



CASS

College of
Alberta School
Superintendents



Continuing
Education
Program



RESEARCH REPORT | September 2024

**Understanding, Honouring,
and Learning Cultural
Protocol in Relationship with
Indigenous Peoples and
Communities**



Research Report

Acknowledgements

As a provincial organization, we acknowledge that we are on traditional territory, gathering grounds, meeting place, and travelling route of the **Treaty 6** First Nations— the Nehiwayak, (Cree), Saulteaux, Niitsitapi (Blackfoot), Dene, and Nakota Nations; **Treaty 7** First Nations— the Blackfoot Confederacy of the Siksika, Kainai and Piikani Nations, the Stoney Nakoda Nation of the Chiniki, Bearspaw and Goodstoney Nations, and the TsuuT’ina Nation; **Treaty 8** First Nations— the Cree, Dene Tha, Dane-zaa and Denesuline Nations; and the traditional homeland of the Métis Nation. We acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples of the past whose footsteps have shaped this land and those of the present and future who will continue to shape it for centuries to come.


The College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS) is committed to restoring and honouring the Truth and Reconciliation calls to action, and we strongly believe that truth must be acknowledged to move forward to reconciliation. This report and the findings shared are part of that commitment. Engaging in respectful, responsible, and reciprocal relationships with First Nations and Métis communities is the path forward to reconciliation. Together we call upon our collective communities to build a stronger understanding and relationship of all the peoples who dwell on this land we call home.

CASS acknowledges and appreciates:

- this project was funded through a 2023-24 conditional grant from the Government of Alberta;
- the Indigenous leaders who contributed to this study by offering guidance and wisdom;
- the system education leaders who contributed to this study by participating in the survey; and
- the contributions of the CASS First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Action Committee.

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Introduction

The TRC considers “reconciliation” to be an ongoing process of establishing and maintaining respectful relationships at all levels of Canadian society. ([TRC](#), 2015b, p. 190)

Indigenous epistemology is our systems of knowledge in their context, or in relationship. (Wilson, 2008, p. 7)

In June 2016, the [Alberta Joint Commitment to Action \(JCTA\)](#) was signed following the 2015 release of the [Truth and Reconciliation Commission \(TRC\) of Canada Reports and Calls to Action](#). The JCTA made explicit a commitment by various organizations to work together to provide professional learning to teachers to ensure that Alberta students would learn about the rich history, perspectives, and contributions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. Signatories included Alberta Education; the College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS); the Alberta Teachers’ Association; the Alberta Association of Deans of Education; the Alberta School Boards Association; the Alberta Regional Professional Development Consortia; and the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

In 2017, the Alberta Government released professional practice standards for teachers, leaders, and superintendents. The Teaching Quality Standard ([TQS](#)), Leadership Quality Standard ([LQS](#)), and Superintendent Leadership Quality Standard ([SLQS](#)), updated in 2023, outline the competency requirements and professional expectations for those within the teaching profession. These standards include the overarching expectation and understanding that **superintendents, principals, and school jurisdiction leaders “play a fundamental role in establishing and supporting the conditions under which the learning aspirations and the potential of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students will be/are realized”** (Alberta Education, 2023a, 2023c, p. 1).

Additionally, within the context of the [SLQS/LQS](#), “**reconciliation**” means the process and goal of creating societal change through a fundamental shift in thinking and attitudes, increasing intercultural understanding to build a better society through learning about First Nations, Métis and Inuit perspectives and experiences, including residential schools and treaties” (Alberta Education, 2023a, 2023c, p. 2).

The [TRC](#), [JCTA](#), [SLQS](#), and [LQS](#) provide a solid foundation on which build the professional learning and practice of Alberta system education leaders. Since the release of these important documents, CASS has worked, with the support of the

this relational context is recognizing that all who are who are connected to the research (e.g., contributors, participants, those analyzing data and summarizing the findings) are “research participants” and have a “relationship to the topic.” (Wilson, 2008, p. 69)

Wilson (2008) has reminded us that an essential part of being in relationship is accepting responsibility to sustain and nurture those relationships; what he has described as “relational accountability” (p. 71). Having a relationship to the topic positions everyone as a participant, learner and, also, one who holds responsibility. We begin, then, by acknowledging that this research study is part of a collective effort to build and sustain respectful, reciprocal relationships for student success. This in keeping with the symbolism of the birch tree as a reminder of our connection to the natural world, ideas, and one another. Dr. Dianne Roulson, CASS Leadership Consultant, wrote this report with these ideas and the concept of the birch tree in mind.

We are grateful to the Indigenous leaders who offered their guidance and wisdom to this research project and to the system education leaders from across Alberta who participated in the survey. We extend gratitude also, to the voices from the literature, both oral and written, whose ideas have been shared throughout the report and will serve to strengthen our collective relationship to the topic.

Contributors

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Terminology

Generally, “Indigenous” is the most accepted term in Canada for referring to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. However, some of the references in the course materials use “Aboriginal.” In fact, Section 35 of the [Constitution Act, 1982](#) still refers to the “aboriginal peoples of Canada.” The SLQS and LQS refer to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.

Canadians have much to benefit from listening to the voices, experiences, and wisdom of Survivors, Elders, and Traditional Knowledge Keepers—and much more to learn about reconciliation. Aboriginal peoples have an important contribution to make to reconciliation. Their knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, and connections to the land have vitally informed the reconciliation process to date and are essential to its ongoing progress. ([Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada](#), 2015b, p. 9)

Background and Context

Everything is in relationship with, or in relation to, everything else. Understanding this relationality means being aware that we are shaped by more than the content of any learning environment; we are also affected by the way we interact with one another and how we move through the work in relation to each other. Situating ourselves by identifying who we are and our connections to others, and by acknowledging the land we come from and are now on, helps set up a space to work with each other in good ways. If we know each other better, we are more willing to listen to, and really hear, each other. (Chrona, 2022, p. 8)

What follows is an attempt to share how the conversations and efforts related to CASS and this research project have unfolded over time. This is intended to keep the story of this work in relationship to what has come before.

In the spring of 2022, the CASS First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Action Committee began exploring the important role of culture and ceremony at the annual CASS First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Gathering. They recognized the need to build understanding about processes and practices related to cultural protocol that were inclusive and honouring of the diversity of Indigenous peoples in Alberta. Some of the initial areas they highlighted included working with Elders (e.g., making requests, gifting) and flags for grand entry. They created an ad hoc committee (from the Action Committee) and discussed the importance of seeking ongoing guidance from Elders, being respectful of the uniqueness and diversity of Nations, and being inclusive of all Indigenous Peoples in Alberta. They talked also about sharing teachings with those attending the Gathering to highlight the significance of the various cultural practices being followed.

They continued conversations into the 2022-2023 school year and emphasized that building understanding about cultural protocol was rooted in establishing and sustaining respectful relationships with local Indigenous communities. They advised also that collective learning was needed for all involved in CASS, not only as it related to the annual First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Gathering. It is important to note that CASS is a legislatively recognized professional entity that “supports building system leadership excellence to ensure optimal learning for all students” (CASS, n.d.-f., p. 1). Part of CASS’ mandate is to support learning opportunities for system education leaders that address Alberta Education’s professional practice standards. The current research project grew from these initial conversations and the need for learning as identified by members of the CASS First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education

Action Committee. It is important to acknowledge the guidance and wisdom offered by the following Indigenous leaders:

- Staahsttayaaki, Dr. Genevieve Fox, Education Director, Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council;
- Lisa Cruickshank, Director, Teaching & Learning, Metis Education, Rupertsland Institute, Métis Centre of Excellence (affiliate of the Métis Nation of Alberta);
- Lori Pritchard, Education Director, Indigenous Education, Calgary Board of Education; and
- Dianne Desjarlais, Director, Métis Settlements Strategic Training Initiatives Society & Regional Coordinator for Indigenous Early Learning Childcare, Alberta Métis Settlements General Council.

Research Questions

It became evident that building collective understanding about cultural protocol was key to supporting respectful and reciprocal relationships for student success. In keeping with the guidance offered over time, this research project was envisioned and designed around two primary questions:

1. How do school authorities understand, honour, and learn about protocol in local Indigenous communities to support building reciprocal relationships focussed on strengthening education programs for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in Alberta?
2. What practices and guidance will support system education leaders in understanding, honouring, and learning about protocol in local Indigenous communities to support building reciprocal relationships focussed on strengthening education programs for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in Alberta?

Honouring the Distinctness and Diversity of Indigenous Peoples and Knowledge Systems

The [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP) and the [TRC](#) assert the distinct and diverse nature of Indigenous Peoples and knowledge systems. They affirm the right of Indigenous peoples to reclaim and practise their traditional ways past, present, and future.

Recognizing that the situation of Indigenous peoples varies from region to region and from country to country and that the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical and cultural backgrounds should be taken into consideration. ([United Nations](#), 2008, p. 7).

TRC Principle 6: All Canadians, as Treaty peoples, share responsibility for establishing and maintaining mutually respectful relationships.

TRC Principle 8: Supporting Aboriginal peoples’ cultural revitalization and integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, oral histories, laws, **protocols**, and connections to the land into the reconciliation process are essential. ([TRC](#), 2015c, p. 4)

As First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities access and revitalize their spirituality, cultures, languages, laws, and governance systems, and as non-Aboriginal Canadians increasingly come to understand Indigenous history within Canada, and to recognize and respect Indigenous approaches to establishing and maintaining respectful relationships, Canadians can work together to forge a **new covenant of reconciliation**. ([TRC](#), 2015b, p. 17)

The “new covenant of reconciliation” referenced in the TRC’s (2015b, p. 17) [final report](#) is akin to the spirit and intent of treaty, treaty relationships, Inuit land claims agreements, and Métis land agreements as discussed in the video: “Treaties and Agreements” ([CASS](#), 2022). Learning about and understanding the spirit and intent of Treaties and Agreements requires a lifelong commitment to learning alongside Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community ([CASS](#), 2022).

What the TRC described as a “new covenant of reconciliation” rests at the heart of this research study. It speaks to the spirit and intent of nation-to-nation relationships and the sacred nature of “a permanent living relationship for all generations” ([University of Saskatchewan](#), n.d.). It is within this “permanent living relationship” that cultural protocol rests. The spirit and intent of treaties and agreements is not captured in

written form but, rather, refers to the sacred nature of relationships that follow the natural laws of Indigenous peoples.

Steven Crowchild, Minor Chief, Tsuut'ina Nation Xakujaa-yina/Chief and Council shared the concept of treaty, Najuna Ats'ila hi, in the Tsuut'ina language. He explained that it translates into “the process of making relatives” ([CASS](#), 2023, 0:35).

These ideas—a new covenant of reconciliation, a permanent living relationship, and Najuna Ats'ila hi, the process of making relatives—point to ongoing, dynamic, reciprocal, balanced, and respectful relationships. It is within these dynamic and living processes that cultural protocol lives.

Indigenous knowledge thus embodies a web of relationships within a specific ecological context; contains linguistic categories, rules, and relationships unique to each knowledge system; has localized content and meaning; has established customs with respect to acquiring and sharing of knowledge (not all Indigenous peoples equally recognize their responsibilities); and implies responsibilities for possessing various kinds of knowledge. ([Battiste](#), 2005, p. 8)

Language is at the core of who we are as a people: our languages teach us about the world around us and how to relate with that world, language is an indigenous knowledge system, and contains knowledge on ethics and protocols. ([Makokis et al.](#), 2010, p. 5)

Holistic Lifelong Learning

It is essential to understand the distinctness and diversity of Indigenous peoples and the dynamic nature of relationships. It is important, also, to build understanding about holistic, lifelong learning for First Nations, Métis and Inuit ([Canadian Council on Learning](#), 2007).

Despite their diverse cultures, histories and geographies, First Nations, Inuit and Métis people share a vision of learning as a purposeful, holistic, lifelong process. This vision entails certain shared principles and values that shape and influence how they see themselves in relation to the world, and that form the foundation of their learning. ([Canadian Council on Learning](#), 2007, p. 5)

The [Canadian Council on Learning](#) (2007) worked to gather the wisdom and knowledge of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities from across Canada. Those involved were united in their commitment to improve educational outcomes for

Indigenous youth. They created Three Holistic Lifelong Learning Models (First Nations, Inuit and Métis, pp. 18–23) and identified “Key Attributes of Learning” (p. 5):

- Learning is holistic.
- Learning is a lifelong process.
- Learning is experiential in nature.
- Learning is rooted in [Indigenous] languages and cultures.
- Learning is spiritually oriented.
- Learning is a communal activity, involving family, community and Elders.
- Learning is an integration of [Indigenous] and Western knowledge.

A caution, always, is to refrain from making pan-Indigenous assumptions; i.e., assuming homogeneity across all Indigenous peoples. These ideas are shared in the spirit of highlighting some key attributes that have been identified by many First Nations, Métis and Inuit people working together in the service of advancing success for Indigenous students. They provide a beginning place from which to enter into relationship.

The [First Nations Education Steering Committee](#) in British Columbia has published the [First Peoples Principles of Learning](#). It was informed by Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and scholars. It is another example of a collective effort to increase education outcomes for Indigenous students.

The principles are as follows:

- Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.
- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one’s actions.
- Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.
- Learning recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge.
- Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.
- Learning involves patience and time.
- Learning requires exploration of one’s identity.
- Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations. ([First Nations Education Steering Committee](#), n.d.)

Acknowledging the distinct nature and diversity of Indigenous cultures, honouring the spirit and intent of treaties and agreements, and embodying the key attributes of

holistic lifelong learning are evident in the work of various Indigenous-lead organizations including [The Indigenous Education National Centre for Collaboration](#), the [Indigenous Knowledge & Wisdom Centre](#), and the [Indigenous Education National Centre for Collaboration with the First Nations University of Canada](#).

These examples are among many that show how cultural protocol lives within networks of relationships with places, languages, identities, and cultures. They show a connection to past, present, and future and underscore the life-long nature of learning. They reveal the need for Indigenous communities to reclaim and revitalize their knowledges, languages, and ways in the wake of the colonial violence and destruction. And, as so beautifully articulated by the Elders' Council of First Nations University of Canada, they “awaken” ([Indigenous Education National Centre for Collaboration](#), n.d.) the spirit and intent of treaties and agreements by calling us to give careful and considered thought to the importance of Indigenous knowledges.

We are all related. We are related to everything. Everything is alive. These concepts are embedded in the structure of our languages, languages that are verb based, relationship oriented. (Makokis et al., 2010, p. 1)

When making the time to connect with First Nation, Métis and Inuit it is important to learn about and respect cultural protocols. Communities have distinct protocols that can be understood through conversations with those in which a relationship is being established. Greater knowledge of protocols follows as relationships are strengthened. A relationship involves working, learning, and growing together. However, relationships are not exclusive to people. Making time within the educational setting includes supporting leaders and educators in building foundational knowledge so they are able to confidently weave knowledge and reconciliation into practice. ([CASS](#), n.d.-e)

Methodology

The CASS First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Action Committee highlighted the need to build collective understanding about cultural protocol. They emphasized that collective learning was needed for all involved in CASS. This is in keeping with CASS' role as a professional learning entity to build excellence in system leadership to ensure optimal learning for all students.

This research project involved a survey that was sent via email invitation to superintendents of all provincial school authorities (see Appendix A). The online survey *Sharing Our Learning About Cultural Protocol to Strengthen Relationships for Student Success* (see Appendix B) was open from May 23–June 12, 2024. The purpose of the survey was to learn about the work that is happening in school authorities to **understand, honour, and learn about protocol within local Indigenous communities to support success for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students**. This included practices and guidance that would support system education leaders as they work to establish and sustain respectful and reciprocal relationships with local Indigenous communities.

Superintendents were asked to delegate the survey to a system education leader who was involved in Indigenous Education and able to represent the work taking place within their school authority. They were invited to share a glimpse into their school authority's journey including, for example:

- their understanding of cultural protocol;
- the relationships they are building with local Indigenous communities;
- how, what, and from whom they are learning about cultural protocol;
- areas for growth;
- the steps they are taking to put their learning into action respectfully;
- the support and guidance they are offering within their district;
- guidance and advice they would offer others; and
- questions they have.

Participation in the survey was voluntary. Respondents were able to skip questions or withdraw at any time before selecting the submit button.

Forty school authorities responded to the survey across all CASS Zones.

Participants were invited to highlight aspects of their learning related to cultural protocol throughout the survey. They had opportunity, also, to share a story of

learning, offer guidance to others, and share any questions they might have. [A complete summary of survey results is provided in Appendix C.](#)

The following is a summary of the drop-down and multiple-choice questions to which participants were invited to reply:

- The CASS Zone in which your school authority is located;
- Your [the respondent's] position/designation;
- The number of **First Nations** and **Métis** communities located in proximity to your school authority;
- With how many of the **First Nation** and **Métis** communities located in proximity of your school authority have you begun establishing respectful relationships;
- With how many **Inuit** communities have you begun establishing a respectful relationship?;
- Who within your school authority has been involved in establishing a respect relationship with neighbouring **First Nations, urban First Nation** people/community, **Inuit** communities and/or **urban Inuit** people/community, **Métis** communities, **urban Métis** people/community, **Metis Settlements Council & Administration** and/or the **Otipemisiwak Métis Government**;
- How would you describe your relationship with neighbouring **First Nations, urban First Nation** people/community, **Inuit** communities and/or **urban Inuit** people/community **Métis** communities, **urban Métis** people/community, **Metis Settlements Council & Administration** and/or the **Otipemisiwak Métis Government** (*seed-present and emerging, sprout-growing and becoming, tree=rooted and evolving, not yet).

* Adapted from [Relationships, Indigenous Knowledge and Land, Pathways to Effective Leadership](#)

Open-ended questions were included in the survey as well. Participants were given opportunity to provide written responses to the following:

- What does cultural protocol mean to you (within your school authority)?
- Please include any information you are willing to share about your work/learning related to:
 - Acknowledging the Land Where We Gather;
 - Honouring Time and Knowledge
 - Honoraria
 - Gifting
 - Travel

- Other
 - Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers
 - Learning areas of expertise and protocol
 - Making requests
 - Prayers/blessings
 - Smudge
 - Ceremony
 - Elder helpers
 - Medicines
 - Naming
 - Language learning
 - Land learning
 - Story telling
 - Talking circle
 - Sharing circle
 - Other
 - Symbols of Respect in Schools/School Authority
 - Indigenous flags
 - Other
 - Events and Gatherings
 - Hosting
 - Food / hospitality
 - Conferences and gatherings
 - Cultural events (e.g., round dance, feast, pow wow, traditional dancers)
 - Other
- Share a story of learning from your school authority related to Cultural Protocol (e.g., how you have been learning about cultural protocol, areas for growth, cautionary tales, how you have changed your approach or practices over time).
- What guidance or advice would you offer other school authorities and CASS about how to understand, honour, and learn about cultural protocol when working with local Indigenous communities?

Online survey data were collected, summarized, and analyzed using charts and graphs for all scale questions. A thematic qualitative analysis was conducted for all open-ended questions.

I believe that Indigenous epistemology and ontology are based upon relationality. Our axiology and methodology are based upon maintaining relational accountability. With a deeper understanding of these concepts, I hope that you will come to see that research is a ceremony. The purpose of any ceremony is to build stronger relationships. (Wilson, 2008, p. 11)

So with all of these knots of being/relationships as our reality, we can go one step further and ask, “How can I find out more about this other being, or idea, or whatever you divide to call a particular knot?” The answer, which is our methodology, seems obvious—the more relationships between yourself and the other thing, the more fully you can comprehend it for and the greater your understanding becomes. Perhaps we can construct a new know (or uncover a previously invisible one) that will coalesce into a theory that describes the relationships that you share with the other. **So the methodology is simply the building of more relationships.** (Wilson, 2008, p. 79)

Key Findings

We can extend this thinking – of viewing objects as the relationships we share with them – on to how we see concepts and ideas. The concepts or ideas are not as important as the relationships that went into forming them. Again, an Indigenous epistemology has systems of knowledge built upon relationships between things, rather than on the things themselves. (Wilson, 2008, p. 74)

1. [School authorities are working to establish respectful relationships with local Indigenous communities, organizations, and people](#)
2. [School authorities involve multiple system and school-based leaders in establishing respectful relationships](#)
3. [School authorities describe most relationships as being in early stages of development](#)
4. [School authorities are engaging in multiple areas of learning related to cultural protocol](#)
 - a. [Acknowledging the land where we gather](#)
 - b. [Honouring time and knowledge](#)
 - c. [Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers](#)
 - d. [Symbols of respect in schools/school authorities](#)
 - e. [Events and gatherings](#)
5. [School authorities access various avenues of support to guide their learning related to cultural protocol](#)
6. [School authorities recognize cultural protocol to be dynamic](#)
7. [School authorities recognize the uniqueness and diversity of Indigenous peoples and communities](#)
8. [School authorities are committed to learning, adjusting, and enacting their learning to show respect and honour relationships](#)
9. [School authorities have stories of learning to share and heartfelt guidance to offer](#)
 - a. [Always ask, never assume](#)
 - b. [Establishing respectful and reciprocal relationships takes years, not months](#)
 - c. [Processes and practices within school authorities must be flexible](#)
 - d. [Honouring time and knowledge is a given and shows respect](#)
 - e. [Ongoing learning, support, and guidance are needed at every level of organization](#)
 - f. [Symbols of respect show relationships and commitment to learning](#)
 - g. [Visiting establishes and nurtures respectful relationships](#)

h. [Step into the work with an open heart and open mind](#)

* Adapted from [Relationships, Indigenous Knowledge and Land, Pathways to Effective Leadership](#)

School authorities are working to establish respectful relationships with local Indigenous communities, organizations, and people

The majority of participants indicated that they are working actively to establish respectful relationships with local Indigenous communities, organizations, and people. While a few reported not being located in proximity to a **First Nation**, many highlighted their work with **urban First Nations** people. Similarly, those who reported not living in proximity to **Métis** communities or territories identified a connection to **urban Métis** people/community, **Metis Settlements Council & Administration** and/or the **Otipemisiwak Métis Government** (including an affiliate, Rupertsland Institute). Fewer than half of participants identified beginning a relationship with an **Inuit** community and/or **urban Inuit** people/community.

Alberta is part of the Métis Homeland.

School authorities involve multiple system and school-based leaders in establishing respectful relationships

Most school authorities identified efforts to include both school and system-based leaders in establishing respectful relationships with local Indigenous communities and people. A range of positions or designations of those involved include: superintendents, system education leaders, service unit leaders, trustees, principals, teachers and school staff, and coordinators, consultants, facilitators, coaches, and liaisons. Almost half of participating school authorities highlighted the direct involvement of trustees in building relationships with **First Nations** and **Métis** and a few mentioned a connection between trustees and **Inuit**.

We work with Urban [First Nations people] but also have met with 3/5 Chiefs and Councils in the 5 years.

We have tried to reinforce that relationship building is central to reconciliation, and we focus on building relationships at all levels. We have especially sought to build opportunities to collaborate on shared learning opportunities with local First Nations and First Nations School Authorities.

School authorities describe most relationships as being in early stages of development

Most school authorities indicated that they are in early stages of development with establishing respectful relationships with local Indigenous peoples and communities. They characterized most of their relationships as a seed (present and emerging) or sprout (growing and becoming).^{*} Very few described their relationship as a tree (rooted and evolving). Many school authorities recognized that building and nurturing relationships requires a long-term commitment and takes years, not months. Some mentioned that they are building relationships with multiple communities and people and that the relationships vary. Most acknowledged that they have not yet begun building relationships with Inuit.

Given that there are 6 [First Nations], we vary in regards to the relationships, some are seeds, some are sprouts and some are trees, but we believe that it takes continuous work to maintain these relationships

It varies depending on the proximity of the group and the type of connections we have. With groups that we connect with to share learning opportunities, our relationships have sprouted. Education services agreements can either further or hinder relationships.

Forest with some, almost seed with one.

^{*} Adapted from [Relationships, Indigenous Knowledge and Land, Pathways to Effective Leadership](#)

School authorities are engaging in multiple areas of learning related to cultural protocol

Almost all school authorities indicated that they are committed to learning in each of the five areas identified in the survey including: acknowledge the land where we gather; honouring time and knowledge; Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers; symbols of respect in schools/school authorities; and, events and gatherings. Acknowledging the land has become a common practice in most school authorities at school, system, and board gatherings, events, and meetings. Honouring the time and knowledge of Elders and Knowledge Keepers is regarded as a given and a vital way of showing respect. Establishing respectful relationships with Elders and Knowledge Keepers by visiting together, learning their areas of expertise, (always) asking what protocol they accept, making requests, creating safe and hospitable spaces, and nurturing the relationships were all identified as imperative. School authorities shared

myriad symbols of respect in schools that demonstrate the strength of relationships and commitment to ongoing learning. Participating in local community gatherings and events as well as hosting and co-hosting within schools and school authorities are seen as essential for relationship building and school engagement for students.

Acknowledging the land where we gather

We are building relationships and are in communication with an advisory circle to revisit and update the land acknowledgement next year. The focus for many years has been to share the land acknowledgement exactly as written to reflect the wishes of the Elders and Knowledge Keepers who shared their knowledge to create it and to ensure that the words are not changed in a manner which minimizes its importance. Members of the division community are asked to share their personal commitment to the land and reconciliation when sharing the land acknowledgement and it is a division requirement that all staff are aware and able to share its significance.

We recently met with our Elder's Council to discuss the term "Dene" and changed it to "Denesuline". We are currently developing AP [administrative policy] on Land Acknowledgement and will consult with Elders here as well as the Athabasca Tribal Council.

We worked with Elders and Knowledge Keepers to learn why we acknowledge the land and then created a district land acknowledgement together. Since then we have been holding significant space in our district to teacher, staff, students and families why we acknowledge the land and engage/support them in the process of acknowledging the land.

Make sure people do their homework about where they are. Learn the traditional names of nations and places. Where are you really? It's important to learn, to show the effort. (Métis/Cree Knowledge Keeper Wapastim, Jason Bigcharles, East Prairie Metis Settlement, personal communication February 22, 2024)

Honouring time and knowledge

We purchase goods from Indigenous artisans [for gifts] whenever possible.

We have developed a framework for paying an honorarium, have developed a payroll process to assist with having honoraria available at the time of visit as opposed to waiting to process through payroll after the fact.

Just this year we implemented a process to be able to pay our Elders their Honoraria in cash ... We offer payment by cash (under \$500), cheque, and by EFT [electronic funds transfer]. We also have paid in advance of performances (such as our June 21st performance) so that the coordinator could pay her dancers in advance.

Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers

As we have learned, Indigenous learning is not linear, but rather cyclical. Instilling this worldview in our school community has been vital in establishing and continuing Indigenous Knowledge.

Learning from and working with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers is central to our work and is included in our Education Plan.

We absolutely value the relationships we have formed with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, and it is profoundly impactful to guide teaching and learning. We have tried to work directly with our key elders to help guide our efforts on Indigenization, building relationships with Indigenous communities, and directly supporting professional learning and student learning. We have found it helpful to ensure that our work with key Elders and Knowledge Keepers is continuous and not just single events.

Our work varies depending on the need, request, and activity. We are working diligently to rebuild trust and relationships with Elders and Knowledge Keepers in the surrounding nations and community of Treaty [number] ... The Indigenous Learning team consults with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members as often as we can and are committed to the concept of "Nothing about us without us."

Symbols of respect in schools/school authorities

Meaningful artwork and artifacts are displayed in our schools, gifted by Indigenous helpers and artisans who have presented or been a part of learning in our schools.

All schools have a land acknowledgement poster, Treaty, Métis and Inuit flags, and TRC Commitment to Action at the entry of their schools.

Treaty 6 and Metis flags displayed at all sites; created & displayed Land Acknowledgment for all sites; ceremonial spaces at schools with high Indigenous enrollment; medicine gardens.

We have art from a local artist displayed in every school. We have a tribute to Terry Fox's Métis Heritage in every school. Additionally, schools have other Indigenous art pieces throughout the division.

We use opportunities to share symbols of respect, in conjunction with our local Indigenous community partners. Some of these opportunities are portraying local Indigenous arts or ensuring our students and staff are able to visit local culturally meaningful symbols or events. We have also planned flag raisings in some of our schools based in conjunction with the local Indigenous community.

Events and gatherings

Over time, we have hosted two powwows, a round dance, a pipe ceremony, and numerous visits from traditional dancers. These events have introduced us to the healing intention embedded in the dances and deepened our understanding of the themes of wahkohtowin (kinship) and kisik (walking together). Through these cultural exchanges, we have come to appreciate the significance of hospitality and the pivotal role of an elder helper in fostering a culture of respect and understanding. During these events, special care is taken to cater to the elders, ensuring their comfort and valuing their knowledge. This practice underscores our commitment to honouring the wisdom and experience of Indigenous elders, which is crucial for building respectful and meaningful relationships. The insights gained from these gatherings have significantly contributed to our collective understanding and respect for Indigenous traditions, helping to create a more inclusive and appreciative community environment.

[Hosting events and gatherings are] crucial for relationship building and school engagement. retention and attendance.

We have had professional learning conferences focused on Indigenization, and it is important to us that our neighbouring First Nations School authorities are invited to these events. In terms of cultural events, we often host different Indigenous arts or dance within our schools. We also encourage and share opportunities for students and staff to participate in cultural events hosted by local Indigenous groups. It is important that we participate in what our Indigenous partners host, not just visits to our schools.

School authorities access various avenues of support to guide their learning related to cultural protocol

All school authorities indicated that they are seeking learning related to cultural protocol. Many identified support that is available within their school authority. Those who reported not having designated roles or positions reach out to other provincial school authorities, First Nation education authorities, First Nation Band Council & Band Managers, Metis Settlements Council & Administration, Otipemisiwak Métis Government (including an affiliate, Rupertsland Institute), community members, families, and local organizations.

School authorities recognize cultural protocol to be dynamic

Participants were invited to share the meaning of cultural protocol within their school authority. They characterized cultural protocol as ‘living in relationship’. This involves the dynamic nature of relationships through which understanding of cultural protocol is constantly evolving. They highlighted an underlying sense of responsibility as well. In short, they described a cyclical the process of learning, adjusting, and enacting what they learn as a way of honouring relationships and showing respect. Cultural protocol can only be understood locally and must be kept in relationship to people and place (i.e., cannot be extracted from or taken out of the relationship). Protocol lives within distinct and diverse Indigenous knowledge systems, places, practices, beliefs, languages, traditions, and natural laws or way of life.

Following cultural guidelines, practices, and requirements for ceremony, interaction, and ways of knowing and being.

Protocols refer to the guidelines, manners, etiquettes and rules that are in place to keep Indigenous ways of being, belonging, doing and knowing at the forefront in a respectful way. Honouring protocols is a first step to establishing good relations. It acknowledges that time has been spent learning Indigenous protocols and recognizing their importance.

Cultural protocol, as shared by the Knowledge Keepers, means respect. The essence of offering tobacco in Cree roughly translates to leading with respect. The throughline of respect should be paramount in all cultural protocols.

It involves an understanding that Indigenous people have always held wisdom and knowledge. Cultural protocol includes the values, customs and practices of Indigenous peoples.

We honour traditional practices with guidance from Elders while adapting to contemporary expressions of Indigenous identities, especially in urban settings. Recognizing Indigenous cultures as living and dynamic, we continuously learn and adapt, building respectful partnerships with Indigenous organizations.

We don't have a "story" to share but we have focused on establishing reciprocal relationships with Indigenous community members, including Elder and Knowledge Keepers from many nations. Through these relationships, we have learned how not to extract and then appropriate the knowledge that is shared with us. We must always identify who shared teachings with us and where they come from. This focus has brought us closer in our relationships and honours the individual and their knowledge.

It is important to look at protocol as contractual and relationship building. We discuss the importance of expressing from the heart instead of the "right" way to do things.

Approaching things in a respectful way, honoring those that we are learning with and from.

We are all related. We are related to everything. Everything is alive. These concepts are embedded in the structure of our languages, languages that are verb based, relationship oriented. (Makokis, 2010, p. 1)

Protocol is understanding. It is a way of life. It is not something that is written down. Understanding comes from relationship. Visit, visit, visit. That's how you build understanding, trust, and respect. (Kainai Elder Saa'kokoto, Randy Bottle, personal communication, March 6, 2024)

School authorities recognize the uniqueness and diversity of Indigenous peoples and communities

Participants identified the uniqueness and diversity of the Indigenous peoples and communities located within proximity of their school authority and/or with whom they are establishing respectful relationships. They commented repeatedly about the complexity and distinct nature of Indigenous knowledge systems and the importance of not making pan-Indigenous assumptions. They recognized that working to establish respectful relationships with a range of Indigenous peoples and communities requires careful and considered action and effort. They mentioned also how much more work

is ahead of them in this regard and the importance of long-term commitment and a willingness to go slowly.

Cultural protocol involves a deep respect and recognition of traditional customs and guidelines for respectful engagement. It involves an understanding that Indigenous people have always held wisdom and knowledge. This may include: Respect for Elders and Knowledge Keepers: Seeking guidance from respected community members. Acknowledgment of Land and Territory: Recognizing traditional lands and territories. Permission and Consent: Obtaining consent for sharing or using cultural practices. Reciprocity and Relationship Building: Building genuine, respectful relationships. Sacred Practices and Ceremonies: Following specific protocols for sacred activities. Cultural Sensitivity and Awareness: Being aware and respectful of cultural beliefs and values. Language and Terminology: Using appropriate and respectful language. Following these protocols honors traditions, respects sovereignty, and supports cultural heritage preservation. We have a lot of learning to do with and alongside diverse Nations.

To honour Indigenous worldviews of doing, being and knowing.

School authorities are committed to learning, adjusting, and enacting their learning to show respect and honour relationships

It was evident from survey responses that school authorities understand the need for ongoing learning. They acknowledged that there is always room for growth. Many identified the need to embed their learning into district practices and processes in ways that are flexible (i.e., in keeping with the ongoing nature of learning related to cultural protocol). They talked about the importance of empowering, supporting, and guiding staff in all parts of the organization and revealed being in very different stages in that regard. Most participants emphasized the importance of revisiting practices to incorporate new learning.

We have very loose frameworks but would prefer that they stay as frameworks in order to be able to be fluid and flexible. Entrenching some of these ideas into a western framework poses some frustration and counter intuition to these understandings. We are trying to get our staff to understand parameters, but be flexible to address specific situations as they need to.

We have utilized some of the excellent cultural protocol resources developed around the province. Among them are the [CASS Learning Guide - A Virtual Circle with Elders](#)

and the [CBE Indigenous Education Cultural Protocols](#). We have also utilized the [ATA Stepping Stones](#) for information on protocols.

As we learn and evolve in our knowledge and relationships, we adjust as required.

We make changes when we learn or take new actions (e.g. when we purchased flags for all schools, we included a flag protocol in our doc).

Smudge needed to be consented to in writing, which has been changed to celebrating and educating about it as a sacred ceremony in a newsletter.

As we learn more, we do better.

We are in the process of changing/updating our admin procedure for Smudge in schools as the language and terms used were no longer accurate or were offensive (Aboriginal etc.) and safety guidelines raised inappropriate concerns (former document require Smudge to only happen in 1 designated spot in each school which would be reported to the operations department, a fire extinguisher need to be present within an arm's length and visible etc.).

School authorities have stories of learning to share and heartfelt guidance to offer

Most school authorities shared a story of learning and/or offered guidance to others about how to understand, honour, and learn about cultural protocol. Key messages that surfaced from their stories and advice point to *how* to establish and nurture respectful relationships and position oneself (and one's school authority) in relationship to local Indigenous peoples and community. Participants did not provide answers about what protocol to offer to whom and for what, recognizing that this is not possible. Instead, they emphasized:

- Always ask, never assume
- Establishing respectful and reciprocal relationships takes years, not months
- Processes and practices within school authorities must be flexible
- Honouring time and knowledge is a given and shows respect
- Ongoing learning, support, and guidance are needed at every level of organization
- Symbols of respect show relationships and commitment to learning
- Visiting establishes and nurtures respectful relationships
- Step into the work with an open heart and open mind

Always ask, never assume

Participants acknowledged the complexity, diversity, and uniqueness of Indigenous knowledge systems and ways. In keeping with this acknowledgement, they identified how important it is to ask local Indigenous communities who they recognize as Elders and/or Knowledge Keepers. It is vital also to establish a relationship with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers and learn their areas of expertise (or seek guidance from others). Their knowledge varies greatly and is not identical from person to person. Participants highlighted repeatedly how vital it is to ask (and keep asking over time), “What protocol do you accept?” and never make assumptions. In short, they pointed to the importance of open, direct, and respectful conversation. Cultural ways are always in motion and, therefore, may shift and change over time. In the process of asking, they said it is important to expect a range of responses. It is Important to ask respectfully, listen, learn, adjust, and act on what has been learned. Participants noted that Elders respond to an open heart and will teach us when we make mistakes.

Do not be scared. Elders/Knowledge Holders are gentle and will guide you. Be respectful.

When an elder or knowledge keeper is invited to one of our sites, we ask what protocol they would like to receive.

Understand it is a journey.

Listen, listen, listen.

We have to have open and transparent conversation. Every Elder and knowledge keeper we've worked with invites our questions. We cannot be afraid to learn. We cannot assume that it is one size fits all. From monetary compensation to protocol, their expectations and practices are all a little different and that's okay. It is also more than okay to respectfully ask up front what their protocol or expectations are. Open the dialogue - when we know better we do better.

School authorities and CASS should prioritize understanding and honouring the diverse cultural protocols of Indigenous communities. Respecting these protocols involves carefully listening to and following the specific guidelines provided by Indigenous leaders and guests. It's essential to approach interactions humbly, recognizing that each community has its own practices and values. Encourage active engagement with these protocols among all school community members, viewing mistakes as learning opportunities.



Always ask, again and again. Never make assumptions. Practices are always changing. Building of relationship happens when you are asking, learning, and listening. Asking goes a long way in gaining respect from Elders. Be as direct as possible (e.g., What protocol do you accept?). There are differences from Elder to Elder, Knowledge Keeper to Knowledge Keeper; not only nation to nation, but even within nations. Elders are returning to traditional teachings and ways over time and changing their ceremonial practices. Be specific about the request you are making so Elders and Knowledge Keepers know what you are asking (e.g., if an Elder accepts cloth as protocol, each colour holds different meaning). (Wapastim, Jason Bigcharles, Métis/Cree Knowledge Keeper, East Prairie Metis Settlement, personal communication, February 22, 2024)

When reaching out to these communities, ask what protocol they would like to see, what protocol they accept. Never assume, always ask. Before we engage, we reach out, inquire, ask about whether they would welcome us to the community, learn their customs, how to make the request. We want to be respectful. We ask, what would you like to see? When you ask, it opens boundaries and when that happens, it is very respectful. (Dianne Desjarlais, Director, Métis Settlements Strategic Training Initiatives Society & Regional Coordinator for Indigenous Early Learning Childcare, Alberta Métis Settlements General Council, personal communication, May 8, 2024)

Establishing respectful and reciprocal relationships takes years, not months

School authorities recognized that establishing respectful and reciprocal relationships with Indigenous peoples and community requires long-term commitment and takes years, not months. This may bump up against expectations and timelines (and, even funding cycles) within current systems and requires an adjustment in mindsets and approaches. Honouring relationships requires shifting thinking and approaches. There was recognition also that spending time together aside from scheduled work is necessary to honour and nurture the relationship. It is important to move slowly to build trust and respect. Only when a trusting relationship begins will the work unfold together. Respectful and reciprocal relationships are at the heart of everything.

Relationships with local Indigenous communities take time and sincerity. We have found it most effective when we have connected with Indigenous communities

informally and have taken strides to attend events and seek to build relationships in those communities.

Committing to spending time together aside from scheduled work together to honour the relationship.

We have spent over 20 years of developing relations with the local Indigenous community members, Knowledge Keepers, and Elders. Our learning in this area has grown and continues to grow.

Relationship is key but can be challenging at times to achieve. It requires perseverance and an open mind, and the willingness to learn.

Listen attentively, be patient/breathe take one step at a time, clear and concise communication, understand, respect and honour differences between indigenous and non-indigenous ways of knowing.

Relationships are key for building trust and community learning. Relationship building is an active process, and requires visiting – listening, sharing and helping while visiting. Once relationships are established with respect and protocols are in place, the sharing of oral traditions, the teachings, and stories in the language. This knowledge must be held locally and used in context at the time of learning in direct relationship. (Makokis et al., 2010, p. 46)

It all goes back to building relationship. Relationships are at the heart of how we are all connected. There are different protocols nation to nation and within nations. Protocol does change for various contexts. There are different protocols that take place and are offered for different situations, events, ceremony, and relationships which create safe spaces. It is important to not generalize the term. It is okay to be direct, to ask. It is important to have clear communication, to know the purpose and intent of the request. It is one thing to learn, another to make a request, then there are the actions beyond the request to nurture the relationship. (Crystal Clark, Indigenous Education Consultant, of Nehiwayak/Denesuline and Métis ancestry, personal communication, February 18, 2024)

Processes and practices within school authorities must be flexible

Participants pointed repeatedly to the importance of embedding new learning into organizational processes and practices and, also, making adjustments over time. Regular review of these practices was highlighted as essential. Learning with and from

Indigenous peoples and community requires organizations to be flexible and nimble and to be willing to shift mindsets and ways of doing things. In short, participants advised that organizations must learn to adjust and be responsive and to expect changes over time; reflecting an ethos of, ‘as we learn, we adjust and do better.’ It is important to note that participants highlighted that relationships can be damaged with rigidity in practices and policies and without a commitment to ongoing learning.

Working with numerous members of the Indigenous community is important. If a district is planning to create a cultural protocols doc then they must be open to reviewing policies that might be in conflict and then update them to support the protocols.

We have made several adjustments and exceptions to division protocol in order to respect and honour the time and knowledge of Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

Honouring time and knowledge is a given and shows respect

Participants indicated that honouring Elders’ and Knowledge Keepers’ time and knowledge is essential. It is a way of showing respect and expressing gratitude for the expertise and gifts that are shared. There is a range of reasons for honouring time and knowledge (e.g., attending conferences, offering teachings, presenting, sharing knowledge, facilitation, ceremony, blessings). Ways of honouring time and knowledge include for example, protocol, gifting, honoraria, travel, and hosting. It is important to acknowledge the preparation or follow up time required of Elders and Knowledge Keepers also. For example, some ceremonial practices involve more than what takes place on the day of the ceremony.

Participants shared various processes and practices within their school authority. The key is that those processes and practices are established in relationship with Indigenous peoples and community and are adjusted over time with new learning. Respondents identified the importance of offering gifts and honoraria on the same day as the visit (or as close to the day as possible) and in keeping with the preferences of the Elder or Knowledge Keeper. A range of payment options for honoraria were mentioned including payment modalities. This may involve removing barriers depending on specific circumstances (e.g., shifting payroll to prepare payment in advance, no banking information, not comfortable sharing SIN or banking information, specific and personal financial implications). A range of appropriate gifts were mentioned in addition to honoraria and covering travel expenses (e.g., student-made gifts, local medicines, gifts from local Indigenous artisans, gifts from Indigenous-owned businesses, tea, jams, scarves, blankets). Following these practices may require

an adjustment in financial and other processes within school authorities while balancing accountabilities and reporting expectations.

Additionally, participants highlighted that the timing of offering protocol (after learning what protocol the Elder or Knowledge Keeper accepts) is something that is important to talk about openly with the Elder or Knowledge Keeper. This was noted as important particularly when requests are made from a distance.

Piikani Elder, Dr. Reg Crowshoe, has cautioned us to be careful about the extraction of knowledge, to always keep it in relationship, to keep working with those who are offering the teaching, all the way along. (Lori Pritchard, Education Director, Indigenous Education, Calgary Board of Education, personal communication, March 8, 2024)

Ongoing learning, support, and guidance are needed at every level of organization

It is important to establish that ongoing learning, support, and guidance are required at every level of the organization as respectful relationships are established and sustained. This may involve empowering staff to develop relationships with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, teaching them how to be respectful, increasing staff comfort with particular practices, offering teachings about why particular practices are important, and creating familiarity with established guidelines and expectations. Participants also pointed to how important it is to share stories of learning within their school authorities and, also, between and among school authorities. Developing provincial networks of support was identified as crucial as well as seeking and supporting ongoing learning opportunities within and beyond the school authority. The ethos of ‘nothing about us without us’ was shared by participants, pointing to the importance of learning with and from Indigenous peoples and not leaving the burden of the work solely on their shoulders. Rather, Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators and leaders working side by side was highlighted as essential.

We provide ongoing professional development to build teacher and administrator capacity in offering protocol and honoring time and knowledge with the Knowledge Keepers and Elders they work with.

Crucial to have Indigenous educators leading the work with the support of a community Advisory Circle.

We are continually working to de-silo the involvement of elders and knowledge keepers in all of the schools we operate, working to develop the capacity of school

based leaders and teachers to appropriately reach out to elders and knowledge keepers in order to enhance the various learning opportunities for staff and students. We work to be the 'bottom hands' to facilitate these opportunities rather than taking on the full responsibility to 'place' elders in schools. We empower staff by teaching them how to appropriately ask for elder/knowledge keeper support, we provide various protocol, tobacco, broadcloth, blankets and gifts but really work to ensure that staff are developing the relationships.

An openness to attend events within the community. Go to the people instead of always trying to have them come to us.

Relationships are critical to gain trust and understanding. School staff must be willing to meet within reserve communities and "go to them" to learn.

The “ethical space” is formed when two societies, with disparate worldviews, are poised to engage each other. It is the thought about diverse societies and the space in between them that contributes to the development of a framework for dialogue between human communities. The ethical space of engagement proposes a framework as a way of examining the diversity and positioning of Indigenous peoples and Western society in the pursuit of a relevant discussion. (Ermine, 2007, p. 193)

Symbols of respect show relationships and commitment to learning

School authorities indicated that the symbols of respect that are displayed within schools and school authorities highlight existing relationships and their collective commitment to learning. The symbols show relationships to land, people, and learning. They shared myriad examples including: land acknowledgement; flags; gifts received from local Indigenous peoples and community (e.g., eagle staff, tipi); maps; students’ homeland and languages; local Indigenous artwork, artifacts, symbols, and languages; outdoor learning spaces; Indigenous plant and medicine gardens; evidence of ongoing learning; commitments to action; and, images of Indigenous leaders and contributions. Participants mentioned the importance of these symbols as a way of conveying safety, welcome, and belonging to Indigenous students and families.

Many cultural protocols are nuanced based on different Indigenous groups, and within Indigenous groups, as well. We have learnt to avoid making pan-Indigenous assumptions but also that symbols of respect require a great deal of consultation and consideration, particularly with naming ceremonies and official land acknowledgements. Official land acknowledgements or flag raisings can be

contentious where there are overlapping territories of Indigenous groups. Our land acknowledgments should be meaningful and inclusive.

Symbols are guideposts to recognize where schools are on the journey of relationship.

Treaty and Metis flags were blessed by Elders, part of a pipe ceremony with trustees, administrators and division leaders, and then gifted to each school and the division office as part of an in-depth flag ceremony. The ceremony included speeches from representatives of Treaties 6 and 7, as well as a Metis leader, our Board Chair and Superintendent. A meal was shared by over 100 participants where all were given the opportunity to share perspectives around the importance of displaying these flags in our schools and division office.

Symbols are integral to authentically representing our Indigenous students in our school system. To represent Indigeneity in our school division, schools have hung both the Treaty 6 flag and the Metis flags in their building atriums. In addition to representing the flags of students' respective territories and homelands. Indigenous art, languages, and mapping can be found adorning the walls of school hallways.

Visiting establishes and nurtures respectful relationships

Gathering together to establish and nurture relationships rests at the heart of everything. The notion of 'visiting' as a way of being in relationship was emphasized repeatedly. It is in relationship, to one another, ideas, and the natural world that trust and respect are established and understanding and learning take place. Respondents identified a plethora of learning opportunities in which they are involved in hosting, co-hosting, and/or attending. Learning about and participating in what the local community is offering and making the effort to travel to local communities are ways of demonstrating respect. Learning with and from Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community members is key. It is in coming together that trust and respect develop, and relationships are strengthened.

Relationships come first no matter what. They come before business and they must be continually nurtured both inside and outside of the work. Always consult the community, honour the knowledge with learning protocol ahead of time, showing that you value the knowledge and support by appropriately compensating guests and pre-teach respect and protocol to administrators, staff, and students

Understanding reciprocity and nuance deeply in such a way as to foster respectful relationships.

Relationships must be nurtured. It is important to reach out to individuals at times when you do not need anything, but your purpose is to give to them, to build and nurture the relationship.

It is vital to build and maintain relationships with Indigenous people, Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Indigenous organizations in your area. It is important to go to them and meet them at their places. This may include going to their band office, going to their gatherings, going to their ceremonies (after asking of course).

You have to sit, listen and visit with the Indigenous communities to build a relationship with the communities that are within your school division.

We need to start building from the foundation of two systems understanding each other. Once we can build that foundation, then the first thing we should start working towards is the concept of trust and respect. (Reg Crowshoe, [Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership](#), 2020, 1:25)

I have been taught by Siksika Elder Miiksika'am, Dr. Clarence Wolfleg, that the concept of visiting is profound, it has a whole worldview attached to it. (Lori Pritchard, Education Director, Indigenous Education, Calgary Board of Education, personal communication, March 8, 2024)

Step into the work with an open heart and open mind

Participants acknowledged that some hesitate to step into this work for fear of offending, being disrespectful, or doing the wrong thing. Some admitted that they used to think someone else should do the work for them. Their advice is to step beyond fear and into the work with an open heart and open mind. They emphasized that each one of us has a place in this work (i.e., Indigenous and non-Indigenous) and it is up to us to make an effort to learn and put our learning into action. Entering into this work with humility and openness to learning (and letting go of the need to have the answers ahead of time) are critical. In short, participants advised: step beyond your fear, be respectful always, ask, listen, be humble, learn from your mistakes, and keep getting better.

For many schools and school authorities, access to elders and knowledge keepers is challenging. Do not let that stop the work. Many of us have parents who are able to guide and support our work. Get to know them. Build relationships with them. They are almost always honoured to be asked for ideas and ways in which we can do the work that needs to be done in our schools / systems.

LISTEN! and be humble

Don't be afraid, approaching things with an open heart and open mind and a willingness to learn will rarely get you in trouble.

Go slow. Do not assume. Be humble. Relationship is formed one word and action at a time.

The best advice we have received in this role/area is to go slow to build good relationships based on mutual understanding, to ask questions when you have them, and to not presume that your identified need or solution is the one that others are looking for or require.

Many educators still feel hesitant in saying or doing something wrong that could be unintentionally offensive or disrespectful to the Indigenous Culture. This hesitation can in fact be paralyzing to the educator from achieving their own deeper learning but it can also be paralyzing in moving the work forward as a collective group. However, when we are vulnerable enough to acknowledge what we don't know or feel confident in, and have a genuine desire to understand and learn we are able to approach our work with humility and empathy.

By approaching this work with an open heart and willingness to learn, educators can create more equitable and respectful learning environments. This, in turn, benefits all students, fostering a more inclusive and compassionate community.

Support for Learning for Cultural Protocol

There are myriad resources and websites available to support learning as it relates to cultural protocol. While what follows is by no means exhaustive, it includes what was shared by participants and highlights some of what might be of interest to school authorities. These include:

Alberta Professional Learning Consortium (2024). *Empowering the Spirit – Educational Resources to Support Reconciliation*.

<https://empoweringthespirit.ca>

Alberta School Boards Association. (n.d.). *Seeking Knowledge – ASBA Indigenous Insights Series*. <https://vimeo.com/showcase/5545531/video/298200428>

Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association. (n.d.). *Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association*. <https://anfca.com>

Alberta Professional Learning Consortium (2024). *Indigenous Culture Based Learning*. <https://indigenousculturebasedlearning.ca>

Alberta Teachers' Association. (n.d.-a). *Elder protocol (Stepping Stones 7)*. <https://legacy.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For%20Members/ProfessionalDevelopment/Walking%20Together/PD-WT-16g%20-%20Elder%20Protocol.pdf>

Note. The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) is reviewing this document and creating additional resources for educators related to protocol. Please check <https://indigenousculturebasedlearning.ca> for updates.

Alberta Teachers' Association. (n.d.-b). *Indigenous education and walking together*. <https://teachers.ab.ca/professional-development/indigenous-education-and-walking-together>

Anishnawbe Health Toronto. (2000). *Approaching a traditional healer elder or medicine person*. <https://aht.ca/traditional-teachings-new/approaching-a-traditional-healer-elder-or-medicine-person/>

BCcampus Open Publishing. (n.d.). *Respecting Protocols*. <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationcurriculumdevelopers/chapter/respecting-protocols>

Fort McMurray Public Schools. (2024). *Guidelines to First Nation, Métis and Inuit elders and knowledge keepers in schools.*

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Y3ltIXGUC9DWpYRmgGuiMasA1Fj-7L9M/view>

Indigenous Education National Centre for Collaboration. (n.d.). *Introduction to the knowledge space.* <https://www.nccie.ca/knowledge-space/introduction/>

Indigenous Knowledge & Wisdom Centre. (n.d.). *Stories, Wisdom, Knowledge, Culture.* <https://www.ikwc.org>

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. (n.d.). *About Canadian Inuit.* <https://www.itk.ca/about-canadian-inuit/>

Lloydminster Public School Division. (2023). *Administrative procedure 168: Smudging.* <https://www.lpsd.ca/about-us/administrative-procedures-new/8854>

Métis Nation of Alberta [Otipemisiwak Métis Government]. (n.d.). *Métis Nation of Alberta.* <https://albertametis.com/>

Metis Settlements General Council. (n.d.). *Metis Settlements General Council.* <https://www.msgc.ca/>

Rupertsland Institute. (n.d.). *Welcome to Rupertsland Centre for Teaching and Learning.* <https://www.rupertsland.org/teaching-learning/>

University of Alberta. (n.d.). *Indigenous Protocols.* <https://guides.library.ualberta.ca/indigenous-research/indigenous-data-sovereignty/indigenous-protocols>

University of Alberta. (n.d.). *Indigenizing and Decolonizing Teaching and Learning: Land Acknowledgements.* <https://www.ualberta.ca/en/centre-for-teaching-and-learning/teaching-support/indigenization/land-acknowledgements.html#:~:text=“The%20University%20of%20Alberta%20respectfully,whose%20histories%2C%20languages%2C%20and%20cultures>

Conclusion

It is evident that school authorities throughout the province are taking steps to build respectful relationships with Indigenous people and community. While some have identified the challenge of not being in proximity to First Nations and Metis settlements, most detailed efforts to reach out to local Indigenous people, families, and organizations. However, these relationships are for the most part in early stages. Participants identified the importance of moving forward with great care given the legacy of colonial violence and devastation in Canada. They recognized the fragility of relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and the need for long-term commitment to action and learning.

As former Chief of Cowessess First Nation Cadmus Delorme has said, “We all inherited this. Nobody today created residential schools, nobody today created the Indian Act, nobody today created the Sixties Scoop” (Delorme, 2024). His sentiment was reflected in the responses in this study. While fear of doing the wrong thing or causing further harm is real, people are increasingly accepting responsibility for stepping up. Participants acknowledged that they are moving beyond “waiting for someone else” to do the work for them or seeing the work resting solely on the shoulders of Indigenous people and community. Rather, participants see that non-Indigenous people have a place in this work, and that their place is beside Indigenous people and community.

The implications of this are profound. Participants indicated that they know the work of establishing and sustaining respectful relationships requires long-term commitment and must unfold slowly and with considered and careful action. That commitment includes listening, humility, openness to learning, sincere care for young people, willingness to adjust ways of doing things within school authorities, always asking (never assuming), and admitting when mistakes are made and committing to doing better. It is these efforts that will create equitable conditions for optimal learning for Indigenous youth and Indigenous education for the benefit of all students. They will demonstrate as well, to Indigenous youth, families, and communities a commitment to reconciliation.

One of the striking responses from school authorities was the recognition that cultural protocol is not something that can be understood or determined outside of relationship. Instead, participants had a sense that cultural protocol is dynamic and lives within complex, sophisticated, diverse, and distinct natural laws, languages, and ways within Indigenous communities. An important finding is that people view cultural protocol as ever changing and evolving and as being understood only in

relationship with Indigenous people and community. There was recognition among respondents that guidance can be offered to school authorities about how to establish respectful relationships. This is very different, however, from creating a set of rules for the province about cultural protocol. In keeping with this insight and as indicated in the body of the report, participants emphasized key tenets for relationship building:

- Always ask, never assume
- Establishing respectful and reciprocal relationships takes years, not months
- Processes and practices within school authorities must be flexible
- Honouring time and knowledge is a given and shows respect
- Ongoing learning, support, and guidance are needed at every level of organization
- Symbols of respect show relationships and commitment to learning
- Visiting establishes and nurtures respectful relationships
- Step into the work with an open heart and open mind


In addition to committing to ongoing learning within organizations, participants pointed to the importance of developing provincial networks of support for Indigenous education. They identified as vital, seeking and supporting ongoing learning opportunities beyond the school authority.

“Where are the Indigenous thinkers at tables where decisions are being made? Not trying to influence the decision makers but being the decision makers.” (Piikani Elder Leonard Bastien, personal communication, September 8, 2020)

Additionally, some respondents indicated that they had difficulty filling positions with Indigenous people and in Indigenous education within their school authorities. It would be important to understand and identify, directly from Indigenous people, what the reasons for this might be and what barriers exist. This might build on the research completed by the ATA and CASS (2022): [Report on Indigenous Teachers and Leaders in Alberta’s Public School System](#).

In closing, we return to Wilson’s (2008) teachings about “relational accountability” (p. 71).

Writing ideas down fixes them as objects that can be taken out of context of time and relationship. As fixed objects, ideas lose their ability to grow and change, as those who hold relations with the ideas grow and change themselves. They lose the relational accountability. (Wilson, 2008, p. 123)



Wilson (2008) has emphasized that what matters more than ideas and concepts is our relationship to an idea or concept (p. 177). It seems a fitting way to close, then, by considering how each of us, from wherever we stand in relation to this work, holds responsibility. May we each treat with great care what we learn as we establish and nurture respectful relationships with one another, the natural world, and ideas. And may we work each day to strengthen those relationships so that we, collectively, create equitable conditions for optimal student and staff learning.

Reciprocity is connected to responsibility ... This means that as each of us learns, we give back by helping others learn. (Chrona, 2022, p. 133)

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Appendix A: Complete Summary of Survey Results from School Authorities

Forty school authorities (n = 40) responded to the survey. The number of responses for each question is indicated throughout Appendix A. Each figure is highlighted as follows to indicate the relative percentage of supporting responses:

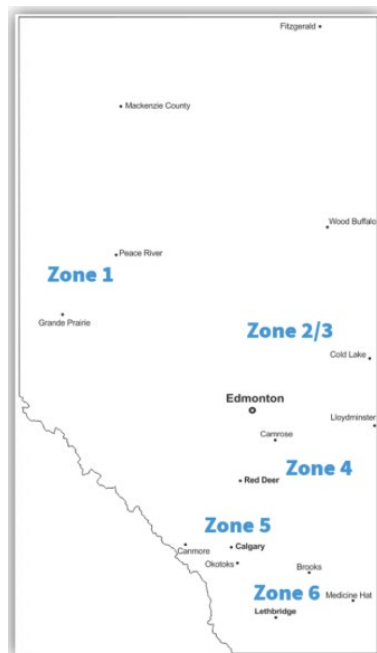
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50–100	

Participation in Survey by Zone (n = 40)

Respondents were asked to identify the location of their school authority by CASS Zone. (see Figure 1). CASS Zones are organized into five geographical areas:

- Zone 1 – North,
- Zone 2/3 - North Central,
- Zone 4 – Central,
- Zone 5 - South Central, and
- Zone 6 – South.

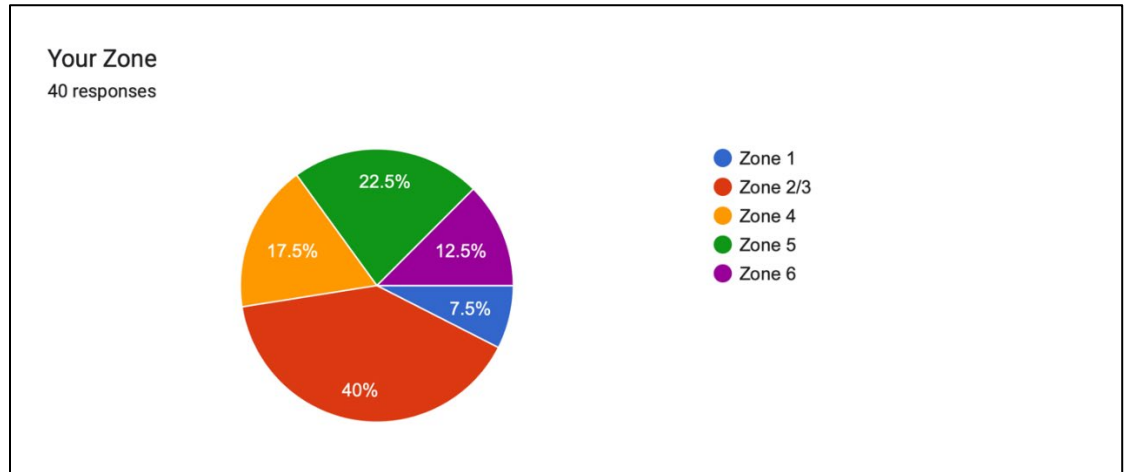
Figure 1. Map of CASS Zones



Note. From College of Alberta School Superintendents. (n.d.-b). <https://cass.ab.ca/about-cass/cass-zones/>

Respondents represented school authorities across all CASS Zones. Participation from each Zone ranged from 7.5 (Zone 1) to 40% (Zone 2/3). See Figure 2.

Figure 2. Participation in Survey by CASS Zone



Position or Designation of Survey Respondents (n = 40)

Respondents were asked to identify their position or designation. Results indicated that they held various system and school-based roles including: superintendent, deputy superintendent, assistant/associate superintendent, director, principal, manager/coordinator, and teacher/facilitator/learning leader. The majority held system leadership roles. See Table 1.

Table 1. Position or Designation of Those Responding to the Survey on Behalf of Their School Authority

Position or designation	Count	%	Responses
Superintendent	8	20	40
Deputy Superintendent	4	10	
Assistant/Associate Superintendent	10	25	
Director	8	20	
Manager/Coordinator	5	12.5	
Principal	2	5	
Teacher/Facilitator/Learning Leader	3	7.5	

Number of Neighbouring First Nations (n = 40)

Participants were asked to identify how many **First Nation** communities are located in proximity to their school authority. Responses indicated a range from 0 (27.5%) to 10 (2.5%). See Figure 3 and Table 2.

Figure 3. Number of First Nation Communities Located in Proximity to Your School Authority

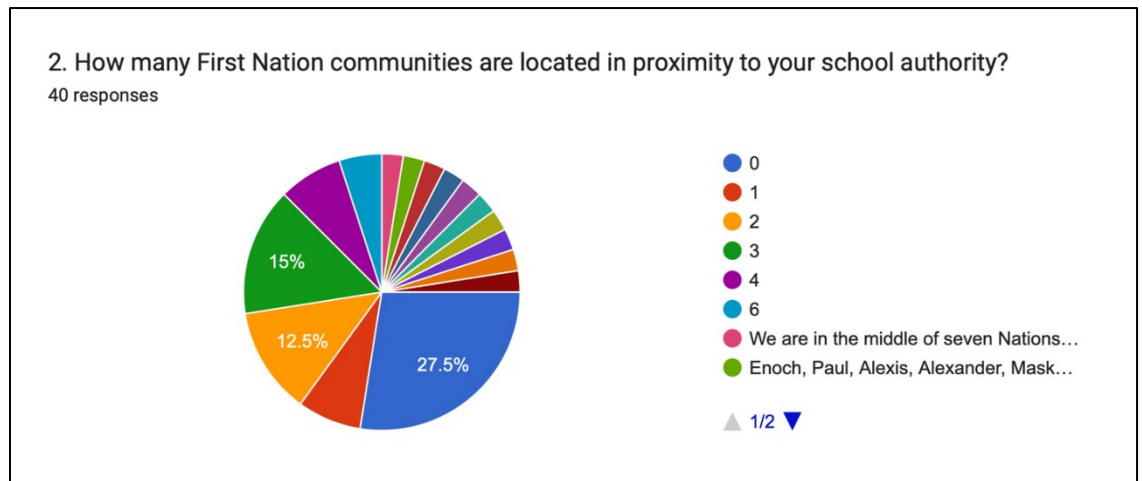


Table 2. Number of First Nation Communities Located in Proximity to Your School Authority (Detailed)

Number of First Nation communities	Count	%	Responses
0	11	27.5	40
1	3	7.5	
2	5	12.5	
3	6	15	
4	4	*10	
5	3	*7.5	
6	3	*7.5	
7	2	5	
8	0	0	
9	1	2.5	
10	1	2.5	
Many	1	2.5	

Note. Table 2 differs slightly from Figure 3. Changes (noted with *) were made based on information provided by respondents in the comments.

Establishing Respectful Relationships with First Nations and/or urban First Nations People (n = 40)

Participants were invited to indicate the number of **First Nation** communities in proximity of their school authority with whom they have begun establishing a respectful relationship; 87.5% indicated that they have begun establishing respectful relationships with neighbouring **First Nations** and/or **urban First Nations** people. Of note, when examining the survey results:

- 57.5% of school authorities indicated they have begun establishing a respectful relationship with at least 1 or more neighbouring **First Nation(s)**;
- Of the 27.5% of school authorities not located in proximity to any First Nation, 12.5% reported that they are working with **urban First Nations** people;
- 25% of school authorities have begun establishing a respectful relationship with **all** the **First Nations** communities located in proximity to their school authority. The number of First Nations with whom they are working ranged from 1 to 10; and
- Several school authorities mentioned that they are developing relationships with local Indigenous organizations including, for example, the Urban Society for Aboriginal Youth (USAY), Spirit North, Urban Aboriginal Voices Society (UVAS), and Aboriginal Friendship Centres.

See Figure 4 and Table 3.

Figure 4. Number of First Nation Communities in Proximity of Your School Authority With Whom You Have Begun Establishing a Respectful Relationship

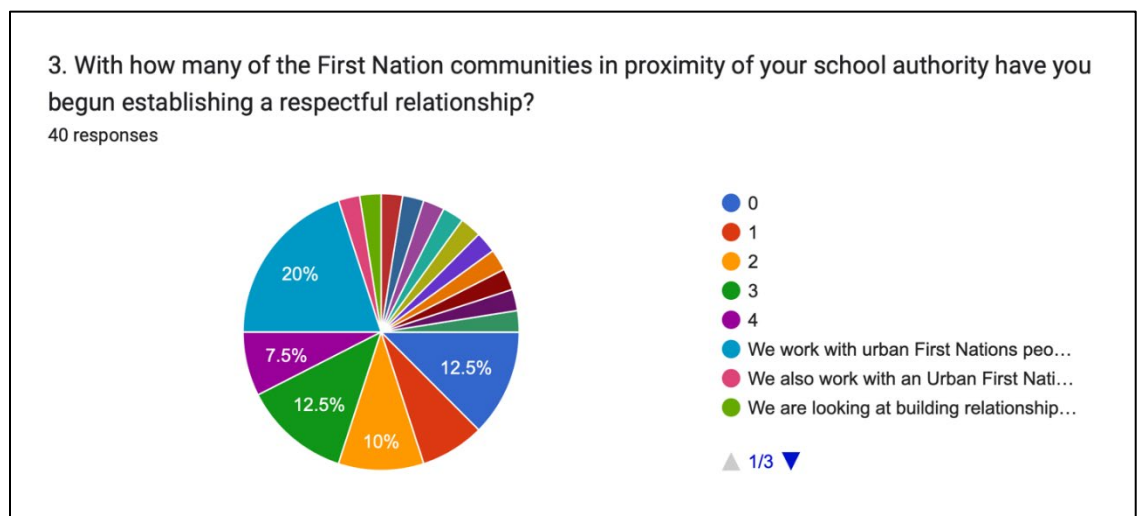


Table 3. Number of First Nation Communities in Proximity of Your School Authority With Whom You Have Begun Establishing a Respectful Relationship (Detailed)

Number of First Nations communities	Count	%	Responses
0	5	12.5	40
1	3	7.5	
2	5	*12.5	
3	5	12.5	
4	3	7.5	
5	1	2.5	
6	1	2.5	
7	0	0	
8	0	0	
9	0	0	
10	1	2.5	
Many	1	2.5	
We work with urban First Nations People	12	30 (20)	

Note: Table 3 differs slightly from Figure 4. Changes (noted with *) were made based on information provided by respondents in the comments.

Those Involved in Establishing Respectful Relationships With First Nations People (n = 40)

Participants were asked to identify who within their school authority has been involved in establishing a respectful relationship with **First Nations** and/or **urban First Nation** people/community. Responses indicated that the position or designation of those who have been establishing respectful relationships included: superintendents, system education leaders, service unit leaders, trustees, principals, teachers and school staff, and coordinators, consultants, facilitators, coaches, and liaisons. See Table 4. Of note, when examining the survey results:

- 92.5% of school authorities that have begun establishing respectful relationships indicated that Superintendents and/or System Education Leaders (e.g., Associate Superintendent, Director) are directly involved;
- 100% of school authorities that have begun establishing respectful relationships indicated that multiple staff members are involved; and,
- 47.5% of school authorities indicated that Trustees are directly involved.

Table 4. Who Within Your School Authority Has Been Involved in Establishing a Respectful Relationship with Neighbouring First Nations and/or Urban First Nations?

Who within your school authority has been involved in establishing a respectful relationship with neighbouring First Nations and/or urban First Nations? (Check all that apply)	Count	%	Responses
Superintendent	28	70	40
System Education Leaders (e.g., Associate Superintendent, Director)	30	75	
Service Unit Leaders	12	30	
Trustees	19	47.5	
Principals	31	77.5	
Teachers and School Staff	33	82.5	
Service Unit Staff	12	30	
Coordinator, Consultant, Facilitator, Coach, Liaison	8	20	

Description of Relationship With Neighbouring First Nations and/or Urban First Nation People (n = 40)

Respondents were invited to describe their relationship with neighbouring **First Nations** and/or **urban First Nation** people/community. The vast majority indicated that respectful relationships have begun and are in various stages of development. Several school authorities that are working with multiple First Nations communities reported that the relationships vary and include a combination of seed (present and emerging), sprout (growing and becoming), and tree (rooted and evolving) (Adapted

from [Relationships, Indigenous Knowledge and Land, Pathways to Effective Leadership](#)). See Figure 5 and Table 5.

Figure 5. Description of Relationship With Neighbouring First Nations and/or Urban First Nation People/Community

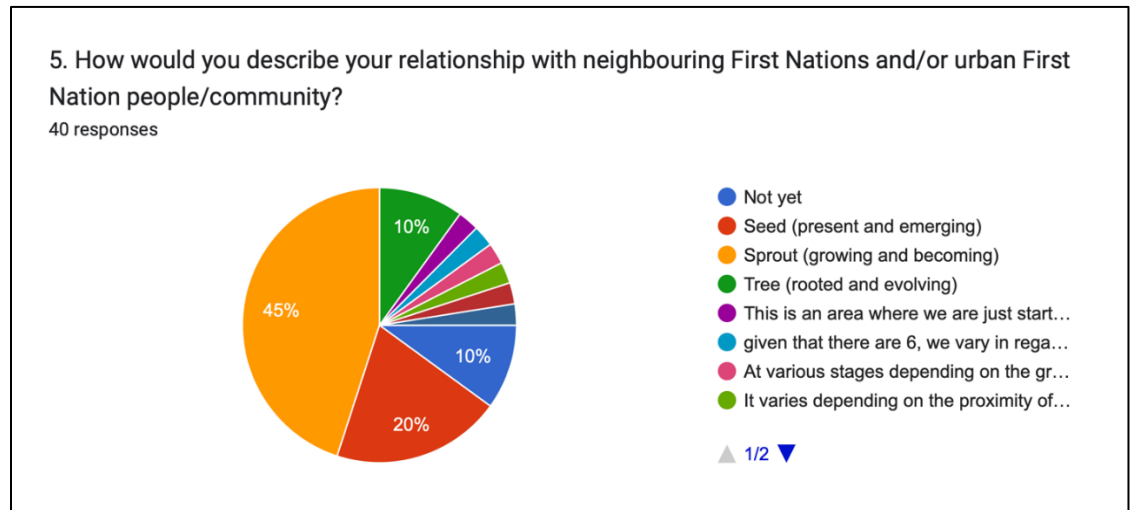


Table 5. Description of Relationship With Neighbouring First Nations and/or Urban First Nation People/Community (Detailed)

How would you describe your relationship with neighbouring First Nations and/or urban First Nation people/community?	Count	%	Responses
Not yet	5	*12.5	40
Seed (present and emerging)	8	20	
Sprout (growing and becoming)	18	45	
Tree (rooted and evolving)	4	10	
Combination of seed, sprout and tree	5	12.5	

Note. Adapted from Ontario Principals' Council & Nelson Education. (n.d.). [Relationships, Indigenous Knowledge and Land, Pathways to Effective Leadership](#). Table 5 differs slightly from Figure 5. Changes (noted with *) were made based on information provided by respondents in the comments.

Number of Neighbouring Métis Communities or Territories (n = 40)

Participants were asked to indicate the number of **Métis** communities or territories in proximity to their school authority. Results indicated a range from 0 (42.5%) to 4 (10%).

Some school authorities identified specific Métis locals and, also, Otipemisiwak Métis Government Districts with whom they are in proximity. See Figure 6 and Table 6.

Figure 6. Number of **Métis** Communities or Territories Located in Proximity to Your School Authority

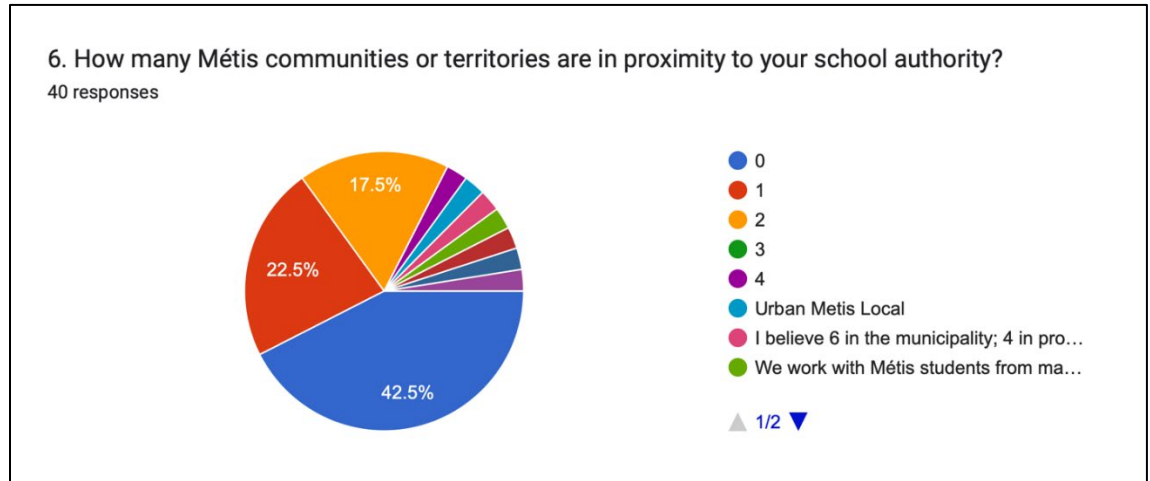


Table 6. Number of **Métis** Communities or Territories Located in Proximity to Your School Authority (Detailed)

Number of Métis communities or territories in proximity to your school authority	Count	%	Responses
0	17	42.5	40
1	9	22.5	
2	7	17.5	
3	0	0	
4	4	*10	
Many	3	7.5	

Note. Table 6 differs slightly from Figure 6. Changes (noted with *) were made based on information provided by respondents in the comments.

Establishing Respectful Relationships with Métis Communities or Territories (n = 40)

Participants were invited to indicate the number of **Métis** communities or territories in proximity of their school authority with whom they have begun establishing a respectful relationship; 80% of school authorities indicated they have begun establishing a respectful relationship with at least 1 or more **Métis** communities or territories. A few school authorities highlighted their work with Rupertsland Institute

(an affiliate of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government), shifting the percentage of those working with Otipemisiwak Métis Government from 15–30%. See Figure 7 and Table 7.

Figure 7. Number of Métis Communities or Territories in Proximity of Your School Authority With Whom You Have Begun Establishing a Respectful Relationship

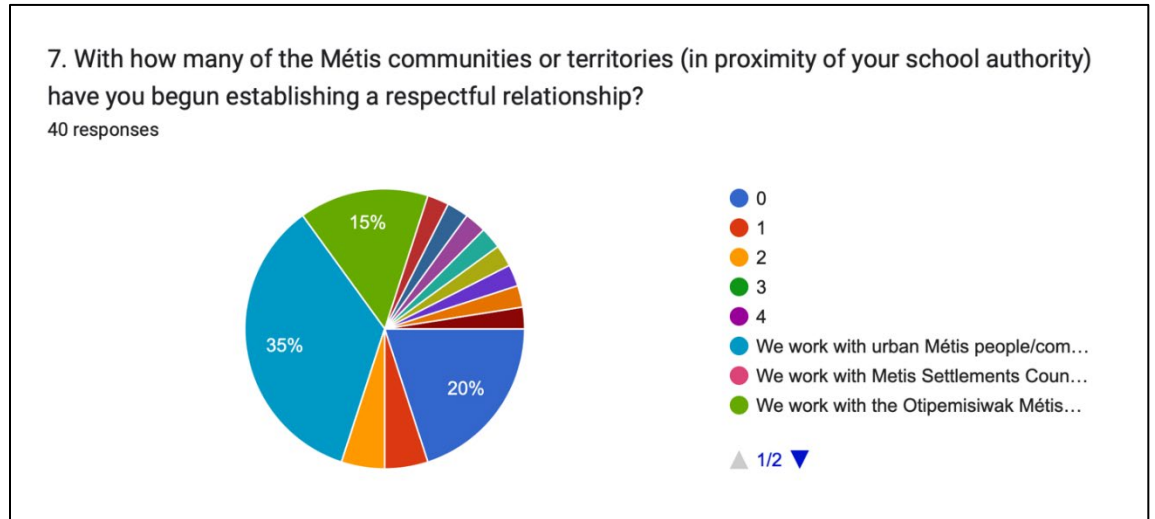


Table 7. Number of Métis Communities or Territories in Proximity of Your School Authority With Whom You Have Begun Establishing a Respectful Relationship (Detailed)

Number of Métis communities or territories in proximity to school authority with whom you have begun establishing a respectful relationship	Count	%	Responses
0	8	20	40
1	2	5	
2	2	5	
3	0	0	
4	1	*2.5	
We work with urban Métis people/community.	18	*45	
We work with Metis Settlements Council & Administration.	1	2.5	
We work with the Otipemisiwak Métis...	6	15	

We work with the Otipemisiwak Métis Government.	12	*30	

Note. Table 7 differs slightly from Figure 7. Changes (noted with *) were made based on information provided by respondents in the comments.

Those Involved in Establishing Respectful Relationships With Métis People (n = 40)

Participants were asked to identify who within their school authority has been involved in establishing a respectful relationship with neighbouring **Métis** communities, **urban Métis** people/community, **Metis Settlements Council & Administration** and/or the **Otipemisiwak Métis Government**. Responses indicated that the position or designation of those involved included: superintendents, system education leaders, service unit leaders, trustees, principals, teachers and school staff, and coordinators, consultants, facilitators, coaches, and liaisons. See Table 8. Of note, when examining the survey results:

- 80% of school authorities that have begun establishing respectful relationships indicated that Superintendents and/or System Education Leaders (e.g., Associate Superintendent, Director) are directly involved;
- 92.5% of school authorities that have begun establishing respectful relationships indicated that multiple staff members are involved in building the relationships; and,
- 42.5% of school authorities that have begun establishing respectful relationships indicated that Trustees are directly involved.

Table 8. Who Within Your School Authority Has Been Involved in Establishing a Respectful Relationship with Neighbouring Métis Communities, Urban Métis People/Community, Metis Settlements Council & Administration and/or the Otipemisiwak Métis Government

Who Within Your School Authority has been Involved in Establishing a Respectful Relationship with Neighbouring Métis communities, urban Métis people/community, Metis Settlements Council & Administration and/or Otipemisiwak Métis Government. Check all that apply.	Count	%	Responses

Superintendent	21	52.5	40
System Education Leaders (e.g., Associate Superintendent, Director)	28	70	
Service Unit Leaders	12	30	
Trustees	17	42.5	
Principals	23	57.5	
Teachers and School Staff	29	72.5	
Service Unit Staff	11	27.5	
Coordinator, Consultant, Facilitator, Coach, Liaison	5	12.5	
None	1	2.5	

Description of Relationship With Neighbouring Métis (n = 40)

Respondents were invited to describe their relationship with neighbouring **Métis** communities, **urban Métis** people/community, **Metis Settlements Council & Administration** and/or the **Otipemisiwak Métis Government**. Eighty-five percent of respondents indicated that respectful relationships have begun and are in various stages of development. Several school authorities working with multiple Métis communities reported that the relationships vary and include a combination of seed, sprout, and tree. See Figure 8 and Table 9.

Figure 8. Description of Relationship with Neighbouring Métis Communities, Urban Métis People/Community, Metis Settlements Council & Administration and/or the Otipemisiwak Métis Government

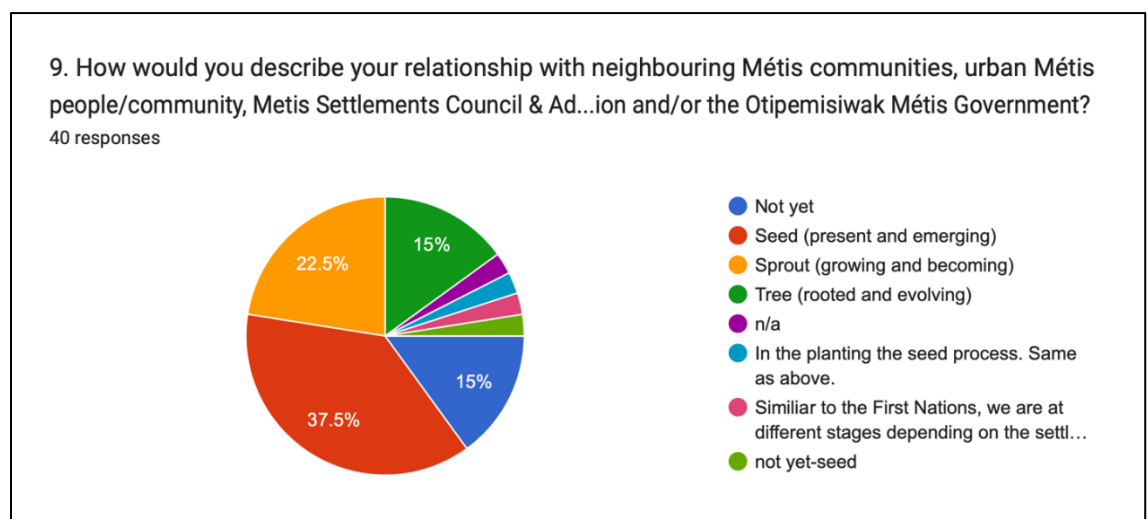


Table 9. Description of Relationship with Neighbouring Métis Communities, Urban Métis People/Community, Metis Settlements Council & Administration and/or the Otipemisiwak Métis Government (Detailed)

How would you describe your relationship with neighbouring Métis communities, urban Métis people/community, Metis Settlements Council & Administration and/or the Otipemisiwak Métis Government?	Count	%	Responses
Not yet	6	15	40
Seed (present and emerging)	15	37.5	
Sprout (growing and becoming)	9	22.5	
Tree (rooted and evolving)	6	15	
Combination of seed, sprout and tree	4	10	

Note. Adapted from Ontario Principals' Council & Nelson Education. (n.d.). [Relationships, Indigenous Knowledge and Land, Pathways to Effective Leadership.](#)

Establishing Respectful Relationships With Inuit Communities (n = 39)

Participants were invited to indicate the number of **Inuit** communities with whom they have begun establishing a respectful relationship; 38.5% of school authorities reported that they have begun establishing a respectful relationship, the majority of whom identified urban Inuit as their primary contact. See Figure 9 and Table 10.

Figure 9. Number of Inuit Communities With Whom You Have Begun Establishing a Respectful Relationship

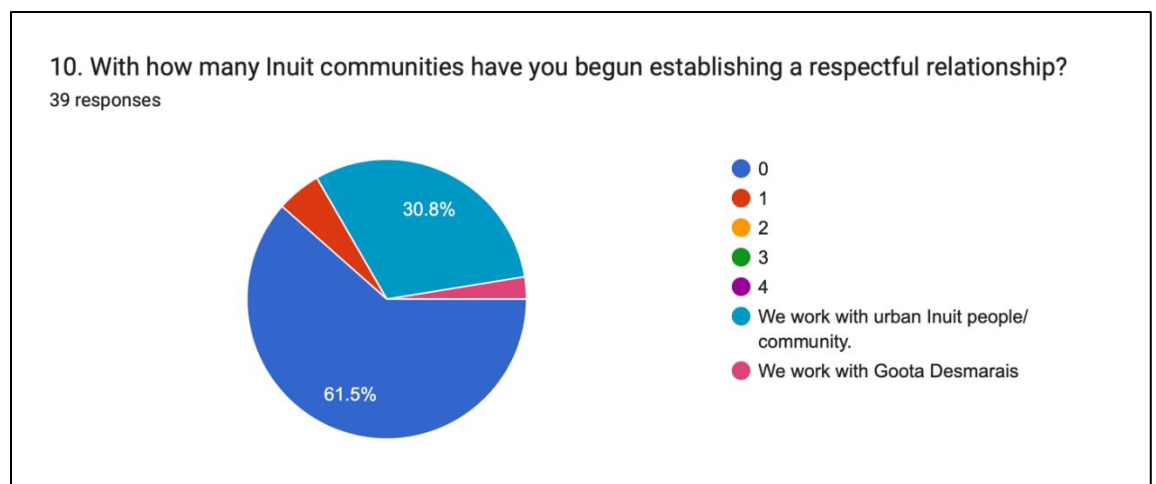


Table 10. Number of Inuit Communities With Whom You Have Begun Establishing a Respectful Relationship (Detailed)

Number of Inuit communities with whom you have begun establishing a respectful relationship	Count	%	Responses
0	24	61.5	39
1	2	5.1	
2	0	0	
3	0	0	
4	0	0	
We work with urban Inuit people/community.	13	*33.4	

Note. Table 10 differs slightly from Figure 9. Changes (noted with *) were made based on information provided by respondents in the comments.

Those Involved in Establishing Respectful Relationships With Inuit (n=31)

Participants were asked to identify who within their school authority has been involved in establishing a respectful relationship with neighbouring **Inuit** communities and/or **urban Inuit** people/community. Responses indicated that the position or designation of those involved included: superintendents, system education leaders, service unit leaders, trustees, principals, teachers and school staff, and a consultant. See Table 11. Of note, when examining the survey results:

- 35.2% of school authorities that have begun establishing respectful relationships indicated that Superintendents and/or System Education Leaders (e.g., Associate Superintendent, Director) are directly involved;
- 64% of school authorities that have begun establishing respectful relationships indicated that multiple staff members are involved in building the relationships;
- 9.7% of school authorities that have begun establishing respectful relationships indicated that Trustees are directly involved; and,
- Several sections in this part of the survey were left blank or marked as N/A.

Table 11. Who Within Your School Authority Has Been Involved in Establishing a Respectful Relationship With Inuit Communities and/or Urban Inuit People/Community?

Who within your school authority is involved in establishing a respectful relationship with Inuit communities and/or urban Inuit people/community? Check all that apply.	Count	%	Responses
Superintendent	7	22.6	31
System Education Leaders (e.g., Associate Superintendent, Director)	8	25.8	
Service Unit Leaders	7	22.6	
Trustees	3	9.7	
Principals	13	41.9	
Teachers and School Staff	15	48.4	
Service Unit Staff	5	16.1	
Consultant	1	3.2	

Description of Relationship with Inuit (n=40)

Respondents were invited to describe their relationship with **Inuit** communities and/or **urban Inuit** people/community; 32.5% of respondents indicated that respectful relationships have begun and are developing. See Figure 10 and Table 12. Of note, when examining the survey results:

- 20% described their relationship as a seed (present and emerging);
- 12.5% described their relationship as a sprout (growing and becoming);
- None described their relationships as a tree (rooted and evolving);
- 67.5% of school authorities reported no relationship or connection to an Inuit community or urban *Inuit* people at this time.

Figure 10. Description of Relationship With Inuit Communities and/or Urban Inuit People/Community

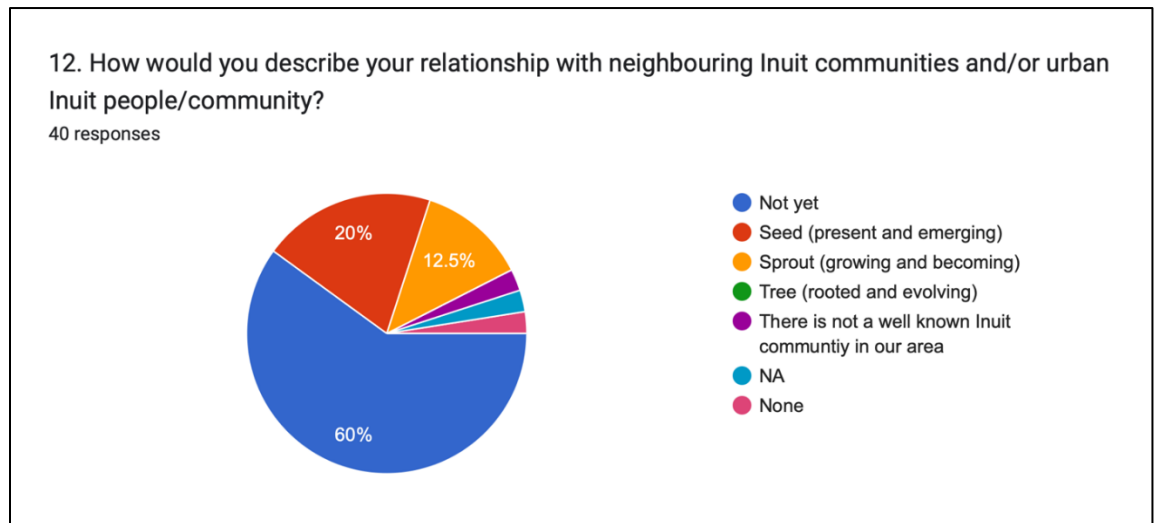


Table 12. Description of Relationship with **Inuit** Communities and/or **Urban Inuit** People/Community (Detailed)

How would you describe your relationship with neighbouring Inuit communities and/or urban Inuit people?	Count	%	Responses
Not yet	2	60	40
Seed (present and emerging)	8	20	
Sprout (growing and becoming)	5	12.5	
Tree (rooted and evolving)	0	0	
Other	3	7.5	

Note. Adapted from Ontario Principals’ Council & Nelson Education. (n.d.).

[Relationships, Indigenous Knowledge and Land, Pathways to Effective Leadership.](#)

Figure 10 differs slightly from Table 12. Changes (noted with *) were made based on information provided by respondents in the comments.

Areas of Learning within School Authority Related to Cultural Protocol

Respondents were asked to identify areas related to cultural protocol that have been part of their learning as a school authority. These areas were organized into 5 sections in the survey:

- Acknowledging the Land Where We Gather;
- Honouring Time and Knowledge;

- Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers;
- Symbols of Respect in Schools/School Authority; and
- Events and Gatherings.

Results indicated a very high level of engagement by school authorities in each of the areas of learning. See Table 13. The results are shared by overall section and then, in detail within sections.

Table 13. Areas of Learning Within School Authority Related to Cultural Protocol

Areas of learning within school authority related to cultural protocol.	Count	%	Responses
Acknowledging the Land Where We Gather	39	100	39
Honouring Time and Knowledge	38	98.8	39
Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers	39	100	39
Symbols of Respect in Schools/School Authority	29	92.8	31
Events and Gatherings	37	100	37

Acknowledging the Land Where We Gather

One hundred percent of respondents (n = 39) indicated that acknowledging the land is part of their learning as a school authority. They shared details about their work that highlighted a range of approaches and practices. Of note, when examining the survey results:

- many school authorities described working with local Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and/or community over extended periods of time to co-create a land acknowledgement;
- acknowledging the land is becoming a common practice in most school authorities at school, system, and board gatherings, events, and meetings; and
- several school authorities mentioned efforts to personalize and make meaningful the land acknowledgements based on ongoing learning and commitment to action.

Honouring Time and Knowledge

- Ninety-seven-point five percent of respondents (n = 39) indicated that honouring time and knowledge is part of their work and learning as a school authority. See Table 14. Of note, when examining the survey results:
- the majority of school authorities highlighted the importance of asking Elders and Knowledge Keepers what protocol they accept;
 - a range of honoraria amounts and practices exist across school authorities and include:
 - providing the amount shared by Elder or Knowledge Keeper
 - on par with teacher substitute payment
 - half day (up to 3 hours) from \$200-\$300
 - full day (over 3 hours) from \$250-\$500
 - variances depending on ceremony or type of request
 - payment options (e.g., Elder or school filling in form, cash, cheque, e-transfer, gift card, direct deposit)
 - two school authorities mentioned providing a T4 at the end of the year (one said that if no SIN was provided, they would put in 0's)
 - revisiting amounts to increase honoraria based on cost of living
- many school authorities have created internal processes and practices to honour Elders' and Knowledge Keepers' time and knowledge and make adjustments as needed based on their ongoing learning;
- a common aspiration is to provide honoraria to Elders or Knowledge Keepers on the same day of their visit (or as close to the day as possible);
- many school authorities described the importance of talking openly to Elders and Knowledge Keepers about honoraria, travel, and gifting (i.e., to learn their wishes and preferences);
- a range of gifts were mentioned in addition to honoraria to honour time and knowledge (e.g., scarves, tea towels, student made gifts, blankets, tea, medicines, jam, student constructed projects honouring the traditional names of Indigenous guests, individuals gifting sacred objects as a thank you for their personal learning journey); and, the majority of school authorities reimburse for travel; some from their home within the city/town and some only for distances travelled outside of the city/town.

Table 14. Areas of Learning Within School Authority Related to Cultural Protocol: Honouring Time and Knowledge (Detailed)

Areas of learning within school authority related to cultural protocol: Honouring time and knowledge.	Count	%	Responses
Honoraria	37	94.9	39
Gifting	35	89.7	
Travel	27	69.2	
Other	8	20.8	

Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers

Ninety-seven-point five percent of respondents (n = 39) indicated that Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers have been part of their work and learning as a school authority. See Table 15. Of note, when examining the survey results:

- many school authorities identified the importance of establishing and sustaining respectful relationships at every level of the organization;
- in addition to the areas mentioned in Table 15, respondents highlighted blanket exercises, honour songs, tipi teachings, advisory circles, cultural performances and teachings, co-creating land acknowledgements, and being part of school and system learning opportunities and meetings; and,
- providing guidance to staff to increase comfort and ensure respectful practices.

Table 15. Areas of Learning Within School Authority Related to Cultural Protocol: Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers (Detailed)

Areas of learning within school authority related to cultural protocol: Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers	Count	%	Reponses
Learning areas of expertise and protocol	35	89.7	39
Making requests	25	64.1	
Prayers/blessings	29	74.4	
Smudge	30	76.9	

Areas of learning within school authority related to cultural protocol: Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers	Count	%	Reponses
Ceremony	26	66.7	
Elder Helpers	21	53.8	
Medicines	18	46.2	
Naming	11	28.2	
Language learning	19	48.7	
Land learning	32	82.1	
Story telling	35	89.7	
Talking circle	26	66.7	
Sharing circle	28	71.8	
Other	8	20.8	

Symbols of Respect in Schools/School Authority

Seventy-seven-point five percent of respondents (n = 31) indicated that symbols of respect have been part of their work and learning as a school authority. See Table 16. Of note, when examining the survey results:

- 71% of those who have been focussing on symbols of respect indicated that they have been attentive to Indigenous flags. These included flags honouring First Nations, Treaty 6, 7 & 8, Metis Settlements, Métis Nation, Inuit, and organizations and, also, in honour of Every Child Matters, the Survivors’ Flag, and National Indigenous Peoples’ Day;
- Respondents described various symbols of respect that highlight areas of learning and, also, gifts received. These included: land acknowledgement posters and banners; eagle staff; Indigenous stations of the cross; maps; students’ territories and homeland; local Indigenous murals, artwork, artifacts, symbols, and language; tipis; medicine wheel; outdoor learning circles and classrooms; Indigenous plant and medicine gardens; teaching posters; TRC Commitment to Action; images of school events; images of Indigenous leaders; Métis cart; and, bulletin boards or displays highlighting specific areas of learning and focus (e.g., permanent Wall of Respect for “Every Child Matters”).

Table 16. Areas of Learning Within School Authority Related to Cultural Protocol: Symbols of Respect in Schools/School Authority (Detailed)

Areas of learning within school authority related to cultural protocol: Symbols of respect in schools/school authority	Count	%	Responses
Indigenous flags	22	71	31
Other	21	67.2	

Events and Gatherings

Ninety-two-point five percent of respondents (n = 37) indicated that involvement in events and gatherings has been part of their work and learning as a school authority. See Table 17. Of note, when examining the survey results:

- in addition to the areas mentioned in Table 17, respondents highlighted events and gatherings focussed on: community (e.g., student and family nights); cultural teachings and land learning Indigenous artists and performers; transitions for students; significant days (e.g., Orange Shirt Day; National Indigenous Peoples’ Day, Red Dress/MMIW); system learning opportunities; Elder advisory circles; wellness; school commencement and closing; tipi transfers and raisings; and, honouring and gifting students.
- many respondents identified the importance of supporting Elders, Knowledge Keepers, staff, and students to attend locally hosted events, gatherings, and conferences and, the importance of hosting, co-hosting, as well as participating in what the community is offering.

Table 17. Areas of Learning Within School Authority Related to Cultural Protocol: Events and Gatherings (Detailed)

Areas of learning within school authority related to cultural protocol: Events and gatherings	Count	%	Responses
Hosting	25	67.6	37
Food / hospitality	26	70.3	
Conferences and gatherings	31	83.8	
Cultural events (e.g., round dance, feast, pow wow, traditional dancers)	33	89.2	

Other	9	24.3	
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From Whom Are We Learning About Cultural Protocol

100% of respondents (n=40) indicated that they are actively learning from others about cultural protocol. See Table 18. Of note, when examining the survey results:

- 95% of respondents indicated that Elders and Knowledge Keepers are guiding their learning;
- in addition to the areas mentioned in Table 18, respondents highlighted Indigenous organizations (e.g., urban Aboriginal voices society, friendship centres, community groups), post-secondary, First Nations education authorities, Rupertsland Institute (affiliate of Otipemisiwak Métis Government), cultural liaisons with Metis Settlements, conferences, webinars, courses, and books (several respondents mentioned the CASS First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Gathering); partnership with Indigenous educators provincially; and, local Metis community representatives.

Table 18. From Whom Are School Authorities Learning About Cultural Protocol (Detailed)

From whom are you learning about cultural protocol? (check all that apply)	Count	%	Responses
Indigenous Education Staff/Team within School Authority	30	75	40
Other School Authorities	19	47.5	
Local Elders/Knowledge Keepers	38	95	
First Nation Band Council & Band Manager	8	20	
Metis Settlements Council & Administration	6	15	
Otipemisiwak Métis Government	8	20	
Other	12	30	

Support and Guidance for Learning within School Authorities

Eighty-five percent of respondents (n = 40) indicated that they have varying degrees of support within their school authority to support learning related to cultural protocol.

An identified challenge by some was finding people to fill the positions designated to support this work. In addition, some respondents indicated that they do not have specific roles within the district and rely on community members, families, and local organizations. They also mentioned principals or teachers who are identified as Indigenous Education representatives or leads. See Table 19.

Table 19. Who Is Available Within Your School Authorities to Guide and Support Learning Re: Cultural Protocol (Detailed)

From whom are you learning about cultural protocol? (check all that apply)	Count	%	Responses
Indigenous Education Staff/Team	32	80	40
Elders/Knowledge Keepers	27	67.5	
We do not have anyone	6	15	
Other	12	30	

Guiding or Supporting Documents

Seventy-five percent of respondents (n = 40) indicated that they have some form of guiding or supporting documents within their school authority related to cultural protocol. They described a range from ‘loose frameworks’ to more formalized administrative regulations or policies. The policies they highlighted related mostly to acknowledgement of land and/or smudge with informed parental/guardian consent. Several respondents indicated that they rely on in-person professional learning and conversations, and local and external resources. Some suggested they were in early stages of developing guiding documents while others said they were deliberately keeping the guidelines fluid and flexible. See Table 20.

Table 20. Guiding or Supporting Documents Created Within School Authority Related to Cultural Protocol (Detailed)

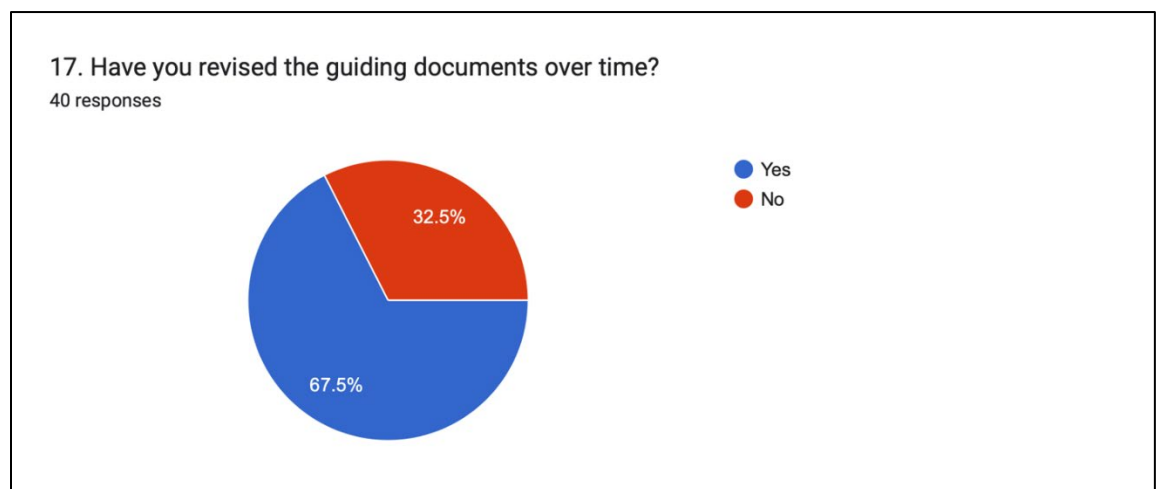
Guiding or supporting documents created as a school authority.	Count	%	Responses
Administrative regulation or policy	20	50	40
Guiding document	19	47.5	
Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Letter	9	22.5	
None	10	25	

Other	11	27.5	
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Revision of Guiding Documents Over Time

Sixty-seven-point five percent of respondents (n = 40) indicated that they have revised their guiding documents over time. They cited ongoing learning and commitment to building respectful relationships as the reasons for the revisions. They highlighted the importance of continuing to adapt and adjust their practices as they strengthen relationships with Indigenous people and deepen their knowledge and understanding. They indicated that revisiting processes and practices over time was essential and would never be ‘finished’. See Figure 11.

Figure 11. Revisions to Guiding Documents Over Time



Sharing Guiding or Supporting Documents and Links

Participants were invited to share guiding or supporting documents from their school authority. The documents shared emphasized the importance of:

- building respectful relationships over time;
- staying true/connected to the teachings shared by Elders and Knowledge Keepers;
- actively engaging in local Indigenous culture and ceremony;
- responding to TRC calls to action;
- supporting ongoing learning to build understanding; and
- encouraging teachers/staff to ask for support (and having support available).

The following guiding documents were shared by school authorities:

- Fort McMurray Public Schools' [Guidelines to First Nation, Métis and Inuit Elders and Knowledge Keepers in Schools](#)
- Calgary Board of Education's [Indigenous Education | Cultural Protocols](#)
- Lloydminster Public School Division's [Administrative Procedure 168: Smudging](#)
- Foothills School Division's [Administrative Procedure 222: First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education](#)

Summary of Open-Ended Survey Responses

The following is a summary of the open-ended survey responses.

What does cultural protocol mean to you (within your school authority)? (n = 38)

Respondents were asked to share the meaning of cultural protocol as it is understood within their school authority. A range of verbs were included in this section to describe people's learning and understanding. These included **seeking, honouring, approaching, adapting, recognizing, building, respecting, engaging, following, offering, establishing, hosting, strengthening, developing and, embedding.**

The verbs noted by respondents reflect what is dynamic, living, and in motion. Respondents spoke to the dynamic nature of relationships through which understanding is constantly evolving. They emphasized the uniqueness and diversity of Indigenous peoples and communities. They noted also the complexity of Indigenous knowledge systems that include, for example, distinct values, customs, practices, traditions, beliefs, languages, and ceremonies.

They highlighted an underlying sense of responsibility as well. In short, they described a cyclical the process of learning, adjusting, and enacting what they learn as a way of honouring relationship and showing respect. In other words, they described cultural protocol as living in relationship and not as something that could ever be separated from relationship.

Stories of Learning (n = 40)

Participants were invited to share a story of learning from their school authority related to Cultural Protocol (e.g., how they have been learning about cultural protocol, areas for growth, cautionary tales, how they have changed their approach or practices over time); 97.5% of respondents (n = 40) shared a story or comment about their learning. A few participants indicated that what was shared was to be kept in confidence. Key messages that emerged from the stories include:

- building respectful relationships takes time (years, not months);

- respectful, trusting, safe, and reciprocal relationships are everything;
- as we learn, we adjust and do better (and this process never ends);
- step into the work with an open heart and open mind (don't wait for someone else to do it for you or out of fear);
- be flexible and nimble as an organization;
- acknowledge and respect the uniqueness and diversity of nations and communities (there is no pan-Indigenous way);
- ask respectfully (and keep asking);
- never assume;
- listen respectfully (and then act on what you have heard);
- Indigenous communities identify Elders and Knowledge Keepers;
- seek to learn and honour local knowledge;
- connect with others in Indigenous education leadership throughout the province;
- keep the learning in relationship (always acknowledge who taught you and nurture the relationships you are establishing); and
- listen to the voices of Indigenous youth.

Guidance for Other School Authorities (n = 40)

Participants were invited to offer guidance and advice to other school authorities and CASS about how to understand, honour, and learn about cultural protocol when working with local Indigenous communities; 90% of respondents (n = 40) offered guidance to benefit others. Key messages that emerged from the guidance offered include:

- establishing respectful relationships is a journey and requires steadfast commitment;
- relationships must be nurtured;
- meet with Indigenous people in their places (go to the nations and into community, don't expect them to always come to you);
- attend local ceremony and events;
- never assume and be humble;
- listen, listen, listen;
- don't be afraid;
- approach relationships with an open heart and open mind (when you make a mistake, learn, apologize, and do better the next time);
- one size does not fit all;
- when we know better, we do better;
- reach out, sit, listen, and visit (repeat);
- be patient and go slowly;

- be respectful always;
- visit before making requests;
- each community has its own practices, natural laws, and values;
- trust and mutual respect are fostered by demonstrating openness and humility;
- breathe, one step at a time; and
- support others to learn and build relationships.

Questions about Cultural Protocol (n = 40)

Respondents were invited to share questions they have about cultural protocol. Several school authorities indicated they are looking forward to learning from others as part of this research project and appreciated the opportunity to participate. Many acknowledged the ongoing nature of the work as they learn with and from local Indigenous people and community. Questions that point to areas for future learning opportunities included:

- keeping fear of offending from preventing engagement and asking questions;
- where to begin in a district with fewer than 1% Indigenous population;
- how to show respect with protocol from a distance (phone or email);
- starting small by establishing one or two relationships (daunting to consider establishing relationships with all neighbouring communities);
- understanding what is most important and lasting;
- supports available (including provincial networks); and
- appropriate way to go about creating own policies and protocols for working with Indigenous Elders and community.

Appendix B: Survey – Sharing Our Learning About Cultural Protocol to Strength Relationships for Student Success



Sharing Our Learning About Cultural Protocol to Strengthen Relationships for Student Success

CASS is interested in learning about the work that is happening in school authorities to understand, honour, and learn about protocol within local Indigenous communities to support success for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students. This includes practices and guidance that will support system education leaders as they work to establish and sustain respectful and reciprocal relationships with local Indigenous communities.

You are invited to share a glimpse into your journey including, for example:

- your understanding of cultural protocol;
- the relationships you are building with local Indigenous communities;
- how, what, and from whom you are learning about cultural protocol;
- areas for growth;
- the steps you are taking to put your learning into action respectfully;
- the support and guidance you are offering within your district;
- guidance and advice you would offer others; and,
- questions you have.

Please have one person complete the survey on behalf of your school authority on or before Wednesday, June 12, 2024. We encourage that individual to consult with others as needed.

It will take 15-20 minutes to complete.

Please note: For the purposes of this survey, we will be referring to The Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) as the "Otipemisiwak Métis Government" as the MNA transitions towards their new Self-Government model.

* Indicates required question

1. Your Name *

2. Your School Authority *

3. Your Zone *

Mark only one oval.

- Zone 1
- Zone 2/3
- Zone 4
- Zone 5
- Zone 6

4. Your Position/Designation *

5. 1. What does cultural protocol mean to you (within your school authority)?

6. 2. How many **First Nation** communities are located in proximity to your school authority? *

Mark only one oval.

0

1

2

3

4

Other: _____

7. 3. With how many of the **First Nation** communities in proximity of your school authority have you begun establishing a respectful relationship? *

Mark only one oval.

0

1

2

3

4

We work with urban First Nations people/community.

Other: _____

8. 4. Who within your school authority has been involved in establishing a respectful relationship with neighbouring **First Nations** and/or **urban First Nation** people/community? Check all that apply. *

Check all that apply.

- Superintendent
- System Education Leaders (e.g., Associate Superintendent, Director)
- Service Unit Leaders
- Trustees
- Principals
- Teachers and School Staff
- Service Unit Staff
- Other: _____

9. 5. How would you describe your relationship with neighbouring **First Nations** and/or **urban First Nation** people/community? *

Mark only one oval.

- Not yet
- Seed (present and emerging)
- Sprout (growing and becoming)
- Tree (rooted and evolving)
- Other: _____

*adapted from [Relationships, Indigenous Knowledge and Land, Pathways to Effective Leadership](#), Nelson)

10. 6. How many **Métis** communities or territories are in proximity to your school authority? *

Mark only one oval.

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- Other: _____

11. 7. With how many of the **Métis** communities or territories (in proximity of your school authority) have you begun establishing a respectful relationship? *

Mark only one oval.

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- We work with urban Métis people/community.
- We work with Metis Settlements Council & Administration.
- We work with the Otipemisiwak Métis Government.
- Other: _____

12. 8. Who within your school authority has been involved in establishing a respectful relationship with neighbouring **Métis** communities, **urban Métis** people/community, **Metis Settlements Council & Administration** and/or the **Otipemisiwak Métis Government**? Check all that apply. *

Check all that apply.

- Superintendent
- System Education Leaders (e.g., Associate Superintendent, Director)
- Service Unit Leaders
- Trustees
- Principals
- Teachers and School Staff
- Service Unit Staff
- Other: _____

13. 9. How would you describe your relationship with neighbouring **Métis** communities, **urban Métis** people/community, **Metis Settlements Council & Administration** and/or the **Otipemisiwak Métis Government**? *

Mark only one oval.

- Not yet
- Seed (present and emerging)
- Sprout (growing and becoming)
- Tree (rooted and evolving)
- Other: _____

*adapted from [Relationships, Indigenous Knowledge and Land, Pathways to Effective Leadership](#), Nelson)

14. 10. With how many **Inuit** communities have you begun establishing a respectful relationship?

Mark only one oval.

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- We work with urban Inuit people/community.
- Other: _____

15. 11. Who within your school authority has been involved in establishing a respectful relationship with **Inuit** communities and/or **urban Inuit** people/community? Check all that apply.

Check all that apply.

- Superintendent
- System Education Leaders (e.g., Associate Superintendent, Director)
- Service Unit Leaders
- Trustees
- Principals
- Teachers and School Staff
- Service Unit Staff
- Other: _____

16. 12. How would you describe your relationship with neighbouring **Inuit** communities and/or **urban Inuit** people/community? *

Mark only one oval.

- Not yet
- Seed (present and emerging)
- Sprout (growing and becoming)
- Tree (rooted and evolving)
- Other: _____

*adapted from [Relationships, Indigenous Knowledge and Land, Pathways to Effective Leadership](#), Nelson)

13. Please indicate which of the following areas have been part of your learning as a school authority related to cultural protocol (it is okay to leave areas blank). We encourage you to check with others within your school authority if needed.

You will find 5 sections here:

- Acknowledging the Land Where We Gather
- Honouring Time and Knowledge
- Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers
- Symbols of Respect in Schools/School Authority
- Events and Gatherings

17. **Acknowledging the Land Where We Gather**

Check all that apply.

- Acknowledging the Land

18. Please include any information you are willing to share about your work/learning related to **Acknowledging the Land Where We Gather**.

19. **Honouring Time and Knowledge** (Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Elder Helpers)

Check all that apply.

- Honoraria
- Gifting
- Travel
- Other: _____

20. Please include any information you are willing to share about your work/learning related to **Honouring Time and Knowledge** (e.g., amounts you have determined for honoraria, changes you have made to your financial processes, how you offer payment, etc.)

21. **Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers**

Check all that apply.

- Learning Areas of Expertise and Protocol
- Making Requests
- Prayers/Blessings
- Smudge
- Ceremony
- Elder Helpers
- Medicines
- Naming
- Language Learning
- Land Learning
- Story Telling
- Talking Circle
- Sharing Circle
- Other: _____

22. Please include any information you are willing to share about your work/learning related to **Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers**.

23. **Symbols of Respect** in Schools/School Authority

Check all that apply.

- Indigenous Flags
- Other: _____

24. Please include any information you are willing to share about your work/learning related to **Symbols of Respect** in Schools/School Authority.

25. **Events and Gatherings**

Check all that apply.

- Hosting
- Food / Hospitality
- Conferences and Gatherings
- Cultural Events (e.g., round dance, feast, pow wow, traditional dancers)
- Other: _____

26. Please include any information you are willing to share about your work/learning related to **Events and Gatherings**.

27. 14. From whom are you learning about cultural protocol? Check all the apply. *

Check all that apply.

- Indigenous Education Staff/Team within School Authority
- Other School Authorities
- Local Elders/Knowledge Keepers
- First Nation Band Council & Band Manger
- Metis Settlements Council & Administration
- Otipemisiwak Métis Government
- Other: _____

28. 15. Who is available within your school authority to guide and support learning re: *
cultural protocol? Check all that apply.

Check all that apply.

- Indigenous Education Staff/Team
- Elders/Knowledge Keepers
- We do not have anyone
- Other: _____

29. 16. What guiding or supporting documents have you created as a school authority *
related to cultural protocol? Check all that apply.

Check all that apply.

- Administrative regulation or policy
- Guiding document
- Parent/Guardian/Caregiver Letter
- None
- Other: _____

30. 17. Have you revised the guiding documents over time? *

Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

31. If yes, please explain the rationale for the revisions.

32. 18 (a). If you have any guiding or supporting documents related to cultural protocol that you are willing to share, please **upload them here**.

Files submitted:

33. 18 (b). If you have any guiding or supporting documents related to cultural protocol that you are willing to share, please **provide the link here**.

34. 19. Share a story of learning from your school authority related to Cultural Protocol (e.g., how you have been learning about cultural protocol, areas for growth, cautionary tales, how you have changed your approach or practices over time). *

35. 20. What guidance or advice would you offer other school authorities and CASS about how to understand, honour, and learn about cultural protocol when working with local Indigenous communities? *

36. 21. What questions do you have about cultural protocol? *

Thank you sharing your learning as part of this CASS survey. We are grateful. The results of the survey will be included in a final report that will be available for all CASS members.

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.



Appendix C: Email Invitation to Superintendents to Participate in Survey

From: [David Keohane](#)
To: [David Keohane](#)
Cc: [Dianne Roulson](#)
Subject: PLS REPLY to SURVEY - Sharing Your Learning About Cultural Protocol to Strengthen Relationships for Student Success
Date: May 23, 2024 12:54:44 PM
Importance: High

This Email is for the Attention of Superintendents

CASS is interested in learning about the work that is happening in school authorities to **understand, honour, and learn about protocol within local Indigenous communities to support success for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students**. This includes practices and guidance that will support system education leaders as they work to establish and sustain respectful and reciprocal relationships with local Indigenous communities.

We are reaching out to request that you delegate a system education leader who is involved in Indigenous Education to complete [this survey](#) on behalf of your school authority.

You are invited to share a glimpse into your school authority's journey including, for example:

- your understanding of cultural protocol;
- the relationships you are building with local Indigenous communities;
- how, what, and from whom you are learning about cultural protocol;
- areas for growth;
- the steps you are taking to put your learning into action respectfully;
- the support and guidance you are offering within your district;
- guidance and advice you would offer others; and,
- questions you have.

The findings of the [survey](#) will be shared in a final report that will be available for all CASS members. It will include practices and guidance that will support system education leaders as they work to establish and sustain respectful and reciprocal relationships with local Indigenous communities.

Please have one person [complete the survey](#) on behalf of your school authority on or before **Friday, June 7, 2024**. It will take 15-20 minutes to complete. I would encourage that individuals responding to the survey consult with others as needed. Please contact Dr. Dianne Roulson, cc'd above, if you have any questions.

Thank you for your assistance in contributing to the professional learning of your colleagues.

Regards,

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