



# Le Villazh Maachi Kashkihtow

## *The Village of Learning K-12*



Welcome to the Fall 2024 edition of  
*Le Villazh Maachi Kashkihtow,*  
*The Village of Learning K-12*





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## ■ Métis History & Cultural Teachings

If you grew up in Canada, you might have learned a bit about Métis history in school, but this history was likely presented through a colonial perspective focusing on the development of Canadian nationhood.

### **The origins and development of Métis nationhood (from a Métis Perspective)**

Europeans first came to North America in the 1500s, and by the 1600s, the fur trade had become one of the most significant economic ventures on the continent. Two major fur-trading companies arose – The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and the North West Company (NWC). Fur traders traveled into the interior of North America in search of furs.

European men working in the fur trade often married First Nation women, as European women rarely came to the interior of North America. European fur traders had many advantages in marrying First Nation women. In addition to companionship, they were able to form alliances and trading relationships with First Nation communities, as well as knowledge of the land, languages, trading routes, and survival skills. First Nations women had a great deal of agency in these relationships and served as invaluable contributors to the success of the fur trade and early Canada.

The children of these marriages grew up with influences from both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures. As the fur trade moved farther west, trading posts were established. At these posts, families of European and First Nations heritage lived together, developing a fusion of various cultures. These heritages intermarried over generations and developed into a unique culture and as a result, Métis identity and Michif language began to rise.

The history of the Métis people is interwoven with the early development of Canada.

In the late 1700s and early 1800s, as the fur trade moved west, Métis nationhood emerged in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. Métis men provided hard labour required to transport furs

and Métis women provided food and supplies to the fur traders. Both men and women also provided social and political relationships that allowed trading to continue smoothly.

The buffalo hunt was of critical importance to the fur trade and the Métis people in the Red River area. The rules of the buffalo hunt formed the basis of the Métis traditional governance system and the buffalo itself was used for the making of pemmican, a fur trade staple. Pemmican was considered essential to the profitability of the fur trade as it was highly nutritious, lightweight, and could be stored for long periods. Métis pemmican production made the Métis economy strong because the fur trade relied on it.

In the early 1800s, Métis right to participate in the economy was challenged during the Pemmican Wars. The Pemmican Wars were a series of trade conflicts between HBC and NWC; whichever company controlled the trade of pemmican would dominate the fur trade. To gain the upper hand in the trade war, a law was created that anyone who wanted to hunt buffalo or sell or trade pemmican had to have a license from HBC. In 1816, a group of HBC representatives tried to stop a group of Métis from transporting pemmican and a battle ensued. The Métis quickly defeated the HBC representatives in an event known as the Battle of Seven Oaks. It was the first time Métis flew their national flag, the oldest flag original to Canada. This impacted the trade war and the eventual amalgamation of the NWC with the HBC, along with the establishment of a colonial government administered by the HBC.

Between the 1820s and 1870s, the Métis enjoyed what was known as the "Golden Years". They focused on strengthening and diversifying their economy by also working as farmers, labourers, small business owners, and other professionals. Métis became social and cultural leaders in the Red River area. They developed an effective military defense and governance and a distinct lifestyle and culture that was recognizable as Métis. Métis communities began to arise across the prairies and into BC. *(cont'd on page 3)*

## Métis History & Cultural Teachings *(cont'd from page 2)*

### Métis in British Columbia

Métis played a pivotal role in the establishment of present-day B.C. From the late 1700s onward, the Métis people began to spread west across Canada, acting as guides and leaders on expeditions to explore and settle on land west of the Rockies. The fur trade, the gold rush, mining, and other natural resource industries drew Métis people to BC in search of entrepreneurial opportunities and economic advancement.

In the early 1800s, along historic Métis fur trade routes, communities of Métis people were living in Prince George, Quesnel, Fort St. John, Kamloops, and Fort Langley. Métis populations also existed in the southern interior, the north coast, the Kootenays, and Vancouver Island. BC Métis continue to live in all these areas today.

Many people are unaware of the Métis history in BC. Because early BC society discriminated against mixed-race people, some Métis were reluctant to reveal their identities. Rather than identifying as Métis, they chose to “meld into the shadows.” They still practiced and celebrated their culture

but made it less publicly visible. Often Métis were forced to choose between being “Indian” or “White” in government records and mixed family histories were suppressed.

Métis people contributed significantly to the development of BC's economy and society in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Métis existed in positions of political and economic power during the early years of the colonial and provincial governments. Joseph William McKay was a Métis man who founded the city of Nanaimo. Lady Amelia Douglas the wife of Sir James Douglas, (the first governor of the colony of BC) was a Métis woman. Their daughter Martha was the first Aboriginal woman from BC to be a published author, and their son James became a BC member of the Legislative Assembly. Isabella Ross was the first female landowner in BC, according to colonial law, and was Métis.

Significantly, the first military unit and police force in BC, the Victoria Voltigeurs, was composed of Métis and French-Canadian men whose uniforms consisted of sky-blue capotes and red woolen

sashes, typical Métis dress at the time. Métis in BC were business owners, community and political leaders, and matriarchs and patriarchs of the cities, communities, and institutions that make up modern-day BC.

Educational or economic opportunities, family ties, and new beginnings are still the same reasons Métis people continue to reside in and come to BC as they did in the past. Métis people in BC can connect with our rich history and are proud of their ancestor's contributions to making BC what it is today.

What is Pemmican you ask? Pemmican was a fur trade staple that was made by drying buffalo meat, pounding it into powder, mixing it with buffalo fat or marrow to create a paste, and then drying the mixture. They often mixed it with berries as well.

Please see our Summer 2024 issue that dives into Métis identity.

Look out for the next issue which will take us further into Métis History including the Dispossession of the Métis Nation and Land Scrip.

## ■ Métis Core Values: Caring

These 12 Core Values are the Métis Way of Knowing and Learning:

Mother Earth	Balance
Kindness	Courage
Honesty	Strength
Respect	Love
Patience	Sharing
Tolerance	Caring

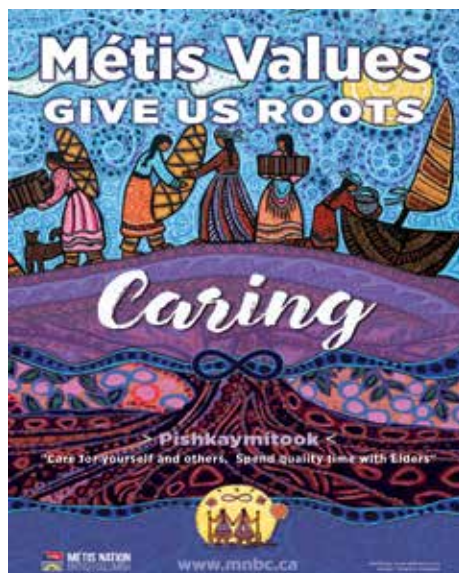
The Core Values, as outlined in the book “The Giving Tree” by Leah Dorion, build a foundation for Métis students, guiding them on how to relate to each other and their surroundings, centering around the importance of cultural ways.

### The Métis Core Value of Caring is Highlighted in this Newsletter.

Caring can enhance classroom learning by fostering a supportive and empathetic environment. It encourages students to look out for one another, creating a sense of belonging and mutual respect. Caring for each other and for the land teaches students the importance of stewardship and community.

**Caring helps students develop empathy, build strong relationships, and create a positive classroom atmosphere. It promotes inclusivity, understanding, and cooperation, which are essential for a harmonious learning environment.**

In essence, caring is a fundamental aspect



of education that not only enriches the learning process but also helps in the holistic development of students. We can achieve more together when we care for one another.

There are a variety of practices and activities that can provide opportunities to demonstrate caring in a classroom, fostering collaboration, communication, and community. These can include:

**Caring for Resources:** Taking care of physical items like art materials or books and respecting shared spaces.

**Morning Meeting:** Daily or weekly gatherings where students share their thoughts and feelings, fostering a sense of community.

**Opportunities for Speaking:** Building and practicing communication skills, learning to express thoughts and listen with empathy.

**Project-Based Learning:** Collaborating on tasks, sharing responsibilities, and celebrating each other's contributions.

**Social Emotional Learning:** Developing empathy and understanding, fostering healthy peer relationships.

These practices are integral to creating an environment where students feel valued and part of a supportive learning community. Encouraging caring builds an understanding of our shared responsibilities to each other in the community, which is a critical aspect of the Métis worldview. **Ka-Wiichihitoyahk: We take care of each other.** ■





## ■ Invitation to Learn

### Métis Foundational Knowledge Themes Course

As many Canadians and educators are aware the Métis peoples are considered (as per section 35 (2) of the Constitution Act, 1982) one of the 3 equally recognized Indigenous peoples of Canada.

Yet, if you asked students “who are the Métis?” you might find that many students, and sometimes educators, don’t really know. The reasons for this are multi-faceted, but we know that systemic and lateral racism played a huge part.

A great resource that helps unpack some of those lived experiences can be found through Rupertsland Centre for Teaching and Learning under the Métis Foundational Knowledge Themes tab: it is free for educators. This course explores the lived experiences of the Métis in Alberta, from discrimination to persistence and resilience, and as well as other historical, and cultural teachings. Although it is not a comprehensive resource of all Métis history across Canada, it is a great place to start! Learn more about the course [here](#).

#### Outdoor Learning Store

The Outdoor Learning Store is a non-profit online hub offering a variety of products to support outdoor education. These include educational kits, books, guides, and essential equipment like compasses and plant identification tools. All proceeds go back into the non-profit, supporting their mission to promote outdoor learning and fund further initiatives.

Check out the Métis courses and resources that they have available.

[Métis Courses & Resources - Outdoor Learning School & Store](#)

In collaboration with organizations like Take Me Outside, the store also supports programs such as the Outdoor Learning Certification Program and the Outdoor Learning Conference. These initiatives provide educators with the tools and knowledge to integrate outdoor learning into their teaching practices, fostering a deeper connection with nature for students.

Learn more about the course [here](#). ■

## ■ Incorporating Métis Content in a Respectful Way within K-12 Classrooms

Respect in education is mutual. Educators need not avoid Indigenous studies for fear of cultural misappropriation. Métis communities value your sincere efforts and understand that learning is ongoing for everyone, including our youth.

To build confidence, engage with Chartered Community members and elders in kaa-wiichitoyahk. This connection is vital, as every Indigenous Education Council (IEC) now expects a Métis representative, facilitating educator access to Indigenous Education resources.

Be mindful of sensitive topics. Avoid singling out Métis students for discussions on residential schools; they may be unaware of

their family’s experiences or feel spotlighted. When addressing cultural misappropriation, ensure educational materials like documentaries don’t inadvertently suggest Métis claims are insincere. Preface such content with clear explanations that legitimate Métis communities exist, and false claims by others don’t reflect on all Métis or First Nations peoples.

Incorporate Métis culture respectfully by inviting Elders from local Métis Chartered Communities or through MNBC for guest talks. Consider the Métis Sashing ceremony for graduates, allowing them to wear their Sash, symbolizing their achievements and connections, with pride alongside their peers. ■

## ■ Learning from the Land Through my mother’s eyes

*The Story of Dyane Murphy*



“Ahstum M’Girl!” Grama called.

Ahstum Michif for “Come” and “My Girl” (commonly used together by an auntie, uncle, grama or grampa,) Grama’s call for me this time meant it was time to go.

Another summer was here again, which meant berry/cherry picking season and time was of the essence.

With Grampa upfront and at the reins of the horse driving and Grama, Uncle Edward (who was blind), and I in the wagon behind, off we’d go!

I never paid much attention to where exactly we went; I just knew it was Grama and Grampa’s old homeland. Today I know it was in or around Prince Albert, Batoche, Duck Lake also known as the Métis homelands. Once there, we had to set up camp which meant pitching the tent, storing the food and water, making a place to eat and cook, washing and hang the clothes, tie the horses, have Grampa’s rifles nearby, and staying close to the berries, and pin and choke cherries. Uncle Edward had that silly Métis humour and always teased and made everyone laugh and was always good company. Once it was time to work it was pail after pail, hour after hour, day after day; and weeks later hope we had enough to last until next summer. Once we were home it would be made into jams and sauce that would be canned or used to make pemmican and stored in the cellar through the winter.

Grampa taught me how to snare birds in the Fall when he hunted and trapped and how to plant vegetables like carrots and potatoes in the garden. This was my life as I knew it and who I still am today. I always felt loved, was never hungry, and although we may have been poor, I never knew, because they made me feel so incredibly rich with love!

Years later I understood (aside from the berry season) why it was areas like Batoche, Duck Lake we camped at and realize now of course, this was their homeland filled with special memories of childhood and family and community like they gave and showed me. Memories of the stories told to them by their father and grandfather about the Battle of Batoche when they fought for their freedom alongside Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont during a time where being Métis was met with a sense of pride. Before they were dispossessed from their lands and forced out of their community.

I hope this story of my mother’s Métis upbringing and her experiences living off the land, has some educational value. Her and her grandparent’s connection to the Métis homeland not only honour a Métis way of life then but can provide students with hands-on, learning opportunities. By incorporating land-based education, we can encourage a greater appreciation for the land and promote a sense of responsibility in students to the resilience and wisdom of the Métis community to inspire integrating Indigenous and Métis heritage into modern educational practices. ■

## ■ Michif Language On the Go!

### Exploring the Rich Heritage of Michif Languages

The **Michif languages** are historically linked to Métis communities across the Métis homeland. The three Michif languages, commonly referred to as Southern Michif, Northern Michif, and French Michif, and are made up of elements from both First Nations languages and European languages – predominantly Cree and French. Southern Michif uses mostly Plains-Cree verbs and French nouns, but also borrows nouns from English, Saulteaux, and Cree [1].

Southern Michif is most associated with communities in southern Saskatchewan and North Dakota [2]. Southern Michif may also be referred to as Heritage Michif, Mixed Michif, or Turtle Mountain Chippewa Cree.

Language ([ameliadouglassinstitute.ca](https://ameliadouglassinstitute.ca))

**Michif is upheld as the national Métis language.**

It is a unique language that developed in the Red River valley in the early 1800s. Michif is

a mixed language that contains Plains Cree verbs and French nouns and noun structure, as well as some vocabulary and structures from Saulteaux and English.

**There are three types of Michif:**

- Métis French (also called Michif-French)
- Métis Cree (also called Northern Michif or Île-à-la-Crosse Michif)
- Southern Michif (also called Turtle Mountain Michif, Chippewa-Cree, or Heritage Michif)

Métis people have a long tradition of multilingualism, which stems from their connections to multiple cultures and their resourcefulness and adaptability. Diverse expressions of Métis culture and different kinship networks have resulted in communities and individuals speaking a variety of other languages, such as Cree, Saulteaux, French, and English.

The Words of our Ancestors <https://ameliadouglassinstitute.ca/michif-language>

**Fall Language.**

*Leaf – enn fy* (Southern Michif)

*Autumn – Latonn* (Southern Michif)

*Wind – Li vann* (Southern Michif)

*Cold – tahkayow* (Southern Michif)

*Rain – la pwii* (Southern Michif)

*Harvest – lii bataazh* (Southern Michif)

*Pumpkin – enn sitrooy* (Southern Michif)

*Apple – enn pomm* (Southern Michif)

*Squash – si koom enn sitrouille* (Southern Michif)

*Festival – aen festivaal* (Southern Michif)



TRANSLATIONS BY  
"HERITAGE MICHIF  
TO GO" APP

[Michif To Go \(Métismuseum.ca\)](https://michif.to.go) ■

## ■ From the Hearts and Minds of K-12 Education in BC

### Friendship Blooms, Building Bridges Through Education and Culture

#### BC School Phone Policy

In British Columbia, schools have begun implementing a "bell-to-bell" policy to restrict the use of personal digital devices, including cell phones, during school hours. This policy aims to minimize distractions and enhance students' focus on their education. Students were required to keep their devices turned off and stored away during class time and between classes unless directed by the teacher. The primary goal of this policy is to create a focused learning environment, reduce distractions, and support students' mental health and social connections.

Exceptions are made for instructional purposes, accessibility needs, and for any medical reasons. Schools are providing resources and guidance to help students, parents, and staff adapt to the new guidelines, including discussion about

online safety and setting boundaries for device use.

In centering the policy in the Métis ways of knowing and learning, it aligns with the community values of respect and focus on education. Métis traditions emphasize the importance of learning and community, and reducing digital distractions can help students engage more deeply with their cultural heritage and educational content. By fostering a more engaging and productive education experience, this policy supports the holistic development of all students.

#### MNBC Digital Equity Initiative

The Digital Equity Initiative is designed to ensure Métis students have the necessary tools and skills to thrive in the digital world. The program provides students with essential digital devices like laptops and tablets, ensuring they have the hardware

needed for online learning. The initiative addresses the need for reliable internet access by offering affordable, high-speed connectivity to Métis families and their households, helping students stay connected and access online educational resources without interruption. The program offers training that covers a range of skills from basic computer operation to advanced topics like coding, digital content creation, and cybersecurity.

The initiative emphasizes community engagement, creating content that reflects Métis culture and values, and encouraging community participation in digital literacy program. By bridging the digital divide and promoting inclusion, the Digital Equity Initiative empowers Métis students with the knowledge and tools they need to navigate the digital world confidently and responsibly. ■

## ■ Métis Family Connections

### Elementary, Middle & Secondary Years

The Métis Family Connections – Elementary, Middle, and Secondary Years Program was developed by Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) for families with Métis children ages 9 to 18 years. The Elementary Secondary Years Program focuses on connecting families with community, culture, and opportunities to access relevant programs and services that support a healthy transition from elementary and secondary education to post-secondary education, skills training, and the workforce. If you have Métis students in your class or school community, referring them to this program can be life changing.

#### Why is it important for families to enroll their children in the Métis Family Connections – Elementary and Secondary Years Program?

- To learn more about Métis identity and Métis Nation.
- To be up to date on what elementary and secondary education services are available in your community and how to access them.
- Be aware of services offered to MNBC citizens such as the Métis Child Care Benefit (MCCB) Program, the Skills Training, Employment and Post Secondary (STEPS) program, and other valuable services offered by the Ministry of Youth, Ministry of Children and Families, Ministry of Housing, and Ministry of Health.
- To be connected to other Métis families.



- To have support in a healthy transition through the elementary and secondary education system into adulthood and the workforce.
- Opportunities to attend Métis family gathering events. ■

## ■ Métis Nation Elementary and Secondary Years Bulletin

### Study Examines Unique Realities of Métis Educators

Métis Nation British Columbia's (MNBC) Ministry of Education was invited to do a call-out for a study on K-12 teachers who are Métis citizens across the homelands. Two Academics, Dr. Laura Forsythe University of Winnipeg, and Dr. Lucy Fowler from the University of Manitoba are undertaking this study called Kaanawapatha maytress/ maytr d'ikol dann li niikinaahk: Taking a Look at the Experiences of Métis Teachers in the homeland. This unique study will examine the lived realities of Métis educators on two fronts: recruitment and retention. They would like to tell the story of how Métis Educators experience educational training in Canadian universities and subsequent teaching careers within the K-12 education system. They hope to interview 50 Métis educators who are MNBC citizens. These 1–3 hour interviews will be conducted over the summer and fall of 2024 virtually (Zoom) or by telephone and they will follow Métis protocols. This project is fully funded by the Rideau Hall Foundation and the results of the research will be

gifted to MNBC and distributed as broadly as possible. Questions can be emailed to [Métisteachers2024@gmail.com](mailto:Métisteachers2024@gmail.com)

### Métis Child Care Benefit (MCCB) for children 0-9 years old

The Métis Child Care Benefit (MCCB) is a monthly benefit designed to support Métis families with their child care expenses. This benefit helps cover costs for Licensed or Registered License Not-Required child care and Licensed Preschool fees. It aims to bridge the gap to the Affordable Child Care Benefit, ensuring that Métis families have access to quality child care services.

### Talking to Parents About After-School Care

When discussing after-school care with parents, it's essential to highlight the program's benefits and address any concerns they might have. Emphasize the importance of a safe and nurturing environment, engaging activities, and the qualifications of the staff. Encourage parents to ask

questions and be involved in their child's after-school routine. Open communication helps build trust and ensures that the after-school program meets the needs of both the children and their families. ■





## ■ MNBC Out in the Community (Prince George)

### September 6–8 MNBC Métis Girls Gathering

September 6th marked MNBC's first ever Métis Girls Gathering. The gathering, held at Camp Friendship in Prince George, was designed to help promote mental wellness, positive relationships, cultural awareness for Métis girls aged 8-15.

The gathering featured several special moments that included sharing of meals, educational and cultural activities and workshops to do with the important female figures in their lives. Allowing some freetime for a no pressure environment was also important. One of the workshops they enjoyed was the ribbon skirt workshop. Each girl received a welcome bag when they arrived that included an indigenous doll wearing an Every Child Matters T-shirt. The ribbon skirt workshop taught them how to make their doll a Métis ribbon skirt to

complete their look. Other successes were the Métis flower beading workshop, cultural activities such as playing the spoons, which the Métis would play with the fiddle while others danced the Métis jig. The spin-to-win Métis trivia wheel (with questions on Métis culture and history) also kept the girls engaged throughout the day.

Evenings were spent around the campfire roasting marshmallows, sharing stories, drumming, and singing which created meaningful and spiritual moments and the book MoonTime Prayer was shared which taught the girls about the sacredness of a woman's moontime and the power of their natural cycles. Moms, daughters, aunts, and grandmas connected in a special way that created lifelong memories, I'm sure. When it was bedtime the girls slept in spacious

cabins with bunk-style beds where a cabin of their own gave them some independence and space to connect with each other and form friendships organically.

The Sashing Ceremony between mom child and Elder Sylvia was probably the most meaningful event that took place. Moms would share some special words guided by Elder Sylvia as they sashed their daughter and told them how much they were loved.

It was an honour to have attended MNBC's 1st ever Métis Girls Gathering and its success where the girls made some special bonds with their mothers, formed new and special friendships and left more mature with a better understanding of their Métis culture and who they are. ■



## ■ UPCOMING EVENTS

# Indspire National Gathering for Indigenous Education

November 20–22, 2024 | Winnipeg, MB

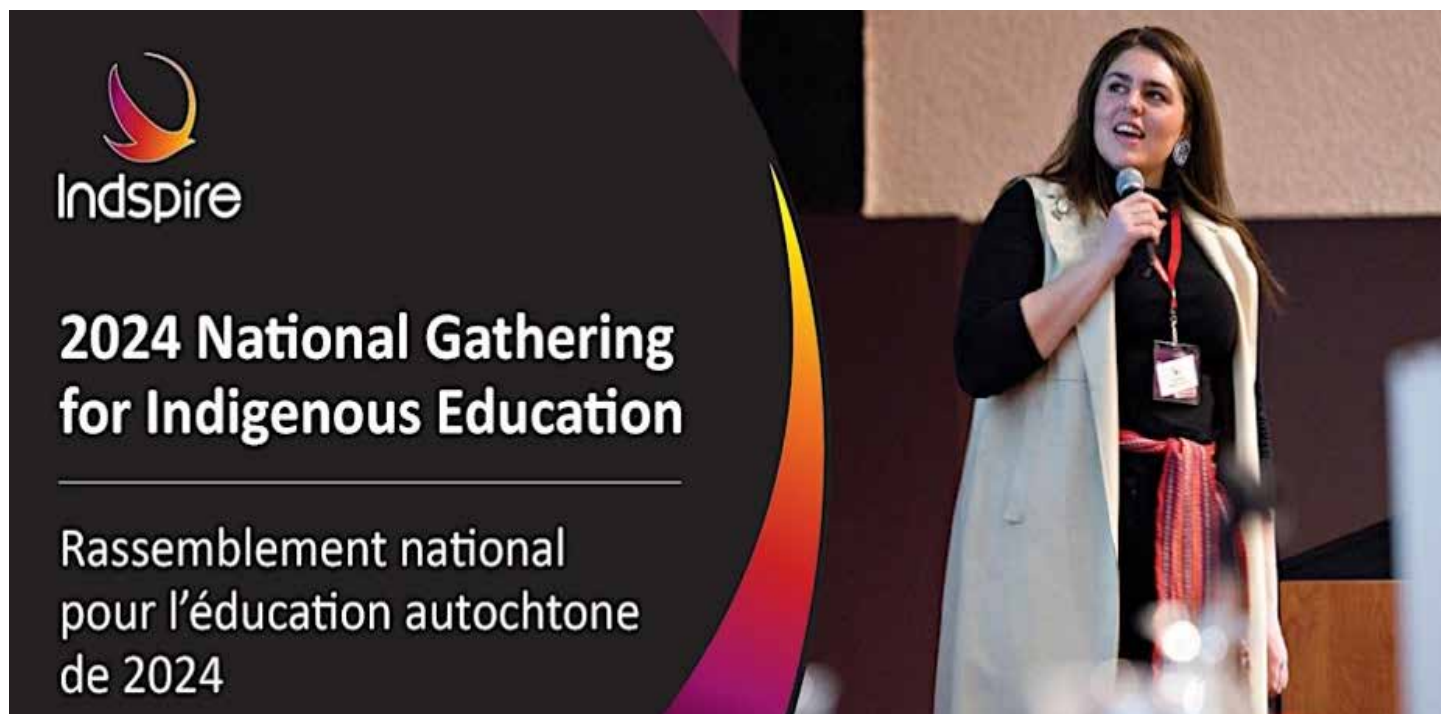
Join Canada's leading voices on Indigenous education in Winnipeg, Manitoba – or from the comfort of your home!

Indspire is pleased to announce that the 2024 National Gathering for Indigenous Education will take place via a hybrid format, allowing educators from across the country to attend virtually or in person.

The National Gathering is a one-of-a-kind venue where educators and partners can share their voices and work together to improve the educational outcomes of K-12 Indigenous students. This uniquely important annual conference attracts hundreds of educators and partners each year. We invite you to join the conversation!

Back by popular demand, there will also be a student panel discussion featuring three Indigenous students who will discuss their experiences in post-secondary educational settings.

[Register for 2024 National Gathering](#) ■



## Our Métis Family Connections – Elementary and Secondary Years Navigators

The specialized Navigators can walk alongside our Métis learners and their families as they navigate their years of the K-12 Education system right up to graduation.

## Contact Information

For more information about Métis programs and services, contact us at [Métiseducation@mnbc.ca](mailto:Métiseducation@mnbc.ca)



## Resources

**Ruperts land Institute - Métis Education Resources**

[Métis Education Resources - Rupertsland Institute](#)

**The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture**

[The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture \(Métismuseum.ca\)](http://TheVirtualMuseumofMétisHistoryandCulture.ca)

**First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Professional Learning Project**

[FNMI – First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Professional Learning Project \(fnmiprofessionallearning.ca\)](http://FNMI-FirstNations,Métis,andInuitProfessionalLearningProject.ca)

**Kaa-Wiichihitoyaahk (We take care of each other) - Métis perspectives on cultural wellness**

[the Amelia Douglas Institute Home - Métis in BC \(mnbc.ca\)](#)

[Métis | Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada](#)



**MÉTIS NATION**  
BRITISH COLUMBIA