



Listening, Understanding & Moving Forward Together: CASS FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS & INUIT Education Gathering 2021

Monday, March 15, 2021

6:30 pm	Zoom Room Opens – Online Check in
7:00 pm	<p>Grand Entry Welcome to the Territory Prayers (Métis and First Nations) Lighting Qulliq Blanketing Ceremony Welcome to the Gathering, CASS Executive Director David Keohane Greetings from Alberta Education</p>
7:45 – 8:30 p.m.	<p>Keynote by Sean Lessard and Moderated by Charlene Bearhead Dr. Sean Lessard is from Montreal Lake Cree Nation in Treaty 6 territory. He is an award-winning writer, international speaker, and researcher in the field of indigenous education and youth. Sean is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Regina and Associate Professor at the University of Alberta. Sean has been awarded the Pat Clifford emerging researcher award by the Canadian Association for Teacher Educators as well as the American Educational Research Associations Early Career Award Winner. His work focuses on indigenous youth empowerment and leadership including the development of his not-for-profit indigenous youth bursary and wellness program that has contributed over \$150,000 in the past 3 years to indigenous high school and post-secondary students across Canada.</p> <p>Keynote Presentation – The Red Worn Runners Sean reflectively returns to the early transformative experiences of his work alongside indigenous youth in Enoch Cree Nation. They called themselves the “Red Worn Runners” as a way to remember the experience and to guide them through the long summer months of “school”. It is through this experience that they learned from the possibilities of imagining otherwise alongside one another and the power and potential of youth leading the way both in and outside of school spaces.</p> <p>https://www.edcan.ca/articles/the-red-worn-runners/ (Canadian Education Association/Red Worn Runners)</p>

**Speaker biographies can be found at the end of this document.*

Tuesday, March 16, 2021

8:30-8:45	<p>Welcome Opening Prayer</p>		
8:45-9:30	<p>Their Classrooms -Their Voices Student Panel Moderated by Seneca Dueck and Layla Dumont of Roots of Resilience</p> <p>Roots of Resilience Education Foundation co-founders will host a student panel with three young Indigenous students who will share their reflections on their school experiences, their calls to action for the adults and decision makers in education, as well as their hopes for the future of education for Indigenous students in this province.</p> <p>The student panel will include an 11-year-old Cree-Saulteaux girl attending Edmonton Public Schools, an 11-year-old Cree girl attending Elk Island Public Schools, and a 12-year-old grade 7 Métis student with Calgary Catholic Schools.</p>		
9:30-9:45	<p>Wellness Break</p>		
9:45-10:45	SESSIONS 1		
<p>Exploring Authentic Métis Resources Presented by Lisa Cruikshank and Billie-Jo Grant</p> <p>This session is designed for participants to explore several authentic recommended resources that help to create teachable moments and provide meaningful learning opportunities. Together we will explore online resources to create meaningful lessons, engaging activities, and develop professional development appropriate for staff and parents.</p>	<p>Inter-generational Healing: Moving from Chaos to Resilience Presented by Kerrie Moore</p> <p>The presentation will include the effects of toxic stress and how it can lead to trauma; how epigenetics plays a role in inter-generational trauma; what is survivor brain and how to help heal the emotional brain; how to create safety; how to heal trauma through a wholistic model; why cultural identity is important for resilience; and the importance of spirituality in healing trauma.</p> <p>Participants will develop an awareness of who Indigenous people are and how both genetics and the environment play a role in resilience; what are the parallels between trauma and other mental health challenges as well as healing parallels;</p>	<p>Learning From and Learning With: The Confessions of a Cree Woman and a Moniyaskwew Presented by Shelagh Hagemann and Josephine Small</p> <p>In this session, participants will experience a realistic view of the challenges faced when walking in each other's moccasins/shoes on the path of reconciliation. Hear the honest and sometimes brutal truth of everyday experiences in education and the motivation behind what keeps these two ladies dedicated and passionate about reconciliation. As a result of attending this session, participants will have an understanding of the challenges in teaching the truth in Alberta schools.</p>	<p>Calgary Catholic School District: A Holistic Approach to Indigenous Education Presented by Cynthia Launiere-Zielke, Patricia McCallum and Angela Houle (CCSD)</p> <p>The Calgary Catholic School District has created an Indigenous Educational Framework to support Indigenous students and their families. This session will describe the systemic approach CCSD has taken to support student and parent engagement, resource development and staff training to enhance student success.</p> <p>Participants will learn about the approach of one school division in making significant impact on the outcomes for Indigenous youth and also all of the staff and students in the division.</p>

	<p>what is a wholistic framework and how do we use this within our school context. Participants will have an understanding of how we create safety and how do we create healthier brains.</p>		
10:45–11:00	Wellness Break		
11:00-12:00	SESSIONS 2		
<p>Revitalizing a Language, Revitalizing Who We Are: A Journey of Bringing Michif Language Back Home Presented by Josh Morin</p> <p>The session will be about the journey it has been to bring Michif back to the St. Albert community where it was once dominantly spoken among the Metis. I will also provide a basic beginner introduction to the Michif language. What some may refer to as Southern Michif or Northern Michif but really, we will learn that we are Michif we are our language -- Lii Michif niyanaan.</p>	<p>Restoring Student Well Being in Tsuut'ina Schools Through Traditional Practices Presented by Cameron Crowchild and Teena Starlight (Tsuut'ina)</p> <p>In this session, you will learn the process of how Tsuut'ina Education implemented Tsuut'ina ways of knowing into the K5 to Grade 12 curriculum. We will share partnerships, teachers training, resources, culture calendar, cultural camps.</p> <p>Participants will learn ways to implement Indigenous Ways of Knowing into western curriculum.</p> <p>As well, participants will learn what kind of teacher supports are needed to successfully implement Indigenous Ways of Knowing into curriculum. We will share the positive impacts on student well-being and learning that has been supported through Tsuut'ina curriculum.</p>	<p>Partners In Place: Finding Truth on the Pathway to Reconciliation Presented by Phil Butterfield and Sarah Heimbecker</p> <p>This session reflects on the successful development of a relationship between Tsuut'ina Education and Connect Charter School through the Partners In Place Initiative.</p> <p>Seeking truth on the pathway to reconciliation means more than simply checking a box on a 'to do' list. Developing a sincere and sustainable relationship that addresses the needs of Indigenous and non-Indigenous educational communities, require patience, trust, and a willingness to learn from each other. Consider the impact of Indigenous ways of knowing on the Connect Charter School community while Tsuut'ina Middle School students develop skills in digital literacy and computational thinking that will foster resilience and wellness as they move into young adulthood.</p>	<p>What I Have Learned: Stories and Lessons From My 20-year Journey in Indigenous Education Presented by Michelle Ranger</p> <p>Please join Michelle Ranger as she shares personal and professional learnings from her experiences as a Métis educator in the Calgary Board of Education. Stories, strategies and wise practices from her experiences as a teacher and leader for early Indigenous learners and their families in urban centres; will be shared. This session is appropriate for those who seek to deepening an understanding of how Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing - benefits all students.</p>

Wednesday, March 17, 2021

8:30-8:45	Welcome, Opening Prayer		
8:45-9:30	<p>Keynote by Tomas Jirousek and Moderated by Elizabeth Gouthro Tomas Jirousek, a member of the Blackfoot Confederacy from the Kainai Nation of southern Alberta, graduated from McGill University this past spring as valedictorian after leading a successful campaign against the use of Redmen as the name of McGill’s men’s sports teams. Tomas graduated with an honours degree in Political Science, with a double minor in Economics and Indigenous studies. Tomas also represented McGill as a varsity rower during his time at the university.</p> <p>Tomas is currently studying law at the University of Toronto. He joined Pro Bono Students Canada in his first semester at the faculty, where he is currently working to open a pro bono Indigenous human rights clinic in downtown Toronto. Tomas hopes to use his law degree to promote racial equality within the justice system.</p> <p>Tomas splits his free time between Whitehorse, Yukon, and the Blood reserve in southern Alberta. He credits his mother, a lifelong educator from the Kainai Nation, as his inspiration for pursuing higher education.</p>		
9:30-9:45	Wellness Break		
9:45-10:45	SESSIONS 3		
<p>Canadian Geographic Education Presented by Paula Huddy-Zubkowski</p> <p>Geographic knowledge and critical thinking concepts are more important now than ever and Canadian Geographic Education aids to help teachers teach with these topics with their resources. Can Geo Education is a not-for-profit organization that is dedicated to creating free, bilingual and engaging resources for educators across Canada.</p> <p>In this 60-minute presentation, Paula Huddy-Zubkowski, Alberta representative for Can Geo Education and the Instructional Media and EdTech Consultant for the Calgary Catholic School</p>	<p>Indigenous Land Based Learning - An Aspen View Experience Presented by Desmond Nolan</p> <p>This session will outline Edwin Parr Composite School’s Indigenous Land Based Learning Experience. This program was developed to introduce staff and students to an Indigenous paradigm of learning by engaging students at a deeper level of participation in which they live fully and consciously. The Land Based program is predicated upon a holistic lifestyle approach, utilizing four quadrants to acquire knowledge: physical, spiritual, cognitive, and emotional. From opportunities such paddling, survival skills, traditional aboriginal food preparation, tee</p>	<p>The Sixties Scoop: Understanding Implications & Contributing towards Reconciliation Presented by Melissa Purcell (ATA)</p> <p>From the 1950s to the 1990s, thousands of Indigenous children across Canada were apprehended and placed with non-Indigenous families, isolating many from Indigenous cultures, languages and identity. This session will provide educators with an overview of historical and current insights into the Sixties Scoop, as well as increased understanding of its legacy. You will leave this session with an increased understanding of the complexities of the Sixties Scoop, including</p>	<p>Reflecting Indigenous Families in the Assurance Framework: The Work of School Councils Presented by Wendy Keiver and Dorcas Kilduff (ASCA)</p> <p>The Assurance Framework was developed to provide the basis for a balanced approach to accountability and public assurance in the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system. School authorities are expected to engage students, parents, staff, and community members in the planning process to establish key priorities, share results and report on progress toward achieving those priorities.</p>

<p>District, will highlight some of Can Geo Education's most popular resources. These resources will cover topics around Indigenous and Traditional ways of knowing, climate change, citizen science and more.</p>	<p>pee building, First Nation crafts, firearm safety combined with core curriculum classes instructed via cooperative methods; students used the 'land as text' as a means for experiential education.</p> <p>Participants attending will understand the benefits of an Indigenous Land Based Education experience and how to look at curricular outcomes from an Indigenous perspective.</p>	<p>resources and strategies to contribute towards reconciliation.</p>	<p>School councils have an important role in supporting accountability and assurance at the local level. Ensuring that Indigenous Families are included and reflected in the engagement opportunities provided by schools and school authorities is critical, and school councils are an important bridge to achieving this. What does this mean for The Work of School Council?</p> <p>Join Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA) experts to discover how school councils can mobilize to engage the greater school community, providing broader and deeper insights supporting accountability and assurance at the local level.</p>
<p>10:45–11:00</p>	<p>Wellness Break</p>		
<p>11:00-12:00</p>	<p>SESSIONS 4</p>		
<p>Cultural Teachings of the Métis and the Nakota Presented by Sharon Morin and Wilson Bearhead</p> <p>Sharon and Wilson will share their diverse experiences and cultural practices related to various teachings that they each live in their families and communities. Participants will be invited to ask questions and share in the conversation virtual-circle style.</p>	<p>Education for Reconciliation: Examining Public Attitudes Regarding the Role of Schools in Reconciliation Processes Presented by Terry Wotherspoon and Emily Milne</p> <p>Canada's national Truth and Reconciliation Commission has challenged Canadian education systems to acknowledge the damaging legacies of residential schooling while ensuring that all students develop an understanding of the perspectives and experiences of Indigenous peoples, as well Canada's relations with Indigenous peoples. This presentation explores public attitudes about the role of schools in fostering reconciliation in Saskatchewan</p>	<p>CV·Δ·ᑭ tapwewin: Dismantling Anti-Indigenous Racism Presented by Melissa Purcell (ATA)</p> <p>This introductory workshop will encourage educators to critically reflect on concepts such as white privilege, systemic racism, and assimilation. Historical and contemporary examples of anti-Indigenous racism will be explored, and participants will be challenged to consider their own role in dismantling anti-Indigenous racism. You will leave with a foundational understanding of anti-racism with a focus on Indigenous Peoples and will also be equipped with suggested resources for further learning.</p>	<p>Our Allies and our Partners The Parents Presented by Dr. Genevieve A. Fox, Carolyn Weasel Fat and Marie Shade</p> <p>Information on community engagement will be shared with participants, and strategies on working with parents and community leaders.</p>

	<p>and Alberta and is informed by analysis that highlights the significance of mutual interactions between community support and educational initiatives in advancing successful educational reform. Drawing on a public attitudes survey with Alberta (n=400) and Saskatchewan (n=400) residents, this presentation aims to address three questions: What are the current public attitudes regarding reconciliation overall and within Alberta and Saskatchewan schools? What does education for reconciliation mean to diverse community members? What are the perceived challenges and the successes of reconciliation related processes within schools and classrooms? The project is part of a wider program of research exploring the development and implications of education for reconciliation activities in Canadian jurisdictions from the perspectives of various participants, including teachers, parents, and other communities.</p> <p>This presentation considers the prospects to advance educational reform processes as framed through an analysis of public conceptions of and support related to reconciliation initiatives within the kindergarten to high school system in two provincial contexts. Further, consideration is given to the policy and practice landscape concerning reconciliation initiatives in various school jurisdictions -</p>		
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	the community context in which schools are situated- and the ways in which educational activities related to reconciliation are perceived by community members.		
12:00-12:45	Witness Sharing by Seneca Dueck and Layla Dumont of Roots of Resilience Closing Ceremony – Retiring of Flags		

In lieu of gifts to presenters, CASS will make a donation to the Métis Nation of Alberta Provisional Youth Council.

Speaker Biographies in alphabetical order by last name:

Student Panel:

Arianna Dumont, a Cree and Saulteaux from and has been raised in Treaty 6. She is 11 years old and is a grade 6 student with Edmonton Public Schools.

Kail Dyck, a Métis and calls Mohkinstsis in Treaty 7 his home. He is 12 years old and is a grade 7 student with Calgary Catholic Schools.

Now 10 years old, **Sebastien Duval**, was born into a mixed/modern family and often celebrates not only his Mother's rich French heritage, but his Father's Asian/Mi'gmaq roots. Add to this Sebastien's Father's Military Background; Sebastien enjoys the discipline that sports, and team play provide him. This has led Sebastien to having a successful Taekwondo career so far, achieving his 1st Degree Black belt at the age of 8. Sebastien's love and understanding of his Native Heritage not only comes from his Father but his Step-Sister (of Ojibwa ancestry) who takes him to Pow Wows in the summer so he can enjoy the drums, singing and dancing. When he can, he joins his father for Hunting Walks at the beginning of Hunting Season, to learn of the ways our brothers and sisters, the forest animals, and how they live and move around.

Speakers:

Wilson Bearhead is a Nakota Elder and a member of the Wabamun Lake First Nation in Treaty 6 Territory. Wilson has served as the Chief of his community, Grande Chief of Treaty 6 and Assembly of First Nations Alberta Regional Chief. He began his career in the field of addictions, mental health and supports for children in care. Over the years Wilson had dedicated his time, always in service to the community, families, and children, in roles that include Elder at federal corrections agencies, public libraries and in schools. Most recently Wilson Served as the Elder for Elk Island Public Schools. Wilson's grandmother Annie was a powerful, positive influence in his young life, teaching him all the lessons that gave him the strength, knowledge and skill to overcome difficult times and to embrace the gifts of life.

Phil Butterfield has been on the staff of Connect Charter School since 2004, serving as counsellor, Assistant Principal, and is now in his fourth year as Principal. With an extensive background in public education in both BC and Alberta, preceded by a 14-year career as police officer in Vancouver, Dr. Butterfield has developed a deep appreciation for the value of

relationships that are founded on mutual trust and understanding. Partners In Place represents the most profound opportunity to ensure students gain a lasting appreciation for Indigenous ways of knowing that are essential to becoming extraordinary citizens, which is the vision for all who pass through Connect's doors.

Lisa Cruickshank (Métis) is the Director, Métis Education and Lifelong Learning at Rupertsland Institute and has served in this role since 2017. Lisa previously worked in the K-12 system for 19 years in various capacities such as: Elementary Educator, Indigenous Education Consultant, Provincial Curriculum Development, and now serves as Director for Métis Education and Lifelong learning at Rupertsland Institute. Lisa is passionate and committed to advancing Métis education across the province and building capacity with Métis educators. Lisa brings her leadership and growing expertise in Métis education working with system leaders, educators, and community members across the province to the project.

Seneca Dueck (Crowe) is a member of the Kahkewistahaw First Nation in Treaty 4 territory. Born Salteaux/Assiniboine Seneca was raised in the ways of the Nakota people of Treaty 6 territory. Seneca's career has been focused in Education working to support Indigenous youth in their endeavors to navigate the public education system in Alberta, and to inspire non-Indigenous youth to confront long held views of Canadian history through the experiences and lens of Indigenous peoples and the complex relationships with the people of this land. Starting her career in Fort Saskatchewan Elementary school as the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Lead in Elk Island Public Schools she then went on to become a Braided Journeys coach with Edmonton Catholic Schools before moving on to become the National Education Strategist for the Moose Hide Campaign. Seneca has also provided support to Healing Our Spirit Worldwide, Project of Heart, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Education events, the College of Alberta School Superintendents FNMI Gathering and more through volunteer work. Although Seneca very much enjoyed the opportunities to support community through all of these roles, she recognizes her responsibility to pass along the teachings of her parents, family and community that have guided her path. Seneca sees Roots of Resilience as the avenue to create positive social change in Alberta and she is honoured to use her own agency to support this important work.

Layla Dumont is a Nehiyaw iskwew (Cree Woman) from the Onion Lake Cree Nation in Treaty 6 territory. Layla holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and has experience in education, public safety through traditional healing and community-based rehabilitation. It was through her work on the national education initiative Project of Heart, that Layla was called to action in educating others about the history and ongoing legacies of colonization and working towards healing and reconciliation. Layla's career path led her to public safety where she worked as a parole officer at a healing lodge for Indigenous women, and later when she became program manager of a community-based violence prevention program for Indigenous youth. In public safety, Layla worked through an Indigenous cultural lens that promoted understanding of and healing from historic trauma through connection to spirit, culture, and community. Her career path shifted back to education when she began working with the Alberta School Boards Association as the Indigenous Relations Coordinator, supporting education communities across Alberta in their journey towards reconciliation. Layla has been honoured to work with her community in various capacities throughout her career and is excited to continue and expand this important work through Roots of Resilience.

Staahtsittayaaki **Dr. Genevieve A. Fox** (B.Ed., M.A., Ed.D.) from Kainai - Blood Nation has been involved with the ethos of Indigenous education in administration, teaching and curriculum development She has taught from the K-12 systems to the college and university levels. Genevieve has worked with national and local organizations such as the Canadian Council on Learning, Treaty 7 Tribal Council and City of Calgary. Today, Genevieve is the Education Director for the Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council working with Kainai, Siksika, Piikani and Aamskapi Pikuni nations. Genevieve is married to Makiinima Chief Roy Fox of the Kainai-Blood Nation and they are blessed with four children and eleven grandchildren, with one great-grandson.

Billie-Jo Grant (Métis) is an award-winning educator with over 20 years of classroom experience teaching K-9 students in both public and Catholic school classrooms. Billie-Jo was the recipient of a 2017 Inspire National Award in the role model category for Indigenous education and she also received a 2018 International Women's Award for her work in Indigenous

education with her local community. Billie-Jo completed a Master's degree in 2018 and stepped out of the classroom into leadership to develop authentic, meaningful, and creative Métis resources with Rupertsland Institute, a Metis Centre of Excellence. As the Associate Director of Métis Education and Lifelong Learning at Rupertsland, Billie-Jo brings expertise in curriculum development and strong interpersonal skills to this project as well as a provincial network of allied and Indigenous educators.

Shelagh Hagemann is a wife, mother and passionate and experienced educator for over 25 years. She is currently the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Student Success Coordinator for Wolf Creek Public Schools. Her teaching career was spent primarily in the secondary area teaching English and Drama. Her leadership experiences include roles as an AISI Leader and Assistant Principal at an Outreach school within the division. Shelagh received her education degree from the University of Alberta and master's degree from Wilkes University. For the past seven years she has been working with staff, students and families across the district supporting First Nations, Métis and Inuit programming.

Sarah Heimbecker is a Principal on the Tsuut'ina Nation. She is from the Piikani Nation and part of the Blackfoot Confederacy. Her research in her graduate studies focused on First Nations students' stories for success. She has studied extensively the factors that impact First Nation student success and the current educational gaps that First Nation students are faced with.

Paula Huddy-Zubkowski is the Alberta representative for Can Geo Education and the Instructional Media and EdTech Consultant for the Calgary Catholic School District.

Emily Milne is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at MacEwan University. She received her Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Waterloo in 2015. Her research program explores the development and implications of education for reconciliation activities in Canadian jurisdictions. She is involved in several community-engaged projects in partnership with schools and school boards/districts, parents/caregivers as well as Elders that aim to improve Indigenous student success by identifying educational inequalities and developing school-based policies and strategies to reduce educational inequalities. She has published thirteen academic journal articles and five book chapters on topics including Indigenous family/school relationships, Indigenous curricular policy directives in public schooling, and education policy. She has presented 28 papers at academic conferences, given 32 presentations to professional/practitioner audiences, including educators and policy makers at Alberta Education, and prepared 18 reports for government and school boards. Her research has been funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Her research has also received national media attention and has been featured on several news outlets including Global News TV, The Globe and Mail, and the National Post, among others.

Kerrie Moore MSW, RSW is Cree/ Metis originally from Saskatchewan. Kerrie has worked for over 30 years as a consultant, educator, and psychotherapist within the domains of Child and family services, education, health, justice. Kerrie is an affiliated instructor in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary. Kerrie is recognized as an Elder and knowledge keeper and provides cultural knowledge and ceremonies to institutions, ministries, and agencies who work with Indigenous people. Kerrie sits on several Elder boards including the U of C Elders Advisory council, CBE Elders Board and is a board member with the Bow Valley Social Work Diploma program. Kerrie works with agencies and funding agencies developing parallel frameworks, including assessments and research models. Kerrie is the recipient of the Alumni of the Year award 2008, Women's Resource Center, University of Calgary.

Josh Morin is a youth leader within the Métis Nation. Born and Raised in the Edmonton Area. Josh has worked hard to provide indigenous led workshops to community members such as Moccasin Making, Finger weaving and Michif language classes as well as running the day-to-day operations at Michif Cultural Connections the Métis Cultural Centre in St. Albert. Josh is also the grandson of honourable Senator Thelma Chalifoux, the first Indigenous woman appointed to the Canadian Senate. His family has long historical roots in St. Albert and Lac St Anne dating back to the community's earliest iterations and are very proud of their strong Métis culture and history they carry in Treaty 6 territory and the Métis homeland.

Sharon Morin was born into a large politically active Metis family and is the 3rd youngest daughter of the late Canadian Senator Thelma Chalifoux. Sharon has spent most of her life learning and then working within the Metis communities in Slave Lake, and the greater Edmonton area. Sharon volunteered with her Mother to start Michif Cultural Connections which is a local Metis resource that houses artifacts, books, and Metis specific resources. Sharon has worked for the past 16 years at the Musee Heritage Museum developing and delivering curriculum based Indigenous programs for students of all ages and has expended the indigenous programming at the Museum and Heritage Sites in St. Albert, currently Sharon is the Programming Manager for all the sites in St. Alberta. Sharon sits on the Indigenous Advisory Circle for the Alberta School Board Association, the Wisdom and Guidance Council for St. Albert Public the Principal Cohort for Sturgeon County school division and recently elected to the Alberta Museums Association, Sharon is a facilitator for Blanket Exercises within the local schools, municipalities, government departments and does many presentations for Professional Development of teachers. It is Sharon's mission to keep up the work of her Mother and help to promote, protect, and preserve the Metis history of our region.

Desmond Nolan is a principal of a grade 7-12 school in the community of Athabasca. His educational career began as a teacher in 2002. Besides teaching in the public system, he is an active member of the Alberta Hunter Education Instructors Association teaching many outdoor related courses. Since childhood Des has been an avid outdoorsman. Growing up fishing, hunting, camping, and trapping enhanced his love of nature and respect for animals and their environments. His adventures as a youngster have brought about his desire to introduce students to the outdoors. As an educator he ensures his students and family experience what our land has to offer.

Melissa Purcell is Denesuline and a member of Smith's Landing First Nation in Treaty 8 territory. She is an Executive Staff Officer, Professional Development, Indigenous Education with the Alberta Teachers' Association and continues to lead Indigenous Education and Walking Together: Education for Reconciliation within the Association. She has experience teaching in Alberta band, charter and public schools. At the division level with Edmonton Public Schools she held the positions of teacher consultant, program coordinator and supervisor of First Nations, Métis and Inuit education.

Michelle Ranger's homeland is St. Laurent, Manitoba. She is a member of the Métis Nation of Alberta and is currently the System Principal of School Improvement – Indigenous Education at the Calgary Board of Education (CBE). Michelle has been described as an innovative, relational and compassionate leader who has devoted her career to Indigenous education in urban settings. Michelle was the first principal of Niitsitapi Learning Centre, an early-years Indigenous holistic and communal learning centre and is currently co-leading the Indigenous Education Strategy within the CBE. Over her 20-year career Michelle has supported Indigenous student success and well-being through her roles as teacher and leader through innovative and wise practices. Michelle is the proud recipient of the 2020 Indspire Guiding the Journey -Indigenous Education Award for Innovative Practice.

Marie Shade (Ootskoistaaksaakii) B.ED. M.ED. from the Blood Tribe Nation has taught in the field of education, Provincially, Federally and Local Control “Kainai Board of Education” for thirty plus years. Presently she is the Principal at Saipoyi Elementary School in Standoff, Alberta. Marie is married to Don and they have three children and six grandchildren. Don is an instructor at the University of Lethbridge. “Student Success” is imperative when Home and School collaborate effectively.

Josephine Small is from the Ermineskin Cree Nation in Maskwacis, Alberta. She is a mother of two sons and seven that call her nohkomp (grandmother). Her first language is Cree, and her Cree name is Ka-wi-chi-pi-mi-ha-wi-mot Is-kwew which means Flying with the Birds Woman. After getting her Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Education from the University of Lethbridge in 1995, she taught Cree for the majority of her career. Josephine says she has seven Masters and those would be all her grandchildren. Growing up in a very traditional Cree family and being totally immersed in her language and culture has opened doors for her in Western Society that is now calling on traditional Indigenous knowledge as it moves forward with reconciliation. Josephine has been part of WCPS since 2018 in her role as First Nation Metis and Inuit Learning Support Coach.

As a Cultural Teacher of the Tsuut'ina Education, **Cameron Crowchild** is both diligent in his teachings and committed to the profession. He joined the education system in May 2018. Prior to joining the Education System, Cameron was a bus driver for 5 years, he enjoyed his job as it enabled him to be around different types of people every day, the teachers, parents, school officials; the most rewarding was being around the children and being able to share teachings every day. He believes that being able to communicate and understand all types of personalities is an important trait to have. Besides being a bus driver Cameron was an Alcohol and Drug Addiction Counsellor for 13 years. His ultimate dream is to put his training from Moose Mountain Log Homes Inc. and Gabriola Island School of Building Arts and build his dream Timber bent home.

Cameron was born and raised in Tsuut'ina Nation, he obtained his high school education in and around Calgary. What is important to Cameron is the education he received from his parents, both maternal and paternal grandparents, they taught him ways of Tsuut'ina and Cree. His classroom and playground were in his backyard the natural environment of mother earth. Cameron and his siblings would adventure out into the woods, to observe the animals around such as the: grouse, badgers, porcupine, horses, and birds. From each observation he learned something about how we are all connected to Mother Earth and how it is important to continue to co-exist with the animals. He believes this was the best education he received, as he learned about our connections to the land and the cosmic universe. In Cameron's adult years he attended ceremonies where he continued to learn about who we are as Dina-tii and learning about our traditional way of life and how continuing to attend these ceremonies is where our education starts.

He is now married to Yolanda Young Pine-Crowchild, a Director of Tsuut'ina Healthy Living Program. He has four children Jessi, Alexa, Tasheena and Johan and 3 grandchildren.

Dzinisi Guja, mizi Tsuut'ina Nishina Tsika at'a. Good day, this is Tsuut'ina-Cree Woman. Her English name is **Teena Starlight**. Teena received her Bachelor of Education with a minor in Math from the University of Calgary in 1999. She began her teaching career working for Calgary Board of Education. Her dream was to become an educator and teach her own people. She moved with her children to her children's homeland on the Blood Reserve. Teena worked for the Kainai Board of Education for 14 years. During this time, she returned to school part time at the University of Lethbridge and received her Master's Degree in FNMI Curriculum and Leadership in 2012. Teena returned to her homeland of Tsuut'ina Nation in 2016. She began working as a teacher and soon became the Vice Principal at Chiila Elementary. In the fall of 2017, she accepted the position of Tsuut'ina Curriculum Developer for Education. Today Teena works closely with Tsuut'ina Elders, Tsuut'ina Gunaha Institute, culture instructors, and educators to develop Seasonal Cultural Teachings for Grades K4- Grade 12. She is currently developing Tsuut'ina curriculum and implementing Tsuut'ina language and culture teachings within the current Alberta curriculum in all subject areas.

Carolyn Weasel Fat is currently the Associate Principal of Saipoyi School, which is in Standoff, Alberta in the Blood Indian Reserve, from September 2008 – today. She does this half time and teach the other half of the day. She was previously the Principal at Aahsaopi Elementary School located in the Levern Area of the Blood Indian Reserve from 2002 – 2008, taught grade 1 – from September 1992 – June 1996, then taught grade 1 immersion and looped with my grade 1 students up to grade the end of grade 3. In all her years of being an educator, she has worked closely with parents. She believes that getting to know them on a professional and somewhat personal basis helps them in becoming more active in their child's education. She has a B.Ed. from the U of L, and a MA in Administration and Supervision from Gonzaga University and is the mother of 3, and a grandmother of 12.

Terry Wotherspoon is a Professor of Sociology at the University of Saskatchewan. He has a record of research activity in education and policy that includes experience working with Ministries of Education and other educational organizations to inform educational policy and practice related to Indigenous schooling and inequality. In one of his previous SSHRC-funded projects, he explored teachers' work in Indigenous communities, addressing the relationships and potential tensions between the multiple workload and curricular demands that teachers encounter in contexts that had adopted mandates to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students. The data and outcomes from that project have been employed to inform subsequent educational policy and practice, especially in Saskatchewan, where Wotherspoon was invited to be part of a team working in conjunction with the provincial ministry of education to assess the outcomes of a community schools initiative that sought to support and improve educational achievement among First Nations, Métis, and low-income students. He has authored several refereed articles in high profile Canadian and international journals and book chapters and has presented findings from these studies to major educational

stakeholders including Saskatchewan Education (the provincial education ministry), the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, the Canadian Education Association, and the Council of Ministers of Education Canada, among others.