous students' scores by the fourth year, though less steady. Indigenous students' scores in School 2 showed an initial increase before dropping by the fifth year of the study to be equivalent to scores in the first year of the study. Specifically, Indigenous scores decreased from a median of 63 in 2017/18 to 58 in 2018/19. Upon further analyses shown in Figure 1 of Appendix B, we found that students in 2018/19 showed greater variability in their scores. Though scores were more concentrated in the higher end for both years, scores in 2018/19 showed a greater spread and had a greater number of scores at 50%. This shows that there was not an overall drop in scores, but it is possible that certain students experienced a decrease in scores or that incoming students in this year of the study had lower scores. The largest increase in median scores occurred between the 2015/16 and 2016/17 school years, with Schools 2 and 3 increasing by five and seven points, respectively. Though School 3 had an initial decrease between 2014/15 and 2015/16, the final difference between 2017/18 and 2014/15 was 3.50 points, showing an overall increase.

Indigenous students' performances showed significant variation (e.g., In School 3, scores of Indigenous students decreased from a median of 65 in 2014/15 to 61 in 2015/16 and increased from 61 to 68 in the 2016/17 year), indicating possible changes in the schools that affected Indigenous students' scores. Though we do not have data as to the particular changes and how they impacted the students, we have two suggestions: different teachers and different school programmes. Indigenous students may perform better when they connect with their teacher (Goulet, 2001) so the ability to form a close relationship with their teachers can affect their scores. Additionally, Indigenous students may feel more empowered from participating in extracurricular programmes (Arraigada, 2015), so changes in the accessibility of these programmes can affect their scores.

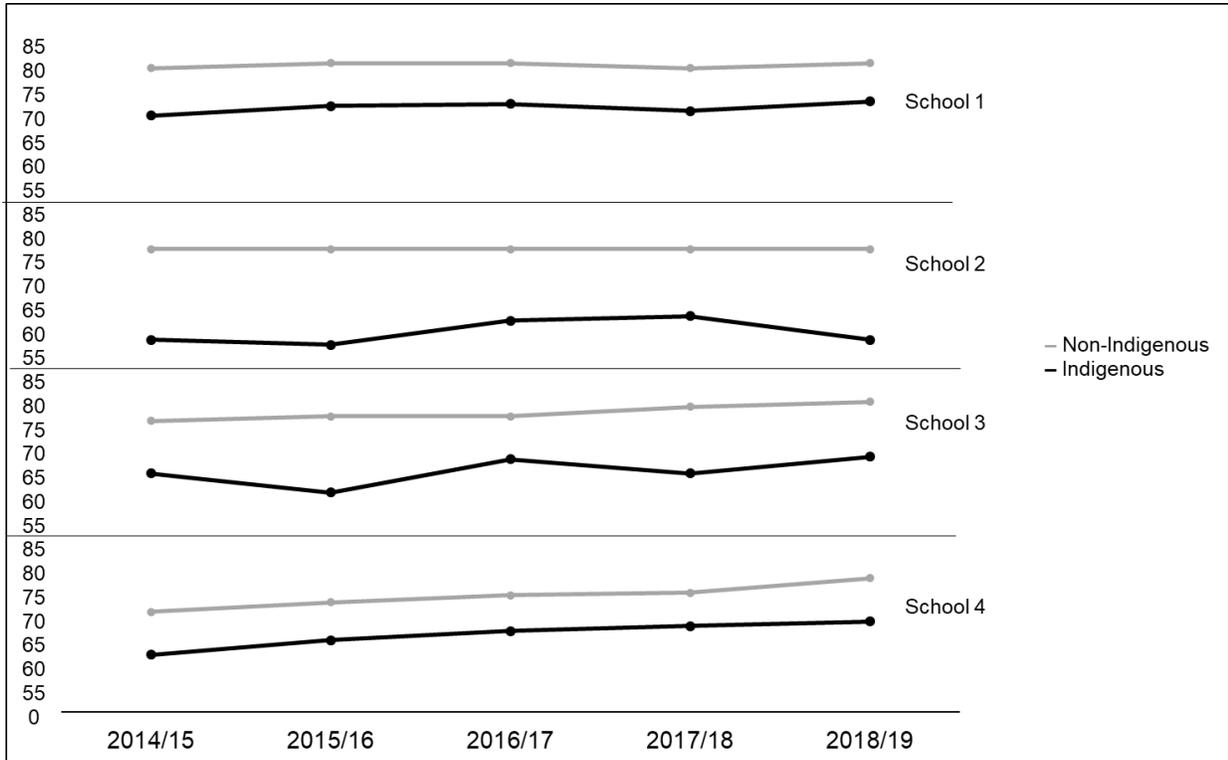


Figure 8. Median grade performance for each school across five years of study for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.

Median scores across subject areas for each school are presented in Figures 2 and 3 of Appendix B. In all schools, scores were highest in PE and lowest in either ELA or math. Non-Indigenous students' scores matched the general pattern due to being a larger sample than Indigenous students. In all schools, Indigenous students scored the highest in PE. At School 1, Indigenous students' scores were equally low in math and science (median = 67). At School 2, Indigenous students' scores were equally low in ELA and science (median = 58). At Schools 3 and 4, Indigenous students' scores were lowest in ELA (medians of 63 and 64, respectively). This indicates that overall, students perform better in physical education but may find difficulty in math and English classes.

Logistic regression

We then performed a logistics regression analysis¹² to examine which aspects of students' education and demographics are associated with their identity as Indigenous or non-Indigenous. The outcome variable (dependent variable) was whether or not they identified as Indigenous and the predictors (independent variables) we analysed were school attended, scores on the midterm and final exams, subject area (ELA, Math, Physical Education, Science, and Social Studies), gender, and grade level. We dummy coded¹³ each of the predictor variables into dichotomous variables. The results are shown in Table 4. Negative *B* values mean

¹² Regression is a type of association analysis that determines how factors can predict outcomes. In a logistic regression, the outcome consists of two categories (in this case: Indigenous and non-Indigenous). We used this analysis to determine how factors in school such as performance, grade, and gender are associated with identity as Indigenous or non-Indigenous.

¹³ Dummy coding is a procedure where categorical variables with more than two levels (e.g., the School variable contains the levels, School 1, School 2, School 3, and School 4) are coded into separate variables, each with two levels (e.g., School 1 = 1 and other schools = 0; School 2 = 1 and other schools = 0; and so on for all predictor variables).

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Indigenous students were less likely to be associated with this criterion and positive *B* values mean Indigenous students were more likely to be associated with this criterion. We found that students who had identified as Indigenous were significantly¹⁴ more likely to be in later years of the study, in earlier grade levels (particularly grade 9), female, in Schools 3 and 4, and in PE courses. Indigenous students were less likely to be in year 2014/15 of the study, in grade 12, male, in Schools 1 and 2, and math courses. Also, non-Indigenous students were associated with higher scores in midterms and finals.

The odds ratio (OR) indicates the change in likelihood of being Indigenous with each incremental change in the criterion variable. When OR is greater than one, the likelihood of being Indigenous increases, when OR is less than one, the likelihood of being Indigenous decreases, and when OR is equal to one, there is no change regarding indigeneity. For example, as shown in Table 4, the OR for going to School 3 is 2.35 indicating that with every unit increase in likelihood of going to School 3, there is a 2.35 greater chance that the person will be Indigenous. Another way to interpret this is that Indigenous students are more likely to attend School 3 than the other three schools. By contrast, the OR for being in Grade 12 is .62, indicating that the more likely one is in Grade 12, the less likely they are Indigenous; grade 12 students are .62 times more likely to be Indigenous (or 1.61 times more likely to be non-Indigenous). Looking at grade level, the OR from Grade 9 to Grade 12 decreases from 1.62 to .62. This means that in Grade 9, students were more likely to be Indigenous but in Grade 12,

¹⁴ Significance cut-off per APA standards is $p < 0.05$. When statistics meet this cut-off, they are said to demonstrate that these predictors will lead to the outcome 95% of the time.

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they were less likely to be Indigenous. One interpretation of this is that Indigenous students may be more likely to withdraw from high school before completion, though we do not have data to test this.

We can also look at regression analyses by school. Indigenous students were more likely to attend Schools 3 and 4 and less likely to attend Schools 1 and 2. Though non-Indigenous students had higher midterm and final scores in all schools, the particular strength of this association varied by school. Specifically looking at midterm scores, in all cases the odds ratio was close to one, meaning that indigeneity was not highly associated with midterm scores. In School 4, the value was exactly one and the B value was zero, indicating that students were no more or less likely to be Indigenous as midterm score increased. The largest association was in School 3 where students were .99 times more likely to be Indigenous (or 1.01 times more likely to be non-Indigenous). Looking at final scores, the lowest association was, again, in School 4 where higher final scores meant students were .97 times more likely to be Indigenous (or 1.03 times more likely to be non-Indigenous). The highest association was in School 2 where the likelihood of being Indigenous was .96 times (or 1.04 times more likely to be non-Indigenous). Overall, it appears Indigenous students' scores were more comparable to non-Indigenous students' in School 4 compared to the other schools.

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Table 4				
<i>Logistic regression with Indigenous identity^a as outcome variable</i>				
Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	OR
Gender				
Male ^c	-0.36	0.03	<.01	0.7
Female ^b	0.36	0.03	<.01	1.44
Other ^b	0.1	0.37	0.79	1.1
Year of Study				
2014/15 ^b	-0.27	0.05	<.01	0.76
2015/16 ^b	-0.15	0.05	<.01	0.86
2016/17 ^b	-0.11	0.05	0.03	0.9
2017/18 ^b	0.03	0.05	0.6	1.03
2018/19 ^c	0.27	0.05	<.01	1.31
School				
1 ^c	-0.32	0.05	<.01	0.73
2 ^b	-0.19	0.04	<.01	0.82
3 ^b	0.86	0.05	<.01	2.35
4 ^b	0.32	0.05	<.01	1.38
Subject				
ELA ^b	-0.06	0.05	0.19	0.94
Math ^b	-0.1	0.05	0.04	0.91
PE ^b	0.38	0.06	<.01	1.46
Science ^b	0.02	0.06	0.73	1.02
SS ^c	0.06	0.05	0.19	1.06
Grade				
9 ^b	0.48	0.05	<.01	1.62
10 ^b	0.29	0.05	<.01	1.34
11 ^b	0.23	0.05	<.01	1.26
12 ^c	-0.48	0.05	<.01	0.62
Midterm	<.01	<.01	<.01	1
Final	0.03	<.01	<.01	0.97

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Note. *B* = coefficient; *SE* = Standard Error; *p* = significance; OR = Odds Ratio.

^aIndigenous Identity coded as 1 = yes; 0 = no. ^bReference categories were male, 2018/19, School 1, Social Studies, and Grade 12. ^cReference categories were female, 2014/15, School 4, ELA, and Grade 9.

The effects on Achievement

To examine the specific outcomes of the Indigenous education programmes, we compared the medians in English Language Arts 10F and Mathematics 10F in all schools. Schools 2, 3, and 4 all offer the programme in addition to the regular class. In School 1, on average, students scored approximately the same in Mathematics 10F (median = 81, *n* = 948) and English Language Arts 10F (median = 80, *n* = 931). However, this pattern varies between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Indigenous students did better in English (median = 68, *n* = 103) than math (median = 65, *n* = 108) while non-Indigenous students did better in math (median = 83, *n* = 840) than English (median = 80, *n* = 828). In School 2, scores, on average, were higher in math (median = 75, *n* = 1,032) compared to English (median = 70, *n* = 950). Similar to School 1, Indigenous students did better in English (median = 57, *n* = 135) than math (median = 54, *n* = 152) while non-Indigenous students did better in math (median = 78, *n* = 880) than English (median = 72, *n* = 815). In School 3, Indigenous students, non-Indigenous students, and students overall performed better in math (Indigenous students: median = 64, *n* = 49; non-Indigenous students: median = 78, *n* = 159; overall: median = 73, *n* = 208) than English (Indigenous students: median = 60, *n* = 51; non-Indigenous students: median = 73, *n* = 150; overall: median = 69, *n* = 201). School 4 showed the same pattern as School 3. Indigenous students, non-Indigenous students, and students overall performed better in math (Indigenous students: median = 66, *n* = 68; non-Indigenous students: median = 78, *n* = 307; overall: median

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= 75, $n = 375$) compared to English (Indigenous students: median = 60, $n = 71$; non-Indigenous students: median = 68, $n = 32$; overall: median = 66, $n = 396$).

We then compared these findings to scores in the programme's classes. In all schools, students overall performed better in regular classes than the Indigenous education classes. In School 2, students performed better in the regular English class (median = 70, $n = 891$) compared to the Indigenous English class (median = 60, $n = 59$) and better in the regular math class (median = 76, $n = 965$) compared to the Indigenous math class (median = 51, $n = 67$). In School 3, students performed better in the regular class than Indigenous math (Programme: median = 58.5, $n = 10$; Regular: median = 73.5, $n = 198$) and English (Programme: median = 61.5, $n = 14$; Regular: median = 70, $n = 187$). In School 4, students performed better in the regular English (median = 68, $n = 342$) and regular math (median = 77, $n = 321$) classes compared to the Indigenous English (median = 61.5, $n = 54$) and Indigenous math (median = 70.5, $n = 54$) classes.

These patterns, however, varied between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in each of the schools. In School 2, Indigenous students performed better in the Indigenous English class (median = 60, $n = 46$) compared to the regular English class (median = 55, $n = 89$), but better in the regular math class (median = 57, $n = 97$) compared to the Indigenous math class (median = 51, $n = 55$). In School 3, Indigenous students performed better in the regular English class (median = 71, $n = 9$) than the Indigenous English class (median = 58.5, $n = 42$) but better in the regular math class (median = 64, $n = 43$) than the Indigenous math class (median = 56.5, $n = 6$). Based on these findings, it appears that the programme is more effective in English than math. School 4, however, contradicts this effect. Indigenous students performed better in

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the Indigenous math class (median = 67.5, $n = 22$) than the regular math class (median = 65, $n = 46$) but better in the regular English (median = 60.5, $n = 50$) than the Indigenous English class (median = 55, $n = 21$). In School 4, then, the programme was more effective for math than English. These conclusions must be interpreted with caution, though, as the sample sizes of reports were very different. As noted earlier, changes in sample sizes impact the observed variability in scores (Aron et al., 2013). It is possible that equal sample sizes of students in and outside the programme may change the median final scores.

Analysis of Qualitative Data

Using a qualitative approach, the research team conducted interviews with 23 staff (i.e., teachers, instructional support staff, and administrators), made class observations and participatory research with select learning activities. Qualitative data collection focused on those who were affiliated with the division's Indigenous education programme; the vast majority of these learning activities took place within the respective high schools and occasionally at the centralized Indigenous education department. The general questions associated with the study may be found in Appendix C.

Interviews were conducted with the principles of appreciative inquiry in mind. The researcher employed these principles by negotiating "initial intentional empathy" (Elliot, 1999, p. 12) with the participants, and attempted to establish an environment of individual and social affirmation (Cooperrider & Whitney, 1999). Observational research was informed by Bogdan and Biklen's (2007) Participant/Observer Continuum. Because most participants were of Indigenous ancestry, the researcher employed Wilson's (2008) relationality and relational accountability to ensure that the research was commensurate with currently accepted and

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appropriate procedures when researching Indigenous peoples (Wilson, 2008). Following data acquisition, data from the interviews were coded to identify emergent themes which were then organized into a number of organizational capacities: community capacity, political capacity, physical capacity, and human resources.

Community Capacity

By the conclusion of this study, it became clear that the dimensions of communal interface in and around LRSD schools were important influences upon them. There are palpable inputs from schools' surrounding communities that were respected and sought after; Indigenous parents, Elders and community members were seen as a crucial part of the education process for LRSD schools. These inputs have affected the content and quality of Indigenous programming in LRSD schools and is in keeping with the developing view that a school's community milieu ought to be regarded as an asset toward Indigenous school improvement (Deer, 2014, p. 12). In the case of LRSD schools, community capacity has increased where Indigenous Education has a significant number of Indigenous students, instructional staff, and robust community interface. As one participant stated:

We really look at the whole family unit but also parent, well-being, and how to support their children as well. So, it's really all aspect of parenting I think, and one of the things that I think I found over the years because I have been here for quite a while. I think one of the things that I found is that people who, especially who are new to the community, who are new to Saint Vital, who are new to Saint Boniface, often times when I was hearing is that they felt isolated. You know, and, really feel any connections, so. What we looked at is building our parent group as a way of helping parents to connect to each

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other, support each other, and throughout we're try to listen to what their needs are and provide support where we can.

To improve a school for which Indigenous students, staff, and community members are associated in such a way that engenders a familial ethos for the benefit of Indigenous student achievement has become a more realizable journey for LRSD schools. The initiation of different programmes and projects developed both centrally and through schools has begun to yield results.

Three dimensions of community capacity merit description. Firstly, cultural activities developed by schools to engage community members and Indigenous students in activities that enhance the cultural knowledge and traditions are an important aspect of the community capacity. Each school has its different approach and perspectives on the need to embrace the community in an effort to initiate and/or improve community interface and academic programming for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. From students transitioning between grades to graduate Pow Wows, community has been a crucial ally and critic in continuing LRSD action. One participant pointed out that:

Yes, there is something here. I think if you look to the graduate Pow Wow, for example, is something that isn't ECHO only thing but something that came about. This ECHO students are graduating, let's celebrate them now, that's something that is not just for graduating students, not just for ECHO students, but a place where those students are honored and the Pow Wow being such a big event that honors culture and student's success, you know, coming out of that, I think the Indigenous leadership again, primarily made up of ECHO students is another option that students have.

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Such cultural activities have become a constituent part of schools' ethos and demonstrate how important those activities are to Indigenous students and community. One participant stated that:

Very often I have parents like will come up to me and say: My son he told me you were the seven teachings teacher and he just loves it; you know, he talks about all the time and that happens on a regular basis and it is so nice to hear that. And that it is not all Indigenous parents. These are parents who have gone out their way to say I like what you are doing. I'm happy that my student is part of that.

Cultural activities in schools oriented toward Indigenous success is a significant aspect of how it is possible to change the perspectives of students and community. The importance of these activities can be seen on Indigenous students' achievement¹⁵ and participation of families in the school life.

Secondly, Indigenous Elder participation in school activities contributed to the cultural capacity of schools and showed how traditional knowledge may be incorporated in curriculum and classrooms activities. The teachings of Elders can provide real and authentic classroom support for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in which traditional knowledge is celebrated and valued. Schools that embrace such knowledge—which may help students to engage and experience IK, heritage, consciousness, and tradition—has become, amongst many, an important institutional goal. As one participant pointed:

¹⁵ See more in the Indigenous Students Achievement section.

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There are other times where Elder Jose come in and teachings with those students, this year we have taken students to Boreal Forest and you know, did some work around, not just learning about ECOs, and the western view of science but also learning about some of the traditional uses of plants, and medicines.

An aspect of how Elder's may contribute to school learning is associated with the notion of place and the way in which it is addressed in school learning. According to Simpson (2002),

connecting to the land is critical if Indigenous ways of teaching and learning are to be employed and programmes are to be ground in Indigenous educational philosophies.

“Being out on the land” is the place where Elders are often most comfortable teaching and interacting with students. (p. 19)

Some emergent concern regarding how the LRSD may minister to this recurrent desire for place-based and land-based education is still coming to be understood—especially in regard to how LRSD schools may facilitate such learning.

It is clear that in the LRSD Indigenous Elders are valued for their role in affecting Indigenous programming and initiatives. Traditionally, Indigenous Elders are regarded as knowledge holders for their respective communities and are thus regarded as particularly competent to teach the history of their ancestors and it is through Elders that stories are kept and shared. In classrooms where Indigenous Elders participate, LRSD students have been encouraged to learn about their culture and history. Additionally, the participation of Elders in classrooms has improved the sense of ownership of cultural identities by students. A participant commented on this phenomenon thusly:

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Indigenous youth leadership is a group of students from all our high schools that meet monthly for a half day, and again with the purpose of having opportunities to do some deeper, I don't know if it is the word, deeper cultural work, right? We annually do a sweat lodge with these students. They spend a little more time with the Elder but not just the cultural work but that whole component on finding leadership from within them, finding your voice, being an advocate for yourself and for others.

Indigenous Elders in the LRSD have been helping students, particularly Indigenous students, to feel connected to their identities and develop a sense of belonging in the evolving culture of the division in a spirit where “Elders have the knowledge about traditions and culture and can share about lifestyle differences between the past and present” (Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre Inc., 2013, p. 8). It may be crucial to the development of Indigenous students in the LRSD that support by Indigenous Elders is facilitated with a view of developing cultural pride and supporting safety. Indigenous Elders are one of the main aspects of cultural capacity and community participation that schools are looking for in an effort to improve their Indigenous education programming through inclusion of traditional knowledge into the curriculum and school activities.

Thirdly, the importance of parental participation in school activities assigned by the LRSD is growing and is viewed as an instrument to engage community and schools in an understanding that everyone is important to the development of a school where students are the focal point. As one participant stated:

The parent support group that we run is very relax thing. It's run every Wednesday afternoon and it is a very relax setting, we have snacks and food and parents come and

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they can seat and talk to other parents or they can do a lot of crafts they make a lot of different things some of them are making star blankets some are doing beadwork but the whole time that they are doing this they are making connections with other parents who are there we have seen great friendships formed and that programmes is growing and growing so that's great to see.

Creating a space where community—especially parents—can come together and exchange knowledge and create relationships is fundamental to the empowerment of the parental community inside and outside of the school. Programmes such as the parent support group open the school's door to create a safe and healthy environment to parents who can build relationships between each other and thus feel connected to the school where their children are attending. Although schools in Canada have historically excluded Indigenous students parents' participation, today the effort is quite different. Schools are looking to empower parents as an instrument of developing a sense of belonging and also increase the students' achievement. As one participant stated:

I would say probably three-quarter are parents that we work with their children are Indigenous parents we do opened to anyone though, and so, we do have parents who come from time to time because they want to learn because they want to, they heard about the teachings that we have, or they heard about some the activities that we've done, and they come because they are curious in something they like to be a part of.

Community capacity may be more achievable by schools if parents engage in schools' activities, building a positive relationship. The dialogue between teachers, staff, parents and community

members has an impressive importance on the development of a sense of belonging and also the engagement of the community to build a school as a part of the community.

Political Capacity

The qualitative data acquired in this study has revealed a significant amount of reference to the manner in which political capital and leveraging might be resident in the design, delivery, and maintenance of Indigenous education programmes in the LRSD. Political capacity, herein referring to an institution's ability and willingness to make and enact decisions in environments for which there are limited resources and divergent interests, has been shown to be somewhat proximate and distal to the programming and actors involved in Indigenous education in the LRSD. From such things as budget considerations, programme changes, and community discussions germane to new Indigenous content (e.g., selecting particular languages that would be employed in Indigenous language programming), it is in this theme that we discover the elements of decision making, related considerations, and related impacts. Decision making of a political nature is intrinsically connected to the activities of school divisions and this appears to be true of the LRSD. In exploring this theme, we turn attention toward the necessity of a robust political capacity in the LRSD and its schools.

The budgetary constraints upon the LRSD and its schools are a significant factor in all institutional considerations and initiatives—including those of Indigenous education. These constraints have a most noticeable impact upon human resource considerations. An example of this impact may be apprehended through a survey of the LRSD's most recently released budget that shows that 84% of budgetary resources are devoted to staff and benefits (Louis Riel School Division, 2020). The commitment to improve Indigenous education has led to a deliberate

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approach of hiring teachers and staff to support new and existing programmes in Indigenous education. Because this field is a relatively new avenue of academic exploration for school divisions, its prospective and even current budgetary allocation may be critically scrutinized by administrators and teachers. In some instances, this budgetary reality led to concern and uncertainty in regard to funding. As one school administrator noted:

What has been put in the budget... has to be approved by the board and then we have to see afterward. We still have to find out if we are going to be funded.

Beyond budgetary concerns, there was a significant amount of data associated with the contributions of students toward discussions of institutional change. Such student contributions, particularly those of high school students, may be understood as curricular in nature insofar as they minister to such needs as preparation for civic participation through the exploration of leadership orientations. In addition to these curricular, these contributions may also be understood as a means of contributing the climate and culture of the LRSD's Indigenous education efforts specifically and their schools more generally. Students' voice has been shown in the data to be valued as a constituent part of the leadership development supports in the division. The students have been supported in their journeys to become oriented toward advocacy on their own behalf and support the community in which they participate. The establishment of the Indigenous Youth Leadership (IYL) was one of the main initiatives that provided opportunities to share and discuss challenges and opportunities relevant for Indigenous students. As one participant said of this programme:

Indigenous youth leadership is a group of students from all our high schools that meet monthly for a half day, and again with the purpose of having opportunities to do some

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deeper, I don't know if it is the word, deeper cultural work, right? We annually do a sweat lodge with these students. They spend a little more time with the Elder but not just the cultural work but that whole component on finding leadership from within them, finding your voice, being an advocate for yourself and for others.

At the time of data collection, the IYL existed as a collaboration amongst all high schools from the LRSD from which students converge monthly to develop and discuss leadership issues and create a space where the students take action of and work such that their perspectives are heard, understood and acted upon. As one participant noted:

This year we are looking to, we are working towards to students the opportunity to do something else to go somewhere else, to see something, to help something. And the theme has really, really is student driven and the theme really has been around it organically has happened themes around voice, action and advocacy.

The opportunity for students to engage in this manner and create initiatives and develop activities whilst ensuring that there are opportunities for them to develop their orientations toward conscientiousness has helped them develop a sense of leadership.

There are a number of further themes that are articulated under the larger pillar of political capacity as they are germane to a school division's commitment toward Indigenous education even though they are readily associated with programming. The rationale for this organization is an outworking of this study which serves as an institutional analysis: Issues such as academic structure and treaty education represent areas of concern that, as revealed in this study, are the outworking of decision-making through effort of collective consideration and initiative in higher-level administration.

Academic Structure

Qualitative interviews and surveys of LRSD grey literature revealed that there are two main programmes that are nominally and in practice focused upon Indigenous programming: ECHO and Medical Career Exploration Programme (MCEP). ECHO is a high school programme that incorporates Indigenous content in terms of Indigenous academic topics, Indigenous cultural perspectives, and the affectation of classroom climate and culture that would benefit Indigenous student learning. In describing the potential of ECHO, one participant said:

I think that to some extent and in some places to great extent, having an ECHO teacher has helped transform the way school communities view themselves, how they identify themselves.

The prevailing view of participants is that ECHO programmes have been received as one of vital importance especially in regard to how Indigenous students see themselves and each other.

The ECHO programme was frequently mentioned as of that benefits Indigenous students as they go about their academic studies but also explore the cultural backgrounds of Indigenous peoples. The ECHO programme was cited as one that allows students to have a safe and appreciative classroom where topics and discussion are informed by Indigenous heritage and identity. As one participant stated:

I think to some extent and in some places to a great extent having an ECHO teacher has helped transform the way school communities view themselves, how they identify themselves.

Programming in ECHO classrooms were attested to be made more affective and authentic due to appropriate staffing through which qualified and knowledgeable Indigenous and non-

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Indigenous teachers have been placed. Activities associated with curricular outcomes in Social Studies classes were of particular importance for participants as they described their work. This may be understood by considering how smudging has created a sense of belonging and pride for Indigenous students and teachers when they participate in this ceremony that may offer students an opportunity to not only feel that they are cleansing themselves, but that they are making a spiritual connection such things as their own identity and their respective family connections. As one participant stated:

As far as smudging goes there have been students I ask right away, there are maybe three or four students who have either participated in a smudge or have seen a smudge. In the past, now all of my students participated in the smudge for the most part and they know how to respectfully say no thanks in a circle. At the beginning I definitely had students who didn't even want to join the circle and that was never pushed. They didn't have to, but now they don't have any problem to join the circle and just not participating.

ECHO programming was described by participants as an enrichment programme oriented to Indigenous students, however it was also adduced as one that transcends academic enrichment and also supports the development of cultural pride. Central to its purposes have been a mission to support the development of a sense of respect and conciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Additionally, ECHO teachers and students have been successful in incorporating Indigenous perspectives not just in ECHO classrooms but in the school as a whole; activities oriented to the understanding of Indigenous cultures, ways of life, history, and the

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relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals in contemporary society have been shared with students school-wide.

One feature of Indigenous education programming across LRSD high schools is that, for the most part, such programming is available to students who are not Indigenous. For instance, the ECHO programme is available to non-Indigenous students who are interested in its content. However, the Medical Career Exploration Programme (MCEP) is specifically for Indigenous students. The funding from the Province comes direct to be invested in Indigenous students' programmes. As one participant described it:

The difference with (MCEP) is that students must be of Indigenous ancestry...the funding that is provided for this programme has to help increase the number of Indigenous people involved in medical fields.

The Medical Career Exploration Programme (MCEP) was established at Windsor Park Collegiate in partnership with Winnipeg's Pan Am Clinic in September of 2017. This programme welcomed Indigenous students from grades 10 to grade 12 (with an introductory experience available in grade 9) to learn deeply of the possibilities for medical fields and potential career trajectories. The Pan Am Clinic (2019) asserts that the Medical Careers Exploration Programme has the intent to demystify the Health system and Health careers for Indigenous students. In contrast to ECHO, where Indigenous and non-Indigenous students can share the same class, MCEP exists exclusively for Indigenous students since the objective is to increase the participation of Indigenous people in the medical career.

In the MCEP programme, students were introduced to various roles, responsibilities, and activities associated with the health field. From grade 9 to 12, students' participation in

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MCEP activities grows gradually with in-class learning increasingly tailored to the study of health over time as well as increased experiential learning inside Winnipeg-area clinics and hospitals. At the outset in grade 9, students were introduced to the programme and visited the Pan Am clinic to have the first contact to a programme. Of this introduction, one participant stated:

Grade nine is more of an exposure than anything else. It is only one day. So, at least when we are talking about, when we did talk about the programme these kids had foundation, they knew what it was, and they had been to Pan Am before. Not all the students, I only have two ECHO kids from last year that are in the programme. The rest are not. So, grade nine is just essentially quite a snapshot.

Seeing different levels of professionals working in the MCEP during the following three years of high school provides students the opportunity to understand the medical field and might start her/his path on health-related areas. The knowledge acquired from the experiential learning in clinics and hospitals was quite specific to particular tasks: students had the opportunity to observe and perform activities in such areas as radiology, casting, and other representative areas.

Human Resources

Human resources was one of the most frequently reoccurring themes in that emerged from the qualitative data. The relationship of human resources (teachers, staff, and principals) and students cannot be dissociated of students' achievement and progress in academic life. The interviews identified three main groups as the core of human resource in a school: teachers, staff, and principals. We will discuss in this report firstly the teachers, which were also

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subdivided in three subtopics: Professional Development, Indigenous Perspectives in Classrooms, and Learning.

Professional Development

Professional development in the area of Indigenous perspectives appeared important for all teachers, staff, and administrators in the LRSD including those in the high school Indigenous education programmes. Data in this portion of the study revealed a prevailing belief that in order to improve existing academic programming and to create new sorts of learning opportunities for students, deliberate professional learning opportunities must be developed. Participants reported professional development exercises related to areas such as language and literacy, treaty education, and land-based learning.

What is particularly interesting about what was revealed by participants who discussed the topic of professional development was the nature of how Indigenous education is developing in the LRSD and in the province of Manitoba; this field is relatively new, the manner in which schools may address it is still in many ways coming to be understood, and the availability of individuals with expertise in specific educational disciplines and topics is limited in contrast to other fields. It appears that, for these reasons, qualified in-class and itinerant teachers, educational assistants, and others in the LRSD who specialize in Indigenous education are principally responsible for the development and delivery of professional development opportunities. Although a school or school division relying upon its own teaching/support staff to do such work is not unique to Indigenous education, it is a noticeable addition to a teacher or educational assistant's responsibilities. As one participant stated:

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I get an extra session where I don't teach most, most teachers teach seven sessions and I teach six, so there is this extra slot where I were. But I'm more focus, that for me is focus on Indigenous youth leadership, it is focus on PD with staff, is focus on changing content and sort of we don't officially have departments but helping other teachers change some of the content and look to different ways of teaching and I think that goes to that.

Participants who offered insight into professional development did explore the emergent importance of teachers in Indigenous education contexts becoming competent in specialized areas such as Indigenous languages and cultural knowledge/practices. This increased concern with specific disciplinary areas in a field for which teachers and staff of Indigenous ancestry have become sought after is perhaps understandable—especially in a field for which development of academic programmes is occurring quickly. However, participants' reference to challenges in the recruitment of qualified teachers and staff in particular areas of specialization were noted. This challenge was especially relevant for Indigenous languages education programming—a relatively new initiative in the LRSD. The challenge in regard to Indigenous language programming was described by participants (particularly administrators) as one in which the market-availability of qualified teachers and staff who are sufficiently fluent in a relevant Indigenous language was very limited and thus affected recruitment efforts. Beyond the general and perhaps more fundamental problem of relatively few Indigenous peoples in Canada being fluent in any Indigenous language, it was cited by participants that numerous Indigenous language speakers who may be qualified for work in the LRSD frequently do not want to move from their communities outside of Winnipeg. As one participant stated: “There

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are some...maybe three [school] divisions approaching language teachers and... there aren't a lot Indigenous language speaking people with degree that want to move to Winnipeg".

As a result of challenges such as those associated with Indigenous language fluency for teachers and staff, professional development opportunities are important for providing skill development for LRSD staff. However, some schools encounter difficulties to develop a deeper change, whether because of the lack of professionals specialized in Indigenous content or because the professional development is still a scarce resource offered to them.

Indigenous Perspectives in Classrooms.

The support provided through professional development sessions that are oriented toward the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in classrooms minister to, necessarily, curricular imperatives that have been a part of K-12 education in Manitoba for almost two decades. Central to these imperatives is the desire to integrate Indigenous perspectives—including history, culture, and other content that is germane to many academic subjects, into school programming. One participant was incisive about its possibilities:

Predominantly I would say in our English, in our History, Geography, Social classes where the teachers are being able to do a good job connecting curriculum outcomes to...Indigenous perspectives being worked into, so I think in our English classes they real focus to use Indigenous authors more and more.

It is palpable that the efforts on the part of the LRSD to create professional development opportunities involving the integration of Indigenous perspective in educational programming has been beneficial, but many participants frequently emphasized that these initiatives affected not only the development of Indigenous students who may have been in ECHO and MCEP, but

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also benefitted non-Indigenous students. The use of Indigenous cultural pieces such as star blanket creation and use, land-based education, smudging, and others have come to be a part of all students' knowledge and have become visible in classrooms. To reiterate, participants identified professional development opportunities in the LRSD as a significant contributing factor. As one participant stated:

PD has been helpful and has helped [our school] in ECHO. Obviously Social Studies are pretty easy way...place to integrate but you know, it has been Elders visits work with students on smudging's, medicines, trying to have, students have opportunity to land-based learning.

The emergent (and, amongst some, prevailing) idea is that cultural activities such as those learned through professional development activities can also enhance the pedagogical dimensions of teaching and learning. Another participant noted:

I think a lot of the PD's that we do, and I think that one in particular, the blanket activity, that we do with a lot of our schools and the staff, I think that opens a lot of peoples' mind. When these benefits are extended to the class, everyone benefits.

It is clear that the opportunities acquired through professional development contribute to an improvement on how Indigenous perspectives are employed to provide learning of Indigenous experiences and culture.

Learning

Central to the efforts of the LRSD to affect the quality of teaching are the intended improvements that target the learning for students. Through the incorporation of Indigenous perspectives in LRSD high schools, there is evidence that learning opportunities have become

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more inclusive. There are two main ways through which this observation may be understood: firstly, these improvements have offered culturally relevant content for Indigenous students and, secondly, these improvements have deliberate focus upon the learning of all students. Ministering to these needs of inclusivity in the LRSD are the development of teaching methods that employ Indigenous cultural exercises such as the blanket exercise, land-based education, and seven-teachings approaches that affect classroom learning in appreciative atmospheres that are safe and inclusive to all students. As one participant stated:

I think we have a really good relationship with students, and I think I know when I go into classrooms they are like, you can feel it when I come in, they are excited they are happy about the teachings and they are very, they have a lot of questions, and they are very open.

There were numerous comments amongst participants in regard to the benefits of Indigenous education programming that were rather specific to Indigenous students—they were associated with the manner in which pride and self-respect may be improved amongst them. The inclusion of Indigenous cultural content that explores elements of knowledge, heritage, consciousness, and tradition have provided opportunities for Indigenous students to develop and/or heighten their senses of pride and self-esteem through explorations of their own identities and those of others who are Indigenous. The evidence acquired from this study suggests that the presence of a sensitivity amongst educators and that the process through which students are welcomed into such processes of pride and self-esteem development is as important as the goal itself—students identifying and affirming with their own backgrounds, communities and identities. As one participant stated:

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Learning the community, figuring out what relationships are like the Indigenous community, Indigenous students and what that looks like from both personal aspects and student services aspects. This is the front-line work that helps.

The efforts of the LRSD to support improved Indigenous student pride and self-esteem appear to be a logical outworking to the principal goal of curricular and institutional improvement. In addition to this emerges the additional goal of teacher/staff engagement, which refers to the manner in which school/division staff are situated in Indigenous education in an appreciative way. Thus, the pride and self-esteem of teachers, other staff and administrators appears to be a consideration in the LRSD as well. Efforts in areas such as professional development, indigenization of curriculum, and Treaty Education provide teachers, have provided valuable forums in which a community of educators may become appreciative of each other's contributions to the field and thus support the climate and culture of the LRSD in this important area. Thus, content in educational programming is not the only concern—the relationships established amongst the community educators in the LRSD is also regarded as very important.

As one participant noted:

I'm looking at curriculum specific and general learning outcomes, I'm looking at working as part of a team in a school where really what I teach, content-wise doesn't matter, I'm part of sort of a larger family that's working on various initiative, and various things.

In order to create a well-established community of educators in the LRSD, it appears that invoking the experiences and perspectives of other important groups such as families, students, and the larger Indigenous community in a positive way brings together an understanding of the

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students' position in society that supports the whole process of including Indigenous perspectives schools. As one participant stated:

The general scope of our programme [Indigenous education] necessarily brings singular thematic or objective-based learning. The best scenario is that it leads to a larger understanding of many Indigenous peoples and a different perspective on a larger scope of history.

Learning may be understood as a means to expand the understanding of content in educational programming toward the creation of new opportunities for Indigenous students to see themselves and the world through different cultural lenses and perspectives. In spite of the importance of maintaining a diversity of perspective in the learning of others, it is important to engage in such learning using their own perspectives associated with their identities and cultures.

Physical Capacity

Participants' comments in this study yielded some commentary on issues of physical capacity—how concern of infrastructure and lands may be an issue for Indigenous education programming in the LRSD. In spite of the relatively low frequency of explicit mention in this study, physical capacity appears to have an important role to play as the opportunity to create safe pedagogical spaces in which Indigenous education programming may be delivered.

The ECHO programme was one of the main topics invoked when physical capacity was discussed. One interviewee mentioned the necessity to adjust classes to be more inclusive and to include the ECHO class in a school setting where the programme show itself as a part of the school and not a specific programme apart from school life. Another participant mentioned:

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Move that teacher from upstairs in the corner to the first class when you walk into the building. I know in Glenlawn, I know the Principal made sure that [Indigenous education teacher] wasn't in the basement and that he was moving in amongst teachers.

Although the movement to include the ECHO classes in a more integrated setting, the buildings themselves did not represent a major concern during the interviews. However, comments were made in regard to classrooms.

Classrooms

Amongst participants, the spaces in which learning occurs were mentioned during the interviews. The prevailing perspective amongst most interviewees was that well developed learning spaces are intrinsically related to successful students through well managed resources materials, artefacts and other related aspects of the physical spaces in schools. With such discussion emerged a perceived necessity to create space able to enhance Indigenous education. As one administrator said of a teacher's efforts:

Going into her classroom is so warm and inviting... she created a safe and inviting space – not all classrooms have this. You immediately got the feeling that Indigenous studies can take place here and that Indigenous students would feel enabled.

The need for appropriate space in which teachers and students are able to work well, establish connections in a classroom/school community, and benefit from and even co-create opportunities for the development of pride in their respective identities is essential in contemporary primary and secondary school contexts. Classrooms, not only in the ECHO programme, but in all the levels and grades must have well-resourced and appropriately

equipped class spaces that will serve as safe environments in which teachers are able to promote students' learning.

Artefacts

Numerous participants discussed the importance of Indigenous artefacts as essential resource in their schools. In many different classes and grade levels, the utility of artefacts as a resource that inspires curiosity and enhances learning was cited. In some instances, teachers had in their possession Indigenous cultural artefacts that was either the main focus of particular lessons or a supplement to a goal/outcome. In other instances, teachers would make use of centrally-managed/curated artefacts for these educational purposes. At the time of this study, the notion of Indigenous cultural artefacts as a supplementary or essential aspect of in-class lessons was still developing and, thus, interest in acquiring such artefacts as wampum belts, sacred medicines, and stuffed figures that represent sacred teachings was increasing. Interviewees stated that there was occasional difficulty to acquire Indigenous artefacts because of the limited number available. The LRSD has acquired kits that contain artefacts and other curricular resources that may be delivered to teachers when requested. As one participant stated:

We look at primary and secondary resources or sources information as important so having artefacts in the classrooms is really valuable...it helps students to really envision and to feel and touch and smell, experience pieces of history and helps to really tell story. I think they are really valuable for the classroom...it's just a matter of finding these artefacts - they don't all come in the kits.

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The “kit” format of resource storage and circulation is not unique to Indigenous education contexts but appears to be particularly important for management of such resources involving a centralized location (as discussed earlier, this centralized location in the LRSD is the Indigenous education department). Although the efforts of an LRSD cultural specialist to collect and create the kits for teachers has proved useful, it is challenging to provide to all classes that desire them the Indigenous resource kits. As one participant stated:

Well, we have lots of artefacts that we have collected. We have probably over 300 artefacts so a teacher will contact me and say, “can I have an Inuit kit?” So, we put together, we have three of those, enough artefacts for three kits. Right now, I have, there is an Inuit kit going out, it’s gone out. It’s sometimes difficult to do this all the time with other things we have to do.

There is a sense amongst some participants (regardless of grade level) that more artefacts to incorporate Indigenous perspectives would be beneficial—especially if those artefacts are accompanied by other curricular resources such as lesson plans, stories, and other important perspectives. Some participants also reported that teachers in the LRSD statedly desire or are in need of support in understanding the nature of such artefacts and their use.

Discussion

As portions of the introductory portions of this report suggest—portions that offer a brief survey of the state of Indigenous education in Canadian primary and secondary schools in current and recent times—many schools and school divisions find Indigenous education to be what may be rightfully regarded as a developing field of study and practice. In the context of Manitoba and that of provincially governed primary and secondary schools, the LRSD appears to be doing quite well. This statement of progress may be understood through the use of different areas of concern for which this report will focus on two: student achievement and institutional initiative. In regard to student achievement, the most recent provincial reports on Indigenous student achievement show that, as a school division, Indigenous students in the LRSD compare quite well to their counterparts across the province. In regard to institutional initiative, appropriate changes at administrative, school, and classroom level show much promise due to comparatively significant initiative and investment.

The data collected, aggregated and analysed in this study also reveals opportunities for the LRSD to consider further administrative and school-based initiatives that would serve the needs of Indigenous students as well as the emergent field of Indigenous education in primary and secondary public schools. The quantitative student achievement data offers a rather easily apprehensible view of what areas of academic endeavour ought to be addressed. To summarize general highlights:

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- Indigenous education programming in LRSD high schools appears to yield higher Language Arts and Social Sciences performance by Indigenous students than is the case in regular courses (i.e., not a part of Indigenous programming).
- Mathematics achievement for Indigenous students was noticeable (Indigenous students generally scored lower in mathematics compared to their performances in other areas as well as in comparison with non-Indigenous students).
- Students in regular courses (i.e., not a part of Indigenous programming) performed comparatively better in terms of course grades than students in courses of Indigenous education programming (e.g. ECHO).

These general highlights of the quantitative portion of this study should not be regarded as all-encompassing of Indigenous student achievement in the LRSD—as stated earlier, there is much variation in some aspects of the student (e.g. performances in particular schools). What may be generally important to highlight is the need for further work in order to address Indigenous student achievement in mathematics and sciences.

In regard to the qualitative data acquired, the content of teachers' and administrators' experiences as captured through interviews provides further evidence of strengths and weaknesses. Within each of the institutional capacities mentioned earlier, challenges and perceived opportunities have led to an acknowledgement of the importance of Indigenous education as well as an appreciation of the difficulties of offering such programming in an urban educational environment. Although these issues were discussed in the findings section of this article, the efforts of teachers, non-teaching professionals and administrators in the school division investigated in this study have led to the emergence of several issues that may be problematic for other school divisions with similar initiatives.

The qualitative branch of this study—interviews with educators and administrators—lead to observations of strengths in regard to Indigenous education programming in LRSD high schools. These strengths may be summarized by the general initiatives that have occurred in

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the LRSD such as those of the establishment of ECHO and MCEP, but also with specific initiatives such as Indigenous language programming, interfaces with Indigenous community members/parents, and participation of Indigenous Elders in various activities which not only offer evidence of commitment and desire on the part of the LRSD to develop Indigenous education programming and services, but also shows a sort of political initiative and, in a sense, boldness that is necessary for institutional change in this field. Although there is much for which the LRSD should be proud of in the area of Indigenous education in all of its divisional manifestations—including those of their English Language high schools—the recommendations section of this report will offer ideas for divisional and school-based change that our team derived from the aggregation of data.

Recommendations

In submitting this report to the LRSD, the following recommendations are made:

i. Data Management

In acquiring student achievement data for this study—the process of which involved extensive quantitative analysis (e.g., regression) that is, ostensibly, the first such survey of such data in the LRSD—difficulty was experienced in its acquisition and organization. Numerous meetings took place at which discussion of what constitutes usable data for the purposes of studies such as this were had and affected the process of acquisition and treatment of the data. These problems occurred because, in part, the data appeared to be organized for purposes other than for statistical analyses of the sort we completed. Should the LRSD wish to extract, organize, and aggregate student achievement data in the future, we recommend that the school division consider amending the manner in which data is acquired, stored, and organized.

ii. Indigenous Education and French Language High Schools

This study was focused on Indigenous education programming in English language high schools in the LRSD. For a variety of reasons related in this report, this focus made institutional sense—for instance, much of the Indigenous Education programming in LRSD high schools was resident only in English schools. This is not to suggest that there are no initiatives occurring in or directed toward French language high schools. However, the gulf in apprehendable energy and initiative devoted to Indigenous education between English and French language high schools in the LRSD

appeared to be significant. Programmes such as ECHO, MCEP, and other initiatives may not be suitable for LRSD French language high schools, yet we recommend that the LRSD, in consultation with respective school staff, administrators and community members, begin to consider how Indigenous education programming—however suited in context of these particular schools and communities—may be initiated to support Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in French language high schools to a similar degree experienced in English Language high schools.

iii. Learning in Non-Traditional Milieus

A frequent concern amongst a notably large portion of participants in this study was the physical spaces in which current and prospective learning occurs in the LRSD. Central to these concerns were:

- That contemporary models for education employed by schools such as those in the LRSD involves classroom learning that is such a departure from normal and/or desired human experiences that it renders that learning sterile and unnecessarily abstract. There is also concern expressed by some that such models are “colonial” in their content and use (i.e., reflective of Euro-Canadian approaches).
- Related to the concern noted in the bullet above is a prevailing and rather specific concern regarding the physical space in which learning that is apropos of appropriate Indigenous Education may occur. Many cited the importance of “learning on the land”; others employed different referents

that made clear the importance of learning in the context of a natural environment.

We recommend that the LRSD (at the administrative level and at the school level) continue to consider how more teachers and classrooms may be encouraged to envision, develop, and delivery learning opportunities that 1) are situated within the natural environment, and 2) are appropriately connected with relevant aspects of Indigenous educational content. Although we must acknowledge that there are some efforts made in some quarters of the LRSD to this end, the findings of this study suggest that there are opportunities to advance this initiative further.

iv. Mathematics and Sciences

An interesting observation of the entire study—one in which a quantitative branch explored student achievement data and a qualitative branch investigated perceptions of educational staff of several types—is that the topic of mathematics (and to a lesser extent, topics that may be understood as part of the sciences) was resident in the former and almost non-existent in the latter with the exception of one particular school in which the MCEP programme was situated.

As one can see from some of the comparative analyses within and across populations in the quantitative branch of this study, some disciplinary courses that may be regarded under the characterization of Mathematics and Sciences show Indigenous students not performing to as a high a level as their non-Indigenous counterparts. As mentioned earlier in this report, this is a general observation that is offered whilst acknowledging that this is not the case across all students, schools,

and courses. However, the gulf in achievement is palpable and trends are compelling evidence that if appropriate initiative is not taken, Indigenous students will continue to perform comparatively low in these areas. Thus, our team recommends that the LRSD begin to investigate potential curricular and pedagogical interventions and deliver such interventions in a manner that will support Indigenous student achievement in Mathematics and Sciences. In making this recommendation, an important exemplar ought to be mentioned about this topic that emerged from a particular LRSD programme. The MCEP programme at Windsor Park Collegiate offers some evidence, through data acquired in this study, of how *meaning* may be situated in an academic programme that may encourage student engagement. Science courses such as those of biology offer students the opportunity to appreciate why such courses are important—meaning can be an important tool with which students may maintain interest in, and even commitment toward, learning in their high school experiences. MCEP is but one programme and the variety of school and student contexts in the LRSD are numerous; the call to investigate in this particular recommendation is a deliberate imperative.

v. Political Boldness

The qualitative data acquired in this study revealed frequent reference to the manner in which political capital and leveraging might be resident in the design, delivery, and maintenance of Indigenous education programmes in the LRSD. It is necessary to emphasize what is meant when referring to the section in which this finding was situated: *political capacity* refers to an institution's—in this case a public

school division—ability and willingness to make and enact decisions in environments for which there are limited resources and divergent interests. The manner in which this emerged from interviews and supported (to a minor extent) by student achievement data demonstrated a prevailing reflection of what the LRSD has already initiated/established in regard to Indigenous education improvements and what it may do in the future. Some established initiatives such as ECHO, MECP, and Indigenous teacher/staff recruitment are examples of positive developments not just for the initiatives itself (as important as they are), but also for the political boldness necessary for making possible such initiatives. There was a palpable perspective amongst many participants that such political boldness is necessary to envision, appropriately develop, and execute the initiatives that are associated with Indigenous education. Central to much of the current successful initiatives examined in this study is the role that school and instructional leadership has had in driving such initiatives. We recommend that the LRSD, with a view of facilitating the development of robust political boldness that is necessary for institutional change with regard to Indigenous education, consider how school and instructional leadership—especially in new areas of instruction or concern (e.g., mathematics education; see recommendations iv and vii)—may be developed and enhanced. A potential initiative that may be central to this recommendation is regular and critical (re)assessment of LRSD strategic plans as well as relevant policies. Also essential to this recommendation is the regular and critical (re)assessment of accountability amongst schools in relation to LRSD plans and policies.

vi. Human Resources

The work of the LRSD in recruiting teachers, educational assistants, and other staff who are qualified to work in the area of Indigenous education appears to have been beneficial for students. High school programmes and the reported experiences of staff show that there has been deliberate recruitment with a view of supporting Indigenous education. The principal example of this sort of recruitment may be that of teacher recruitment; in the LRSD's ECHO and MCEP programmes, teacher expertise in the areas of social studies, language arts, and the humanities has been central to hiring. For the most part, teachers in these programmes have university backgrounds in Indigenous studies or related areas and have acquired their university teaching credentials in the province of Manitoba in the last decade. Thus, many of these teachers have benefitted from provincial regulations established to support Indigenous education such as the teacher education course requirement for Indigenous education as well as the Native Studies teachable area. Such scholarly background and expertise appears to have been central to where the LRSD is currently.

Given the trajectory of Indigenous Education that emerged from the qualitative branch of this study, it is clear that the opportunity for growth in the LRSD exists and the corollary opportunity to recruit staff of different sorts to support such growth will be crucial. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, the need for new areas of focus in which Indigenous perspectives are integrated means that diversity in scholarly expertise may be required.

Many of the participants in this study identify themselves as Indigenous. As is the case in other institutions of education (e.g., higher education, First Nations education authorities) as well as in other areas of the public service (e.g., government, crown corporations, NGOs), recruitment of Indigenous labour has become important and frequently declared as an institutional priority. The now near-customary preference assigned to Indigenous teachers should, in deference to the frequently-stated importance of the authenticity of experience that they bring to the teaching role, continue to be sought out whenever reasonably possible.

Related to at least two other recommendations contained in this report (recommendation iv on *Mathematics and Sciences* and recommendation vii on *Disciplinary Orientations*), we recommend that the LRSD, in correspondence to further programme development in the division, continue to recruit qualified staff (teachers, educational assistants, and other roles) that will not only support current Indigenous education programming but that of other institutional areas.

vii. Disciplinary Orientations

As mentioned previously, this study revealed differences in achievement in some academic areas (particularly that of mathematics) within and across certain student populations. For instance, Indigenous students generally scored lower in some areas of mathematics compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts. This finding may not only be one for which programmatic change in at least some areas of mathematics can be developed but also serve as heuristic for coming to understand the disciplinary trajectory of LRSD for which courses/topical areas that have not

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previously had Indigenous perspectives/content (to a significant extent) may be the focus of future initiative.

There are scores of high school courses reflected in the quantitative branch of this study from which student achievement data was derived. Many of these courses are not a part of the high school programmes that we studied but are nonetheless constituent courses in a school division that has stated priorities in the area of Indigenous achievement. We recommend that the LRSD begin to investigate potential new avenues of academic programme development (beyond the area of mathematics that was reflected in a previous recommendation) in which Indigenous content and perspectives are integrated. Such growth in the amount of learning opportunities for students will enhance the content of high school programmes and also support the notion that Indigenous education is a bonafide academic area.

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Indigenous Perspectives at the Cultural Interface

APPENDIX A: Student Demographics Data

<i>Characteristics of School 1's sample each year by total students and reports in core courses</i>							
2014/15				2015/16			
Characteristic	Students	%	Reports	Characteristic	Students	%	Reports
Gender				Gender			
Male	607	53	2317	Male	623	55	2343
Female	535	47	2029	Female	520	45	1939
Unidentified	0	0	0	Unidentified	0	0	0
Identity				Identity			
Indigenous	98	9	384	Indigenous	108	9	409
First Nations	44	4	145	First Nations	45	4	163
Métis	55	5	204	Métis	55	5	209
Inuk (Inuit)	0	0	0	Inuk (Inuit)	0	0	0
Other	5	0	21	Other	4	0	17
>1 categories	4	0	14	>1 categories	4	0	20
Non-Indigenous	1044	91	3962	Non-Indigenous	1035	91	3873
Total	1142	100	4346	Total	1143	100	4282
2016/17				2017/18			
Gender				Gender			
Male	611	54	2207	Male	580	54	2062
Female	528	46	1899	Female	500	46	1773
Unidentified	0	0	0	Unidentified	0	0	0
Identity				Identity			
Indigenous	110	10	398	Indigenous	108	10	379
First Nations	43	4	170	First Nations	42	4	157
Métis	56	5	187	Métis	52	5	173
Inuk (Inuit)	0	0	0	Inuk (Inuit)	0	0	0
Other	4	0	13	Other	3	0	8
>1 categories	7	1	28	>1 categories	11	1	41
Non-Indigenous	1029	90	3708	Non-Indigenous	972	90	3456
Total	1139	100	4106	Total	1080	100	3835

Indigenous Perspectives at the Cultural Interface

2018/19			
Characteristic	Students	%	Reports
Gender			
Male	535	53	1970
Female	472	47	1721
Unidentified	1	0	5
Identity			
Indigenous	103	10	345
First Nations	48	5	159
Métis	44	4	151
Inuk (Inuit)	0	0	0
Other	2	0	4
>1 categories	9	1	31
Non-Indigenous	905	90	3351
Total	1008	100	3696

Table 2							
<i>Characteristics of School 2's sample each year by total students and reports in core courses</i>							
2014/15				2015/16			
Characteristic	Students	%	Reports	Characteristic	Students	%	Reports
Gender				Gender			
Male	615	57	2296	Male	609	57	2200
Female	459	43	1670	Female	453	43	1660
Unidentified	0	0	0	Unidentified	0	0	0
Identity				Identity			
Indigenous	111	10	388	Indigenous	119	11	414
First Nations	58	5	199	First Nations	74	7	248
Métis	40	4	146	Métis	34	3	130
Inuk (Inuit)	0	0	0	Inuk (Inuit)	0	0	0
Other	5	0	14	Other	1	0	3
>1 categories	8	1	29	>1 categories	10	1	33
Non-Indigenous	963	90	3578	Non-Indigenous	943	89	3446
Total	1074	100	3966	Total	1062	100	3860

Indigenous Perspectives at the Cultural Interface

2016/17				2017/18			
Gender				Gender			
Male	588	55	2064	Male	580	53	2119
Female	482	45	1869	Female	521	47	1913
Unidentified	0	0	0	Unidentified	1	0	5
Identity				Identity			
Indigenous	113	11	392	Indigenous	127	12	447
First Nations	65	6	227	First Nations	73	7	256
Métis	39	4	131	Métis	40	4	146
Inuk (Inuit)	0	0	0	Inuk (Inuit)	0	0	0
Other	3	0	10	Other	2	0	5
>1 categories	6	1	24	>1 categories	12	1	40
Non-Indigenous	957	89	3541	Non-Indigenous	975	88	3590
Total	1070	100	3933	Total	1102	100	4037

2018/19			
Characteristic	Students	%	Reports
Gender			
Male	592	53	2226
Female	514	46	1863
Unidentified	1	0	1
Identity			
Indigenous	124	11	433
First Nations	79	7	271
Métis	35	3	121
Inuk (Inuit)	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
>1 categories	10	1	41
Non-Indigenous	983	89	3657
Total	1107	100	4090

Indigenous Perspectives at the Cultural Interface

Table 3							
<i>Characteristics of School 3's sample each year by total students and reports in core courses</i>							
2014/15				2015/16			
Characteristic	Students	%	Reports	Characteristic	Students	%	Reports
Gender				Gender			
Male	113	50	404	Male	118	55	407
Female	115	50	384	Female	97	45	334
Unidentified	0	0	0	Unidentified	0	0	0
Identity				Identity			
Indigenous	44	19	147	Indigenous	45	21	153
First Nations	23	10	79	First Nations	25	12	80
Métis	17	7	52	Métis	13	6	48
Inuk (Inuit)	0	0	0	Inuk (Inuit)	0	0	0
Other	2	1	8	Other	2	1	9
>1 categories	2	1	8	>1 categories	5	2	16
Non-Indigenous	184	81	641	Non-Indigenous	170	79	588
Total	228	100	788	Total	215	100	741
2016/17				2017/18			
Gender				Gender			
Male	127	61	482	Male	132	57	480
Female	82	39	292	Female	95	41	357
Unidentified	0	0	0	Unidentified	3	1	15
Identity				Identity			
Indigenous	41	20	148	Indigenous	45	20	177
First Nations	19	9	75	First Nations	18	8	75
Métis	10	5	31	Métis	15	7	54
Inuk (Inuit)	0	0	0	Inuk (Inuit)	0	0	0
Other	6	3	20	Other	7	3	30
>1 categories	6	3	22	>1 categories	5	2	18
Non-Indigenous	168	80	626	Non-Indigenous	185	80	675
Total	209	100	774	Total	230	100	852

Indigenous Perspectives at the Cultural Interface

2018/19			
Characteristic	Students	%	Reports
Gender			
Male	145	58	511
Female	102	40	397
Unidentified	5	2	21
Identity			
Indigenous	64	25	244
First Nations	37	15	140
Métis	21	8	83
Inuk (Inuit)	0	0	0
Other	1	0	5
>1 categories	5	2	16
Non-Indigenous	188	75	685
Total	252	100	929

Indigenous Perspectives at the Cultural Interface

Table 4							
<i>Characteristics of School 4's sample each year by total students and reports in core courses</i>							
2014/15				2015/16			
Characteristic	Students	%	Reports	Characteristic	Students	%	Reports
Gender				Gender			
Male	202	50	722	Male	214	51	794
Female	204	50	766	Female	207	49	763
Unidentified	0	0	0	Unidentified	0	0	0
Identity				Identity			
Indigenous	59	15	217	Indigenous	58	14	215
First Nations	27	7	101	First Nations	29	7	111
Métis	24	6	91	Métis	24	6	87
Inuk (Inuit)	0	0	0	Inuk (Inuit)	0	0	0
Other	2	0	9	Other	1	0	3
>1 categories	6	1	16	>1 categories	4	1	14
Non-Indigenous	347	85	1271	Non-Indigenous	363	86	1342
Total	406	100	1488	Total	421	100	1557
2016/17				2017/18			
Gender				Gender			
Male	215	50	806	Male	234	53	898
Female	213	50	810	Female	203	46	753
Unidentified	1	0	4	Unidentified	3	1	14
Identity				Identity			
Indigenous	69	16	276	Indigenous	78	18	298
First Nations	39	9	153	First Nations	47	11	184
Métis	24	6	99	Métis	23	5	78
Inuk (Inuit)	1	0	4	Inuk (Inuit)	2	0	10
Other	3	1	11	Other	1	0	5
>1 categories	2	0	9	>1 categories	5	1	21
Non-Indigenous	360	84	1344	Non-Indigenous	362	82	1367
Total	429	100	1620	Total	440	100	1665

Indigenous Perspectives at the Cultural Interface

2018/19			
Characteristic	Students	%	Reports
Gender			
Male	230	54	881
Female	197	46	716
Unidentified	2	0	10
Identity			
Indigenous	69	16	246
First Nations	43	10	154
Métis	17	4	52
Inuk (Inuit)	2	0	10
Other	0	0	0
>1 categories	7	2	30
Non-Indigenous	360	84	1361
Total	429	100	1607

Indigenous Perspectives at the Cultural Interface

Table 5

<i>Number of reports in each grade per year of study at each school</i>					
School 1					
Grade	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
9	1415	1163	1064	1085	1021
10	1326	1523	1376	1149	1188
11	841	893	1012	858	748
12	764	704	654	743	742
Total	4346	4283	4106	3835	3699
School 2					
9	1182	1106	1248	1218	1303
10	1307	1241	1115	1381	1268
11	897	902	972	804	882
12	605	649	598	634	637
Total	3991	3898	3933	4037	4090
School 3					
9	216	171	303	261	276
10	202	221	211	288	300
11	200	187	131	176	232
12	170	162	129	127	121
Total	788	741	774	852	929
School 4					
9	412	479	484	542	530
10	483	528	555	481	535
11	338	298	363	372	305
12	255	252	218	270	237
Total	1488	1557	1620	1665	1607

Indigenous Perspectives at the Cultural Interface

Table 6

<i>Number of reports per subject by school and year of study</i>					
School 1					
Year	SS	Science ^a	Math	ELA	PE ^a
2014/15	830	556	1220	1193	547
2015/16	837	558	1221	1140	527
2016/17	823	561	1190	1116	461
2017/18	741	463	1132	1069	430
2018/19	721	454	1077	1010	437
Total	3952	2592	5840	5528	2402
School 2					
2014/15	764	513	1112	1045	567
2015/16	789	510	1124	1035	440
2016/17	790	500	1129	1058	456
2017/18	807	547	1128	1075	480
2018/19	825	556	1238	1071	400
Total	3975	2626	5731	5284	2343
School 3					
2014/15	149	94	233	231	81
2015/16	133	90	226	208	84
2016/17	14	104	215	209	105
2017/18	169	112	235	228	108
2018/19	190	118	244	262	115
Total	655	518	1153	1138	493
School 4					
2014/15	285	180	438	395	190
2015/16	309	205	446	400	197
2016/17	320	216	451	418	215
2017/18	328	212	485	434	206
2018/19	319	211	414	435	228
Total	1561	1024	2234	2082	1036
Note. SS = Social Studies; ELA = English Language Arts; PE = Physical Education. aOnly Grade 9 and 10 classes that have final grade scores are included.					

Indigenous Perspectives at the Cultural Interface

Table 7

<i>Mean number of reports per student</i>	
School	<i>M</i>
1	3.67
2	3.71
3	3.6
4	3.73
Overall mean per student	3.68
Note. <i>M</i> represents mean.	

APPENDIX B: Student Achievement Data

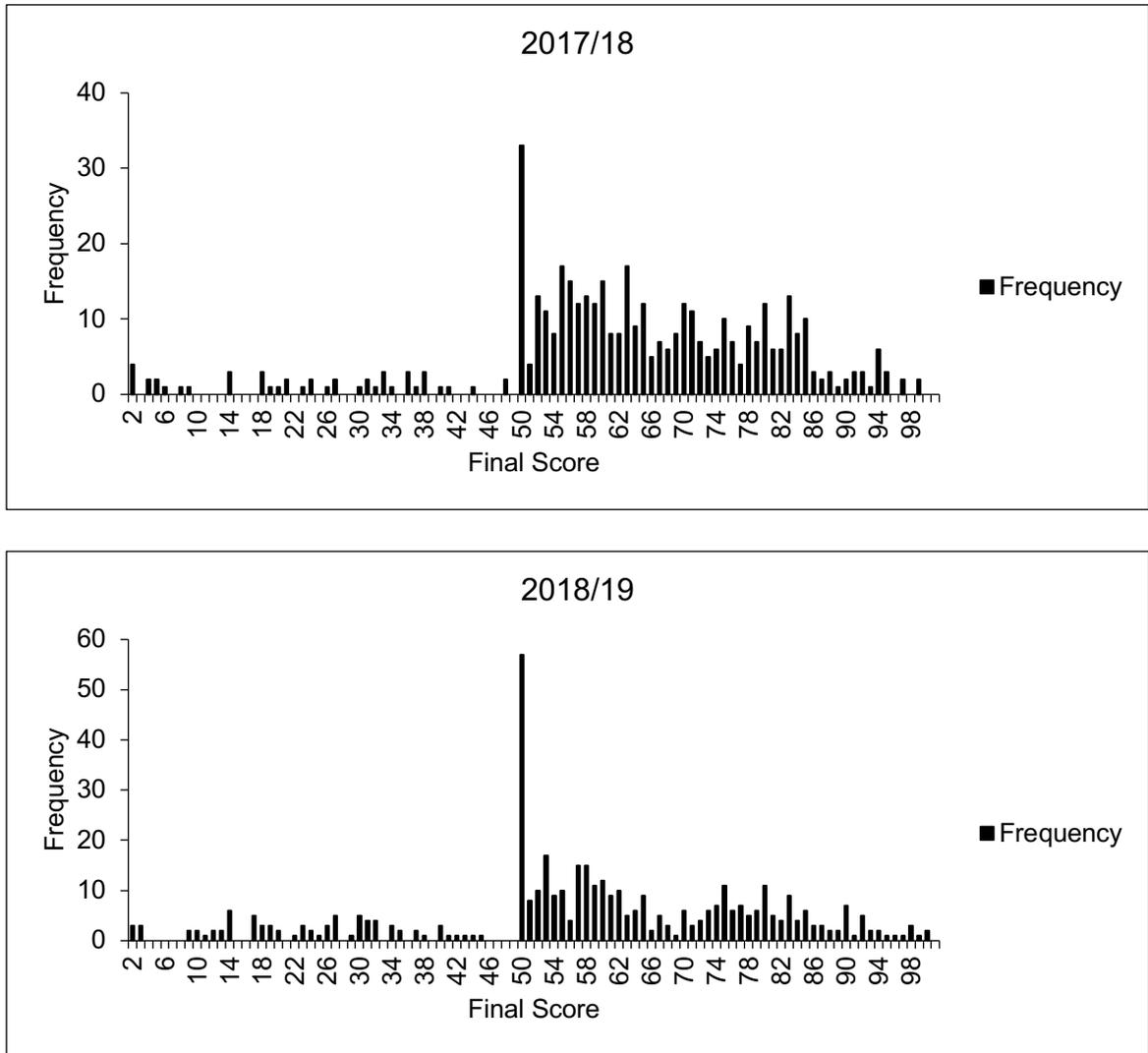


Figure 1. Histograms of median final scores from School 2 in 2017/18 and 2018/19.

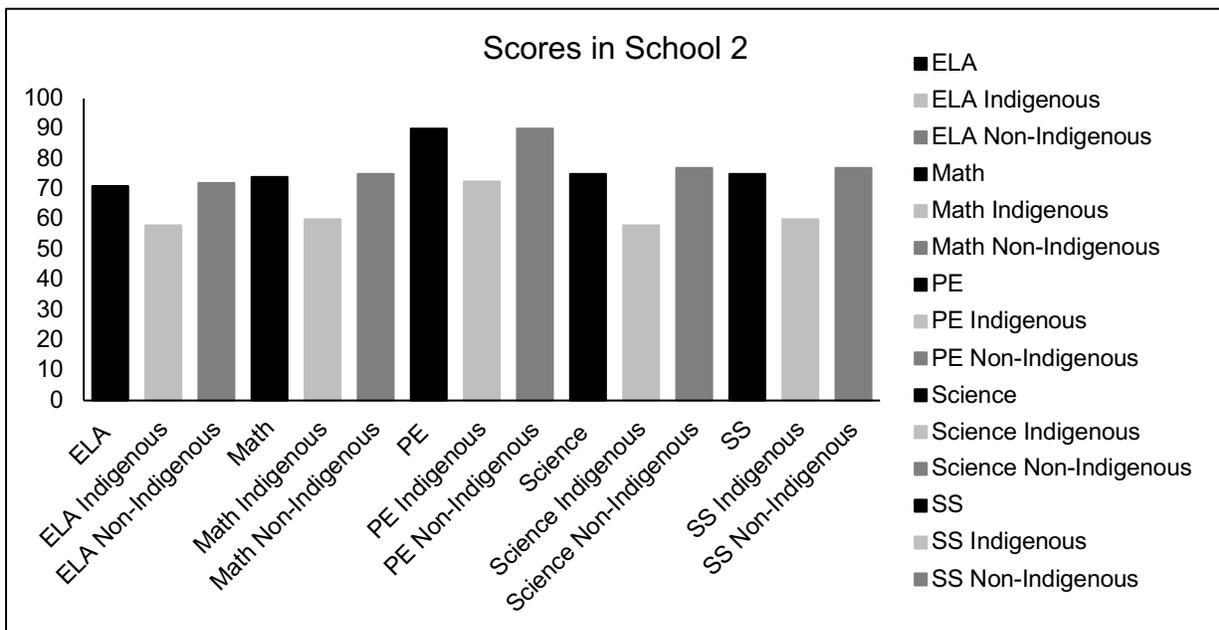
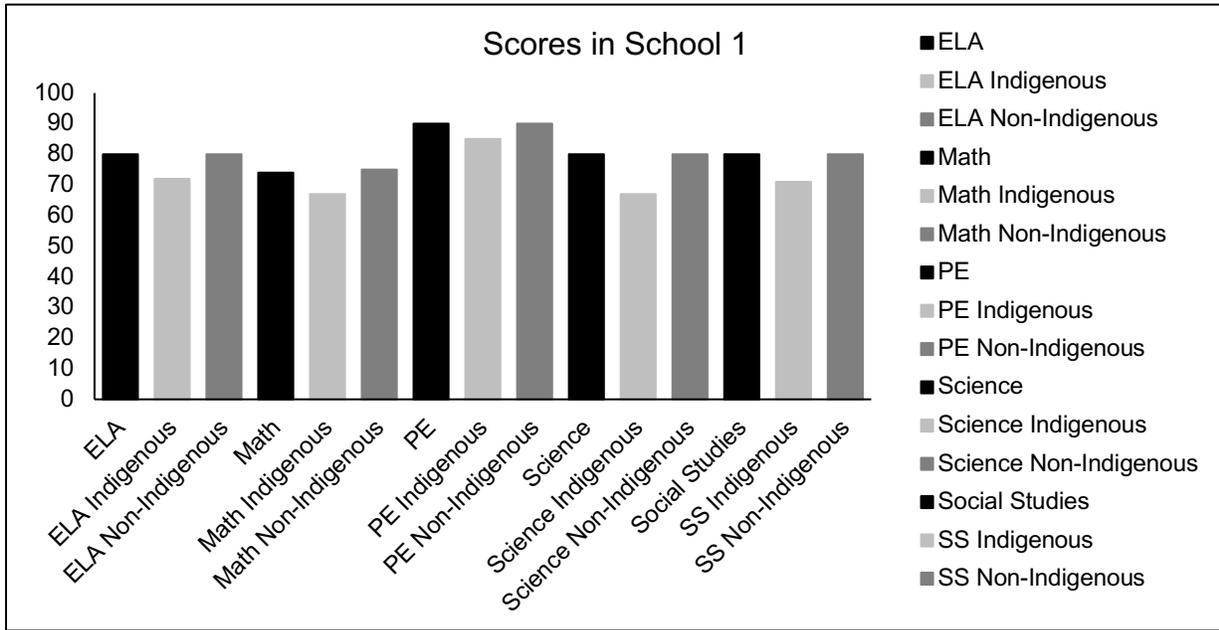


Figure 2. Indigenous and Non-Indigenous scores across each subject within Schools 1 and 2.

Indigenous Perspectives at the Cultural Interface

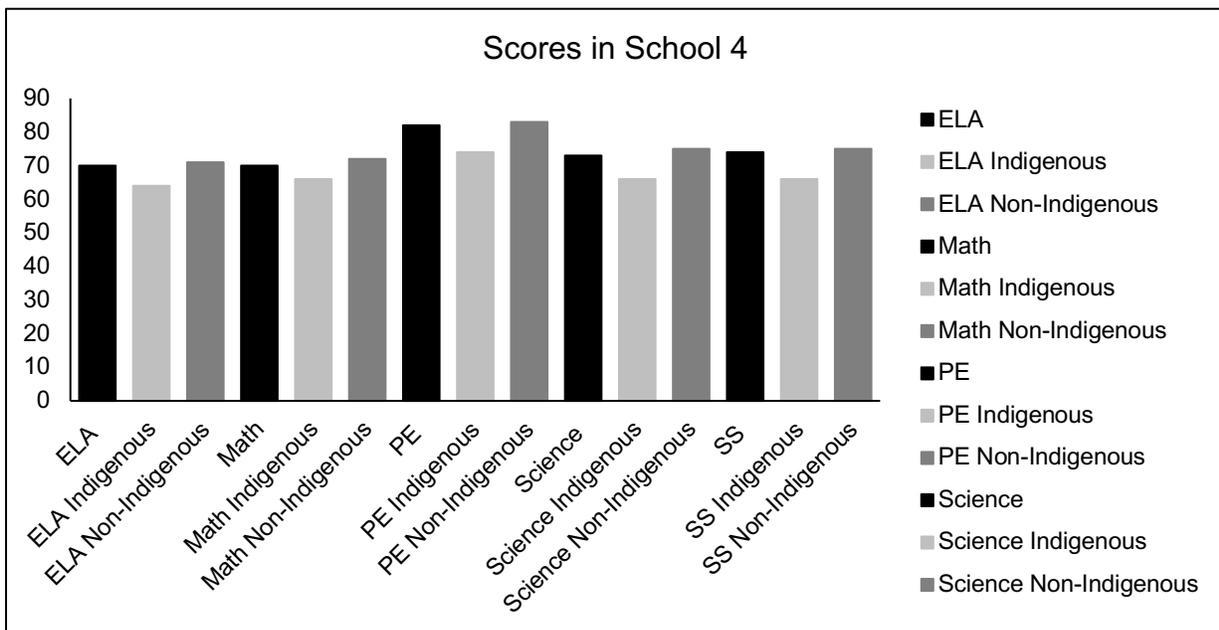
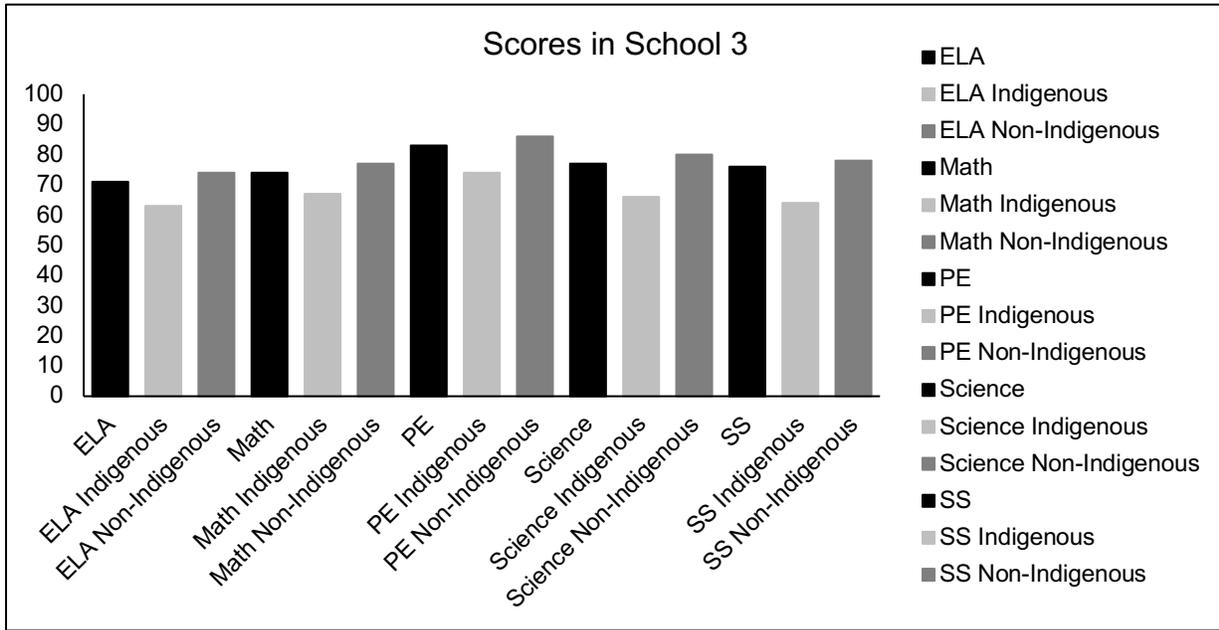


Figure 3. Indigenous and Non-Indigenous scores across each subject within Schools 3 and 4.

APPENDIX C: Qualitative Instrument

Interview Guide

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study titled *Indigenous Perspectives at the Cultural Interface: Researching the Interventions*.

The purpose of this study is to investigate Indigenous student achievement in high schools of the Louis Riel School Division (LRSD) over five years up to June of 2019. More specifically, this study aims to:

- Describe Indigenous student achievement in LRSD high schools for which formal Indigenous education programming has been established;
- Identify trends in Indigenous student achievement over the course of this particular high school programme;
- Identify corresponding issues or environmental factors that may be reflected in these trends.

This study is designed to investigate how the cultural knowledge, traditions, histories, and views of Indigenous peoples are being included in schools and classrooms in Manitoba. The results of this research will be used to support Indigenous student learning and to help all students learn about Aboriginal cultural knowledge, traditions, histories, and worldviews.

I've a number of topics I hope we can cover. I hope that questions that I may pose may lead to conversation when possible. You may decline to respond to any of these questions or decide to conclude this interview at any time. You may also ask that I stop recording this interview at any time.

General Questions (or prompts):

- Please tell me about your current professional role.
- Please tell me about indigenous education at your school in terms of:
 - Academic activities, and
 - Student Success
- In what ways are Echo and/or MCEP operating in your school?
- Please explore the administrative and/or instructional observations on opportunities and challenges for Indigenous education in your school in terms of:
 - Physical Capacity
 - Political Capacity
 - Human Resources Capacity
 - Community Capacity
 - Curricular Issues
- Any other Comments