"We Belong" Advisory Committee Annual Progress Report & Strategic Plan

2022-24

Fort McMurray Public Schools

Treaty Eight

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Fort McMurray Public School Division acknowledges that we are on Treaty 8 Territory, a traditional meeting grounds, gathering place, and travelling route to the Cree, Dënësulinë, and Métis.

We acknowledge all the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries. We are dedicated to honouring the intent and spirit of Treaty 8.

Fort McMurray
Public Schools

Acknowledgements

Thomas Andrews - Principal
Tonya Baker - Educational Assistant
Scott Barr - Director, HR
Daniel Baseley - VP / Teacher
Jennifer Beales - Custodial Coordinator
Ashley Brockway - Teacher
Jihan Jones - Teacher
Robyn Kuseler - Teacher
Adrienne Norris - Teacher
Annalee Nutter - Superintendent
Jennifer Park - Teacher
Cara Payne - Teacher
Crystal Perry - Teacher
Fahmo Rage - Teacher
Mehar Rashid - Principal
Heather Redfurn - Teacher
Helen Emeny - EDI Professional Learning Lead
(ERLC); document author

Thank you to the 2022-2023 "We Belong" Advisory Committee members who contributed their time, expertise, and insight to advance equity in FMPSD.

Equity

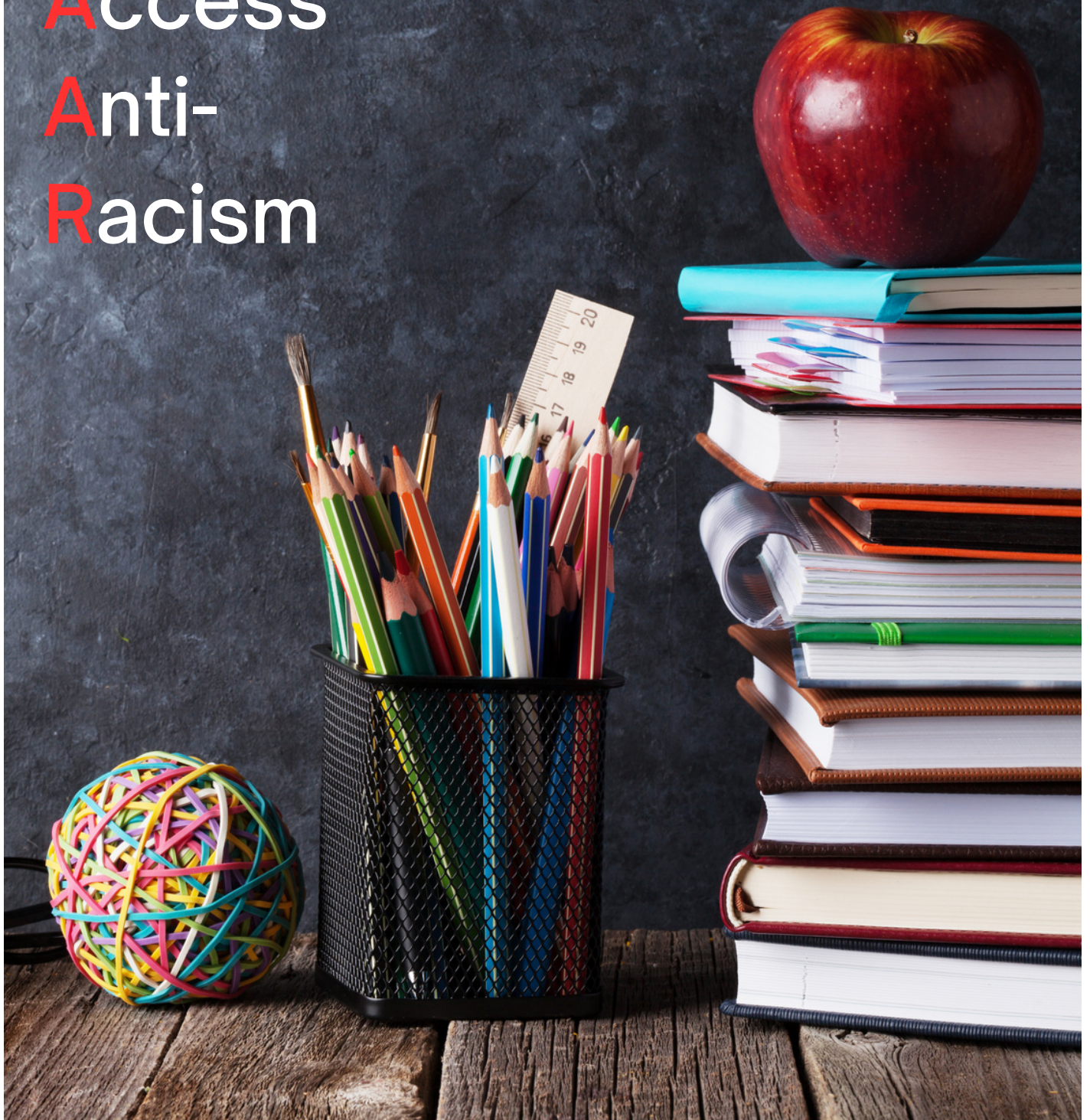**D**iversity

Inclusion

Indigenization

Access

Anti-

Racism

Table of Contents

Introduction

In response to a 2022 Board of Trustees request to investigate equity, diversity, and inclusion in FMPSD, a committee was formed to outline current practices and to identify gaps that require attention. The following report outlines work completed by the 2022-2023 "We Belong" Advisory Committee as well as recommendations to advance equity, diversity, inclusion, Indigenization, anti-racism, and access in FMPSD.

At the invitation of Superintendent Annalee Nutter, a diverse representation of individuals from different schools and employee groups volunteered to take part in committee work for the duration of the 2022-2023 school year.

Each member is bound by a code of conduct that compels them to view complex dilemmas and problems through the lens of four ethical paradigms: justice, critique, care, and profession.

Year 1 committee members met in person seven times:
October 17, 2022
November 14, 2022
January 16, 2023
February 13, 2023
March 6, 2023
April 3, 2023
May 29, 2023

Additional stakeholder input was solicited between scheduled meetings.

The Alberta Professional Practice Standards

All Alberta Teachers and Leaders are required to meet the expectations of the *Quality Standards of Professional Practice* from the Ministerial Orders of the Minister of Education.

Leadership Quality Standards

- ✓ Fostering Effective Relationships
- ✓ Modeling Commitment to Professional Learning
- ✓ Embodying Visionary Leadership
- ✓ Leading a Learning Community
- ✓ Providing Instructional Leadership
- ✓ Supporting the Application of Foundational Knowledge about FNMI
- ✓ Developing Leadership Capacity
- ✓ Managing School Operations and Resources
- ✓ Understanding and Responding to the Larger Societal Context

Teacher Quality Standards

- ✓ Fostering Effective Relationships
- ✓ Engaging in Career-Long Learning
- ✓ Demonstrating a Professional Body of Knowledge
- ✓ Establishing Inclusive Learning Environments
- ✓ Applying Foundational Knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit
- ✓ Adhering to Legal Frameworks and Policies

THREE YEAR EDUCATION PLAN PRIORITES

Promote Growth & Success for Every Student

1. Success for all students

Outcome: High quality learning opportunities for all & excellence in student learning outcomes.

2. First Nations, Métis, Inuit & English Language Learner Success

Outcome: High quality learning opportunities for all & excellence in student learning outcomes.

Maintain Safe & Caring Learning Environments & Supports

1. Positive Learning & Working Environment

Outcome: FMPSD schools are welcoming, caring, inclusive, respectful, and safe & offer high-quality learning opportunities for all students.

2. Quality Infrastructure for All

Outcome: Student learning is supported through the use of effective planning, management, & investment in Division infrastructure.

Effective Stakeholder Engagement

1. Parent and Student Engagement

Outcome: Highly responsive & responsible jurisdiction. The education system at all levels demonstrates effective working relationships.

Strengthen Quality Teaching & Leading

1. Culture of Excellence

Outcome: High quality learning opportunities for all and excellence in student learning outcomes.

Priority: Focus Area

Outcome: Result

Strategy: How we get there

Fort McMurray Public Schools

Setting the Direction

Prior to the first meeting, committee members were asked to complete a survey. The results generated **five areas of focus** for 2022-2023 committee work:
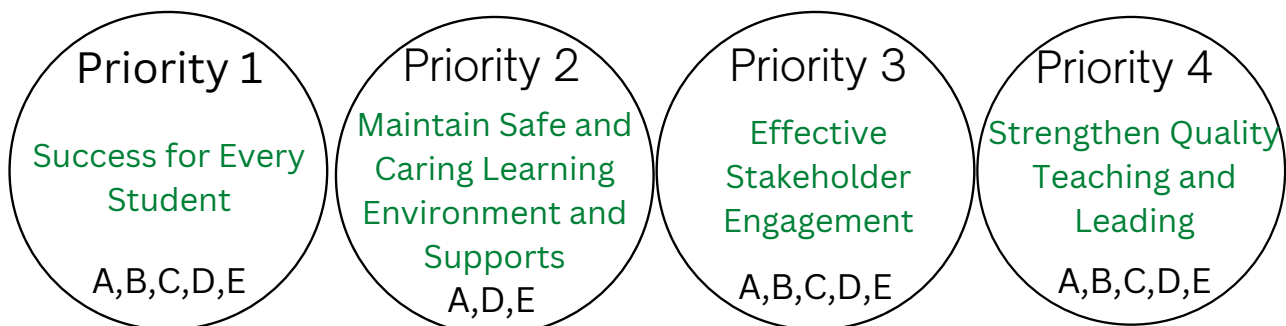
A) Learning, Engagement, Voice, and Access

B) EAL Programming and Indigenous Pedagogies

C) Resource Curation

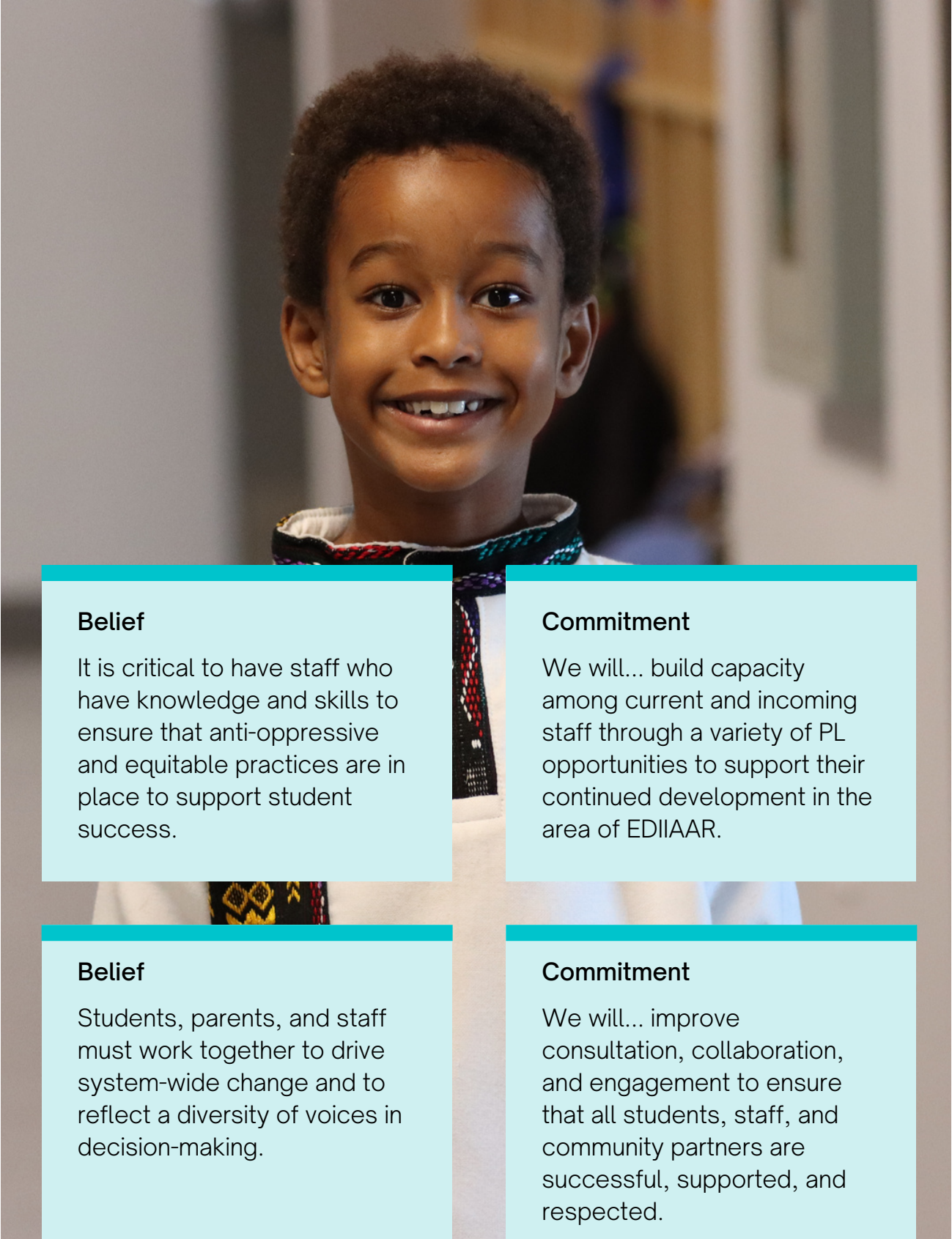D) Data Collection and Analysis

E) Policies and Administrative Procedures

Alignment of Education Priorities & EDIIAAR Areas of Focus

Priority 1

Success for Every Student

A,B,C,D,E

Priority 2

Maintain Safe and Caring Learning Environment and Supports

A,D,E

Priority 3

Effective Stakeholder Engagement

A,B,C,D,E

Priority 4

Strengthen Quality Teaching and Leading

A,B,C,D,E

A) Learning, Engagement, Voice, & Access

Belief

It is critical to have staff who have knowledge and skills to ensure that anti-oppressive and equitable practices are in place to support student success.

Commitment

We will... build capacity among current and incoming staff through a variety of PL opportunities to support their continued development in the area of EDIIAAR.

Belief

Students, parents, and staff must work together to drive system-wide change and to reflect a diversity of voices in decision-making.

Commitment

We will... improve consultation, collaboration, and engagement to ensure that all students, staff, and community partners are successful, supported, and respected.

2022-2023 Advancements:

- Three Administrator PL Sessions: An Introduction to EDI Work; The 8 Competencies of Culturally Responsive Schools; EDIIAAR Survey Data Review.
- Two Educational Assistant PL Sessions: Literacy for Diverse Learners; Culturally Responsive Practices.
- Division-Wide PD Day Teacher Session: Culturally Responsive Practices.
- Three Educational Sessions delivered by "We Belong" Committee Members.

Setting the Direction Year 2 & Year 3 (Teachers and Leaders)

- Require Indigenous Canada or Indigenous Studies (IS) coursework for new administrators.
- Support access to IS coursework for existing administrators who are without.
- Include annual mandatory EDIIAAR awareness training for all employee groups.
- Create a division-level position to oversee EDIIAAR work and planning.
- Provide PL for administrators and teachers in restorative practices.
- Designate an EDIIAAR representative at every school or site.
- Initiate a BIPOC Staff Association.
- Engage staff in the creation of "Action Pathways" to address incidents of racism, discrimination, and hate speech.
- Conduct an accessibility audit at school sites.

2022-2023 Advancements:
- Diversity Packs were created for every elementary school to support student instruction, inclusion, diversity awareness, and a stronger sense of belonging. Kits included: bulletin board sets, children's literature, 'Colors of the World' crayons/markers, and games to stimulate conversations about diversity and belonging.
- Fishbowl conversations were held with secondary students on EDIIAAR topics.
- Secondary students completed the first EDIIAAR survey.

Setting the Direction Year 2 & Year 3 (Students and Community Partners)

- Conceptualize, plan, and initiate a BIPOC Students' Association, a BIPOC Parents' Association.
- Continue annual EDIIAAR survey with secondary students.
- Initiate a simplified EDIIAAR survey for students in grades 4 through 6.
- Engage secondary students in the creation of BIPOC Student Associations.
- Create safe spaces in secondary schools where diverse student groups can gather.
- Engage students in the creation of "Action Pathways" to address incidents of racism, discrimination, and hate speech.

B) EAL Programming & Indigenous Pedagogies
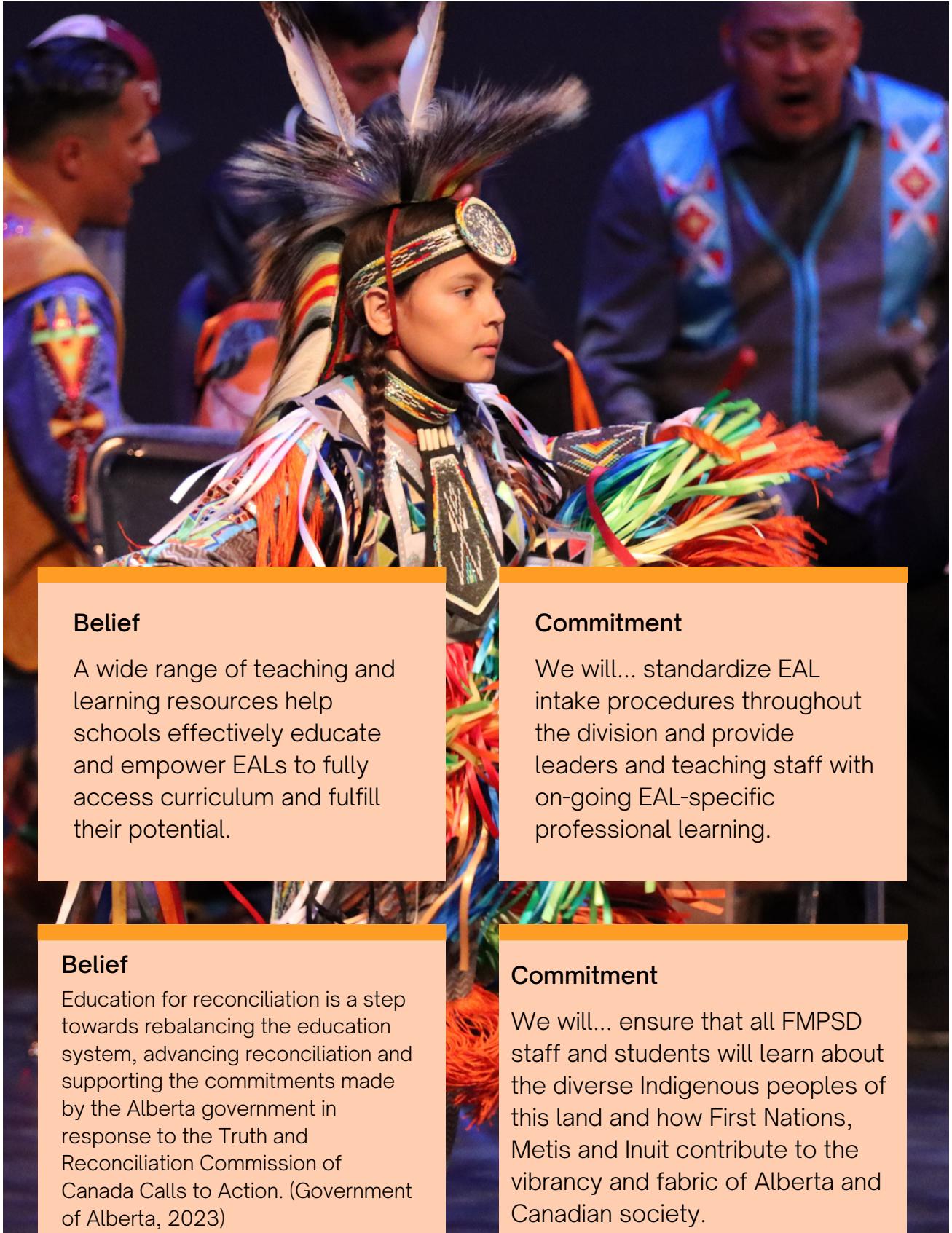
Belief

A wide range of teaching and learning resources help schools effectively educate and empower EALs to fully access curriculum and fulfill their potential.

Commitment

We will... standardize EAL intake procedures throughout the division and provide leaders and teaching staff with on-going EAL-specific professional learning.

Belief

Education for reconciliation is a step towards rebalancing the education system, advancing reconciliation and supporting the commitments made by the Alberta government in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action. (Government of Alberta, 2023)

Commitment

We will... ensure that all FMPSD staff and students will learn about the diverse Indigenous peoples of this land and how First Nations, Metis and Inuit contribute to the vibrancy and fabric of Alberta and Canadian society.

EAL Programming

2022-2023 Advancements:
- EAL presentation to "We Belong" committee by member.
- EAL PL sessions for Educational Assistants and Teachers
- Superintendent inquiry into EAL intake and assessment practices that are currently in use in schools.
- Planning for division-level EAL specialist role to guide EAL intake, assessment, community engagement, programming, and staff PL.

Setting the Direction Year 2 & Year 3

- Designate an EAL point person at every school site.
- Include EAL professional learning topics at regular times throughout the school year.
- Dedicate funds to purchase resources that promote diversity.
- Include a multicultural calendar in curated resources and integrate into division/school activities and communications.
- Engage additional community agencies and individuals to facilitate settlement.
- Bring in guest speakers for students.
- Support the establishment of a BIPOC Staff Association.

Indigenous Pedagogies

2022-2023 Advancements:
- Monthly meetings with Elder's Council
- Expansion of FMPSD Indigenous education website
- On-going community engagement (Elder-in-Residence; Nistawoyou Friendship Centre; Aboriginal Health Liaison; NAABA partnership; Sage; and Suncor Partnership)
- Land-based learning opportunities for students from grade four to 12.

Setting the Direction Year 2 & Year 3

- Annual restorative practice PL for leadership and teaching staff.
- Indigenization of school spaces and integration of Indigenous teachings into curriculum and school proceedings.
- On-going education for staff and students about the impact of colonization and residential schooling on Canada's Indigenous peoples.
- Annual trauma-informed practice PL for leadership and teaching staff.
- Student showcase of Indigenous culture
- Expansion of land-based learning to include Division 1 students.
- Establish Land Acknowledgement policy.

C) Resource Curation

Belief

Available resources should reflect the diversity of students and staff. Diverse resources cultivate intersectionality, an awareness of privilege, and the possibility of understanding other persepectives.

Commitment

We will... prioritize and expand investment in human, financial, digital, and print resources to advance EDIIAAR practices in students, staff, and community partners.

Belief

All students have the right of access to technology, both in school and at home, to access curriculum content, online learning tools, and to have voice and agency in the academic environment.

Commitment

We will... support student access to home internet services and laptop technology to level the playing field and offer equal access to digital resources and learning supports.

2022-2023 Advancements:
- The Board of Trustees approved funding for Diversity Packs that were purchased for every elementary school.
- Continued community engagement through social justice projects.
- Continued accessing programs such as Tools for Schools and Coats for Kids.

Setting the Direction Year 2 & Year 3

- Expand diversity resource purchases to include secondary schools.
- Dedicate funds to engage speakers from outside the division for secondary students.
- Dedicate funds for publicity of EDIIAAR initiatives and division/school events.
- Investigate student home access to technology and internet services and reach out to local industry (e.g. Telus, Syncrude) and/or charitable organizations (e.g. The United Way) to access internet access and laptops for all students who are without.
- Continue to access "Tools for Schools" (United Way) program

D) Data Collection & Analysis
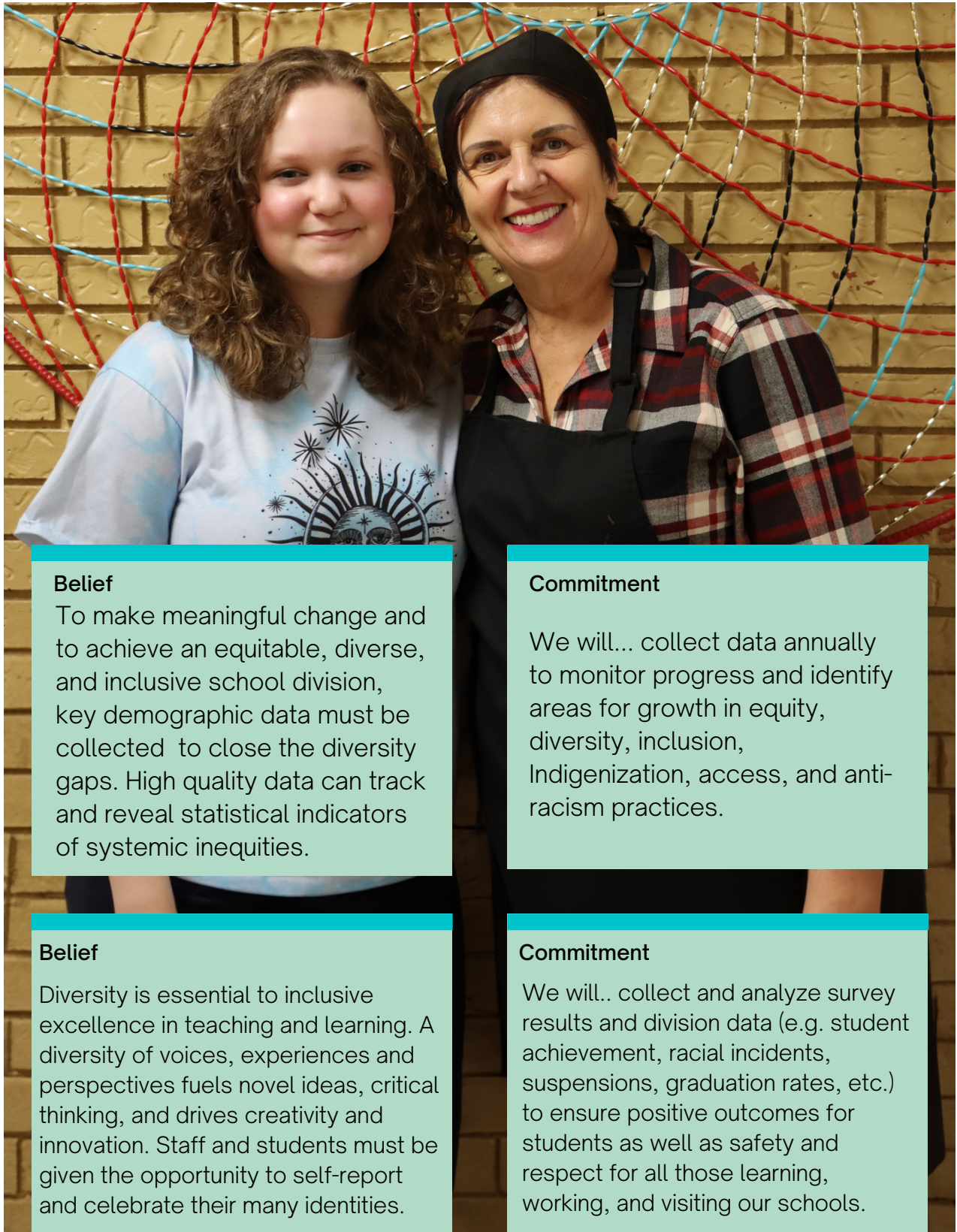
Belief
To make meaningful change and to achieve an equitable, diverse, and inclusive school division, key demographic data must be collected to close the diversity gaps. High quality data can track and reveal statistical indicators of systemic inequities.

Commitment

We will... collect data annually to monitor progress and identify areas for growth in equity, diversity, inclusion, Indigenization, access, and anti-racism practices.

Belief

Diversity is essential to inclusive excellence in teaching and learning. A diversity of voices, experiences and perspectives fuels novel ideas, critical thinking, and drives creativity and innovation. Staff and students must be given the opportunity to self-report and celebrate their many identities.

Commitment

We will.. collect and analyze survey results and division data (e.g. student achievement, racial incidents, suspensions, graduation rates, etc.) to ensure positive outcomes for students as well as safety and respect for all those learning, working, and visiting our schools.

2022-2023 Student & Staff EDI Survey Results

- Students and staff completed their respective surveys in January, February, and March 2023
- The student EDI survey was comprised of 22 questions
- 1598 Gr. 7-12 students participated in the survey
- The student survey results can be accessed through Superintendent Nutter
- Student responses were shared with the "We Belong" Committee, with division administrators, and with the Board of Trustees
- The staff EDI survey was comprised of 25 questions
- 243 school-based teaching staff participated in the survey
- The staff survey results can be accessed through Superintendent Nutter
- Staff survey results were shared with the "We Belong" Committee, administrators, and with the Board of Trustees
- Administrators responded to survey data through a Jamboard at the April 4, 2023 meeting:
  https://jamboard.google.com/d/19sANJhXHBFwU8hv6Bxx_yr5ACilDnhUa9Dsy3E10ld8/edit?usp=sharing

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Setting the Direction Year 2 & Year 3

- Conduct a Parent/Family EDI survey early in the 2023-2024 year
- Include all staff groups in annual EDI surveys. (School-based teaching staff, educational assistants, maintenance workers, custodial staff, administrative assistants, senior leadership / head office staff, etc.)
- Explore the possibility of expanding the student survey to include elementary students in grades 4 to 6
- Revise registration documents to include the option of race, gender, ethnicity, etc. self-identification.

E) Review of Policies & Administrative Procedures

Belief

FMPSD is committed to creating, maintaining and promoting a school division that is free from racism, hate speech, and discrimination and where students, staff, families, and community partners feel welcome, included, respected, and safe.

Commitment

We will... commit to establishing procedural coherence to: a) raise awareness about human rights; b) address racism, hate speech, and discrimination; c) hold people accountable; and d) stop racism, hate speech, and discrimination from recurring.

Belief

The successful implementation of policies promoting and protecting diversity requires assessment and feedback from marginalized groups. This means that the FMPSD actively seeks out diverse voices from inside and outside the organization to create and enhance policies and administrative procedures.

Commitment

We will... uphold inclusive practices, FMPSD policy and procedures will be reviewed annually to ensure equity, diversity, and inclusion in governance, teaching, learning, assessment, conduct, recruitment, and accessibility to curriculum and the physical environment.

Existing policies, administrative procedures, and value statements as they relate to EDIIAAR

FMPSD Administrative Procedures (AP 160, 164, 170, 203, 350, 403, 441, 445, 450, 455)

"All Fort McMurray Public Schools are welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe." (Policy 19, 20)

"Inclusive education and success for all will continue to be a target as we help students learn anywhere, anytime, anyplace!"

"Our schools provide a safe and caring environment where kids are comfortable and confident."

"All our schools are grounded in codes of conduct for students that emphasize inclusion and self-discipline."

"FMPSD is made up of students from all backgrounds who come together in our schools to observe and practice the universal values of respect, inclusion, and doing what is good for your neighbour."

Setting the direction for new policy development (Year 2):

Division-wide response and action protocols for addressing incidents of **student to student** racism, hate speech, and discrimination

Division-wide response and action protocols for addressing incidents of **staff to staff** racism, hate speech, and discrimination

Division-wide response and action protocols for addressing incidents of **student to staff** racism, hate speech, and discrimination

Division-wide response and action protocols for addressing incidents of **staff to student** racism, hate speech, and discrimination

Division-wide response and action protocols for addressing incidents of **student/staff to community partner** (e.g. Elders, religious leaders, student/staff family members) racism, hate speech, and discrimination

Division-wide response and action protocols for addressing incidents of **community partner to staff** racism, hate speech, and discrimination

Summary

Through the work of the committee and its initial membership, we have established a living document which outlines our plans to address gaps which will allow us to advance equity, diversity, inclusion, indigenization, anti-racism and access in our school division. This aligns to our priorities of maintaining safe and caring environments and supports for everyone and promoting growth and success for our students.

This plan will be enhanced and modified as we move through the work we have set out to do. New committee members will be brought on board to continue to gain perspectives and voices of our stakeholders.

It has been established by both staff and students that education is the first priority for all in order for everyone to understand why the work is necessary, and secondly, to find ways to address the issues in a way that is focused on the learning and less on the punishment, to ensure the issues do not repeat themselves.

We look forward to working together amongst all of our stakeholders to enrich our knowledge and learn from one another so that everyone feels safe and cared for.

~Superintendent Annalee Nutter

"Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future and renders the present inaccessible."
- Maya Angelou

Glossary of Terms & Acronyms

Advocacy - "An activity by an individual or group that aims to influence decisions within within political, economic, and social institutions" .

Allyship - "The actions, behaviours, and practices that leaders take to support, amplify and advocate with others" (Dias & Hamill, 2023).

BIPOC - Black, Indigenous, People of Colour

Diversity - Various backgrounds and races that comprise a community, nation, or other grouping

EAL - English as an Additional Language

ELL - English Language Learner

Equity - "Whereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances" (NACE, n.d.).

Inclusion - "Refers to how diversity is leveraged to create a fair, equitable, healthy, and high-performing organization or community where all individuals are respected, feel engaged and motivated, and their contributions toward meeting organizational and societal goals are valued" (Bennett, 2015).

Indigenization - "A collaborative process of naturalizing Indigenous intent, interactions, and processes and making them evident to transform spaces, places, and hearts" (Wilson, 2018).

Intersectionality - "The idea that individuals experience oppression differently based on where they stand across social markers" (Samonte, n.d.).

2SLGBTQ+ - "acronym which refers to Two-Spirit people, Lesbian; Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer; and + is inclusive of people who identify as part of sexual and gender diverse communities, who use additional terminologies." (Government of Canada)

NAABA - Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association

PL - Professional Learning

Resources

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