Final Report of the Program Evaluation of the Action Research for Mino-Pimaatisiwin in Erickson Schools, Manitoba

February 2020

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CENTRE FOR ABORIGINAL AND RURAL EDUCATION STUDIES

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Action Research for Mino-Pimaatisiwin in Erickson Manitoba Schools Executive Summary

This action research project, Mino-Pimaatisiwin, was a collaboration among researchers at Brandon University, the staff and principal of Erickson Elementary School (EES) and Erickson Collegiate Institute (ECI), the superintendent of Rolling River School Division, and members of a First Nations community, Rolling River First Nation, working on systemic educational change by infusing Indigenous perspectives into the school culture, curriculum, and community. The project was conducted during the 18 months of fall 2017 to spring 2019. It was funded by Indigenous Services Canada through the New Paths for Education Program. Project funding was used for student/school materials and resources, learning materials, professional development, conference presentations, and community-school activities.

According to Hart (2002), Mino-Pimaatisiwin is an Ojibwe term for "life in the fullest, healthiest sense" (n. p). Its foundations are wholeness, balance, relationships, harmony, growth, and healing. Hart explains all aspects of the whole are in relation to one another: "When we give energy to these relationships, we nurture the connections" (Hart, 2002, n. p.). Thus, student learning should include how parts work interdependently to create wholes (Bell, 2016). Indigenization is a transformative process that highlights the importance of centering Indigenous people, cultures, knowledge systems, experiences, and priorities in education (Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000; Smith, 2013). According to Manitoba Education and Youth (2003), "Schools have the responsibility to ensure that Aboriginal perspectives are fairly and accurately conveyed to all students. The inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives into curricula will benefit not only Aboriginal peoples but non-Aboriginal peoples as well" (p.1). The purpose of this evaluation was to explore the impact on the "good life" of infusing Indigenous perspectives into the elementary school curriculum with a focus on building self-esteem and cultural connectedness among Indigenous students using the cultural frameworks of Mino-Pimaatisiwin and the Ojibwe Seven Teachings of a Good Life.

The purpose of the evaluation was to explore the extent to which the Erikson Schools achieved their goal of co-developing, with Rolling River First Nation, an educational environment based on the cultural framework of Mino-Pimaatisiwin (Good Life) and the Ojibwe Good Life Principles. Activities directed toward these goals included teacher and administration professional development in the areas of cultural proficiency, Indigenization of curricula across grade levels, experiential learning, community exchanges, and involvement of Elders.

The program evaluation of the Mino-Pimaatisiwin project included three areas: (1) needs assessments of the existing and ideal types of student assessments; (2) results of student success surveys; and (3) teachers' and principals' perceptions and actions on Indigenizing school curricula. Data sources for the program evaluation research included student surveys, interview data from teachers and principals, feedback slips, and student interviews about student field trips, and document analysis. Data analysis included both quantitative and qualitative data analysis processes.

In addition to the data collection and analyses, an extensive review of the literature was conducted. The purpose of the review was to present a framework of Indigenous philosophical and ontological concepts that sought to support thorough explanations and descriptions of the findings.

Overview of key findings from the program evaluation research:

- The contents of this program evaluation should serve as an exemplar to other schools of the courage, open-mindedness, and collaborative spirit required to facilitate systemic change of this magnitude.

- The schools have had success in achieving an educational environment based on the cultural framework of Mino-Pimaatisiwin (Good Life) and the Ojibwe Good Life Principles.

- The teachers and principals who were interviewed displayed a commitment to the Indigenization of curriculum, student-centered focus, and dedication to reconciliation and equity. The schools had advanced educational practices throughout the project and demonstrated notable responsiveness to not only supporting but actively promoting well-being for all their students, with a particular focus on the context and difficulties many Indigenous students encounter in mainstream schools.

- More culturally responsive resources are needed to be readily available to schools.

- There are limited or no formative or summative student assessment strategies that include Indigenous perspectives. In large part, education policies at the provincial level are the drivers of student assessment.

- Erickson students in both the collegiate and the elementary school have a high degree of cultural connectedness. However, a connection to school appears to diminish in the final two years of high school.

- Formal opportunities for ongoing discussions, debriefing, and professional development for teachers and administrators are required to support the ongoing development of competencies to address the complexity of this challenging work of developing and implementing an Indigenous curriculum.

Based on the program evaluation, an overarching recommendation supports that Erickson Schools continue to collaborate with Rolling River First Nation on the Indigenization of the curriculum to facilitate best the success of students attending school from that community.

Specifically, it is recommended the Erickson Schools:

- Continue to nurture their relationship with the Rolling River First Nation, particularly with the families of students and with recognized Elders and Knowledge Keepers from the community, and to provide direct opportunities for teachers to connect with the Rolling River First Nation;

- Continue to support onsite Indigenous leadership. Rolling River School Division to develop a transition plan to consult with a recognized Indigenous cultural competency liaison (someone with expertise and education in Indigenous pedagogy, i.e., an Elder, Knowledge Keeper, or scholar with mentorship from a recognized Elder or Knowledge Keeper) or board of directors;

- Develop assessment strategies that expand the common learning occurring through holistic Indigenous perspectives and traditional provincial and federal assessment practices;

- Sustain ongoing professional development in cultural proficiencies with a particular focus on Indigenous cultural competencies and anti-racist intervention skills, ongoing Indigenization of curriculum and decolonization, continue to increase the number of community exchanges and increase Elder and Knowledge Keeper involvement; and

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers in terms of culturally competent curriculum delivery (keeping in mind duties related to reconciliation, sacred knowledges, cultural appropriation, Settler colonialism, identity awareness, critical race analysis, and anti-racism work).

Introduction

In 2016, the Office of the Auditor General of Manitoba presented the Manitoba Provincial Legislative Assembly with a report titled *Improving Educational Outcomes for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Aboriginal Students*. Section 1.2 of this report presented a review of the gaps in monitoring, analyzing, and reporting performance of programs and initiatives at the local, regional, and provincial levels in Manitoba. The major findings were that there is/are:

1. Inconsistent and weak monitoring of initiatives;

2. Few evidence-based program evaluations to inform decision-making;

3. Limited analysis to explain trends and understand why the education gap is widening between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students; and

4. Little public reporting on progress.

In collaboration with Rolling River School Division, Erickson Elementary School (EES), Erickson Collegiate Institute (ECI), and Rolling River First Nation, Brandon University Center for Aboriginal and Rural Education Study (BU CARES), through research, measurement and evaluation processes, examined the Indigenization of curricula and school programs that will ultimately improve Indigenous student success. The elementary and high schools in Erickson have started a process of Indigenization of curricula based on Mino-Pimaatisiwin and Ojibwe Seven Teachings of a Good Life. This project aimed to clarify the vision, targets, and theories of the plan they have in place.

Firstly, the information presented in this report will provide an explanation of the process used, by BU CARES, for consultation and collaboration with the Erickson schools, Rolling River School Division, and Rolling River First Nation. Secondly, this report will provide an explanation of the initial needs assessment that was completed on the data collection and assessment tools currently used by EES and ECI. Thirdly, it explores the development of cultural competency, belonging, and resilience among Erickson School students during the timeframe of the Mino-Pimaatisiwin project. Fourthly it examines the perspectives of Erickson School staff and administrators on the process of Indigenizing the curriculum, and finally, it provides a perspective on the ideal educational framework for Indigenous students, as presented in the literature.

Mino-Pimaatisiwin is living life in the fullest, healthiest sense. It is the ever-present goal of growth and healing; and, includes efforts by individuals, families, communities, and society. Indigenous education is a live-long journey that is rooted in language, culture, spirituality, the involvement of families and communities, and the development of all four facets of a learner's personal growth. The purpose of learning is to develop the abilities, understanding, values, and acumen needed to honor and safeguard the natural world and ensure the long-term sustainability of life. Reports indicate that Indigenous students narrate similar general self-concept to their non-Indigenous peers; however, poorer self-perception in school functioning (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007,

2009). These findings point to the importance of the learning environment, and those working within it, to portray multi-dimensional models of self-concept.

Process

An overarching tool that has helped BU CARES' success, working with Indigenous partners and school division partners, is a community research protocol that explicitly outlines the roles, responsibilities and Ownership, Control, Access and Possession Principles of research involving Indigenous people and communities. This protocol guides all of the education and research activities performed through this project. Community consultation is achieved by engagement with Chief and Council, Elders, teachers, and parents. BU CARES solicited community input in regards to the interpretation of research findings to better understand the context of research results. A project steering committee was created, comprised of the Dean of Education, the Director of BU CARES, representation from Rolling River First Nation, Rolling River School Division, Erickson Elementary School and High School, and research assistants from Brandon University. This committee provided input into the overall project direction including recommendations for activities and ensured on-going consultation and collaboration. Figure 1 outlines the process by which the committee implemented and evaluated this Mino-Pitisaawin project.

Figure 1. Framework for Planning, Implementing and Evaluating Mino-Pimaatisiwin.

As part of this research project, with Erickson Elementary School and Erickson Collegiate Institute, staff worked in professional learning communities, on action research cycles related to specific areas of need that have been identified. Two cycles of a success indicator survey, along with staff dialogue and additional assessment data, provided the staff with evidence supporting the need for specific programming in several areas of student well-being. Both schools found indication of support needed in the areas of cultural connectedness and self-esteem. Through the action research process, each school team reviewed research and determined the appropriate course of action and strategies to meet the needs identified.

The action research process is a seven-step framework that is cyclical in nature. The first step is to select a focus. This is done through dialogue and reflection on the question: what area of student growth or learning is throwing up red flags, needing some exploration? The second step of the process is to clarify theories. This is done by the educators examining their values, beliefs, and theoretical perspectives on the area of focus. Next, the team identified the research question(s) to guide the inquiry on the focus topic. Through the collection of valid, reliable data, the PLC team was able to sort and examine the information gathered, looking for themes and patterns. This analysis provides the educators an opportunity to parallel their initial concerns with supporting evidence. The final two steps of the action research process are reporting or sharing the results with administration and colleagues, and; lastly, determining a plan of action that refines the strategies that will be used to support the area of focus. During this step, staff also explored research literature on the area of focus to assist in planning.

The staff of both schools planned the activities to Indigenize the curriculum. The evaluation team from Brandon University collected survey data on student feelings of cultural connectedness, belonging, and resilience at the start and end of the project. Finally, interviews were conducted with staff members and administrators at the end of the project.

Context of the Evaluators

In preparation for conducting a culturally sensitive evaluation, it is important that the evaluators be attuned to the cultural context, and under ideal conditions, the evaluators should be "insider" with respect to the cultural group of stakeholders. In this case, the stakeholders are a group of teachers, most of whom are non-Indigenous settler Canadians like the evaluators.

The identity term "settler" refers to a situated, process-based, and pervasive identity in Canada (as well as in other settler societies globally). We are attempting to work with respect to the treaties that were made on these lands and acknowledge that we live on Treaty 1 and Treaty 2 Lands, which are the traditional homelands of the Dakota, Anishinabek, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dene and Métis peoples.

Our own teaching experience is with adult learners in post-secondary, professional development, and clinical training settings as well as with students, teachers, and

administrators in K-12 schools. We feel settlers involved in the sincere work of decolonizing professional approaches, structures, and systems share a similar set of hopes and challenges. Frierson, Hood, and Hughes (2002) have shown that common intersections to the stakeholder group lend to the validity of the data.

Evaluation Framework

The role of the external program evaluators was to direct and facilitate the collection of evaluation data, analyze the evaluation data, and prepare the implementation, interim report, and final evaluation reports.

This report is the final program evaluation report. Its focus on relevant components aims to help the community, students, teachers, schools, and the school division achieve their collective goals and objectives.

The evaluation framework involved the following 3 phases:

1. Needs assessment;

2. Interim report; and

3. A final summative report delivered to all the partnerships in the Indigenization of schools.

Program Evaluation Question

The purpose of the program evaluation was to evaluate to what extent the Erickson Schools—as institutions responsible for providing education to students in the Rolling River School Division that includes Rolling River First Nation—were providing a high quality, indigenized curriculum to their student population.

The overarching evaluation question was:

To what extent have the Erickson Schools achieved their goal of co-developing, with Rolling River First Nation, an educational environment based on the cultural framework of Mino-Pimaatisiwin (Good Life) and the Ojibwe Good Life Principles to improve learning outcomes for Indigenous students?

The sub-questions of the evaluation included:

To what extent has teacher and administration professional development in the areas of cultural proficiency increased the understanding of the Indigenization of curricula and experiential learning across grade levels?

To what extent have the intended community exchanges increased Indigenous family involvement in the school?

To what extent has the involvement of Elders contributed to the Indigenization process at the schools in terms of cultural proficiency?

Activities directed toward these goals included teacher and administration professional development in the areas of cultural proficiency, Indigenization of curricula across grade levels, experiential learning, community exchanges, and involvement of Elders.

Program Evaluation Methodology

Participants were Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers, principals, and students. The program methodology for the final program evaluation involved the following data collection and analysis methods.

Data Collection and Assessment Inventory

The assessment identified the student data that Erickson Elementary and Erickson Collegiate were currently collecting and related these data to the framework for Mino-Pimaatisiwin.

Student Surveys

The CARES prepared paper surveys that were distributed to school staff who then administered the surveys to their students. Students at both Erickson Elementary and Erickson Collegiate completed the surveys.

Surveys were administered according to age group. At Erickson Elementary, there were some third grade students who received the K-2 survey and some that received the 3-6 survey. There are limitations to the Erickson Elementary survey 2, as the format was altered due to a change in who was administering the survey; therefore the results cannot be related directly to survey 1.

The purpose of the survey was to provide descriptive data analysis about student experiences of cultural connectedness and self-esteem over the two-year period. Significant findings from the surveys are presented graphically in Part 5.

School Context Teacher Interviews

Four teacher school context interviews were conducted at each school, totaling eight interviews. The purpose of these interviews was to understand the school context and teacher perception of the interplay between educational context indicators and the Indigenization of the curriculum process. The researcher used a semi-structured interview guide.

With the permission of the participants, the interviews were audio-taped. The audiotapes were then transcribed into anonymized, textual data by a research assistant/casual employee of Brandon University (Christiane Ramsey). In the event that participants did not wish to be audio-taped, the interviewer made field notes of the interview. These field notes were also transcribed into textual data. The textual data were imported into NVivo software and subsequently analyzed using the following analytical functions of the software: (1) coding for themes; (2) word count frequencies; and (3) key words in context.

Organization of this Report

Part 1: Introduces the broader social and educational issues in a Canadian context, leading to the provincial context and finally locating the challenges within the context of Erickson Schools and Rolling River First Nation.

Part 2: Explores the findings of the needs assessment of student assessment strategies evaluations of the central undertakings of the project.

Part 3: Review of the relevant literature.

Part 4: Review of the relevant literature: Indigenizing the curriculum.

Part 5: Reports on the findings of the cultural connectedness, belonging, and resilience surveys.

Part 6: Presents the overarching major findings from the staff interviews.

Part 7: Includes conclusions and recommendations based on the findings and ends with the reference list.

Part 1: Introduction

Challenges of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education

The well-documented problems of Eurocentrism, racism, residential school history and vast ontological and epistemological differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews and concepts about learning are major barriers for the provision of culturally competent education to First Nations, Métis and Inuit in Canada (Martin & Pirbhai-Illich, 2016; Regan, 2010; Smith, Tuck, & Yang, 2018; Tunison, 2007). The dominance of neoliberalism and globalization in the West are recognized as extensions of colonialism that interfere with Indigenous life (Coulthard, 2014; Smith, 2012). Past and present land theft and disputes about the industrialization and exploitations of traditional territories continue to strain relations between Canada and First Nations (Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000; Coulthard, 2014; Smith, 2012 ;). Concerns about external control over Indigenous life extend to the education system as well, where requirements for 'proof' of academic improvement can be viewed as justification for external control of Indigenous education (Tunison, 2007).

Indigenous scholars recognize the ways that traditional Indigenous knowledge, as an epistemological fact of life recognized through ceremony, oral teachings, stories, land-based practices, and ancestral languages has been disrupted by colonial interventions (Coulthard, 2014; Simpson, 2004). For Bell (2016), education is the accumulation of knowledge systems, worldviews, and ways of knowing that are produced from active relationships in the environment, has played a role in the cultural and physical survival of Indigenous Peoples for millennia. Simpson (2004) calls for the application of Indigenous knowledges to address the multitude of problems caused by colonialism.

Traditional Indigenous learning starts in the home, which is inseparable from the land (Smith, Tuck, & Yang, 2018), with family being the first teachers to provide the important skills that young people need to live in this world (Tunison, 2007, 2013). As evidenced by public inquiries, such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015), Residential Schools and the Sixties Scoop were among the documented colonial interventions that severed this traditional learning arrangement. Scholars of Indigenous education have articulated the importance of decolonizing and re-claiming family involvement in the education process of children (Tunison, 2013). This as a major challenge for schools committed to Indigenizing education. School boards, administrators, and teachers committed to taking on the responsibility of overcoming the violence and cultural genocide of our shared colonial history, and the ongoing occupation of traditional lands, must seek points of connection to rebuild trust with Indigenous peoples (Regan, 2010). Too often the onus of student success is put back on the communities that have been negatively affected by colonization, and educational institutions can play a reconciliatory role by maintaining a posture of accountability and openness to what First Nations say they need for the education of their People (Battiste & Henderson, 2000).

Educational Achievement Gaps

In 2016, the Office of the Auditor General of Manitoba presented the Manitoba Provincial Legislative Assembly with a report titled: *Improving Educational Outcomes for Kindergarten to Grade 12 Aboriginal Students*. The report echoed many long-standing issues confronting K-12 Aboriginal students in Manitoba and across Canada. This report is particularly relevant to this project. Specifically, section 1.2 of the Auditor General 2016 report presented a review of the gaps in monitoring, analyzing, and reporting performance of programs and initiatives at the local, regional, and provincial levels in Manitoba. The major findings were that there are:

- inconsistent and weak monitoring of initiatives;

- few evidence-based program evaluations to inform decision-making;

- limited analysis to explain trends and understand why the education gap is widening between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students; and

- little public reporting on progress.

At the national level, 2016 Canadian census data shows the gaps in achievement between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the K-12 system. For example, 90% of non-Indigenous adults (aged 20-24 years old) have at least a high school certificate. By comparison, 84% of Métis young adults have a high school certificate and 75% of off-reserve, First Nations young adults have completed high school. Notably, only 48% of the young adults living on reserve have completed high school.

According to Richards (2017), Manitoba's high school graduation rate for First Nations young adults living off-reserve is 61%. The high school graduation rate for on-reserve First Nations young adults is 36%. While these results are not surprising given the data that shows how gaps in achievement appear by income, race, and ethnicity (Johnson, 2002), detailed proposals for intervention are available yet under-implemented (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008).

The achievement gap is widening for Indigenous students (Giroux, 2012; Universities Canada, 2015). This is concerning nationwide and locally, given a K-12 student body in Manitoba that comprises 18% Indigenous students; that percentage is poised to rise given 2016 census data that indicate while Indigenous people in total represent 18% of Manitoba's population, 29.6% of children aged four or younger are Indigenous (Statistics Canada, 2016). An emphasis on gaps in achievement itself clouds the complex interactions between issues and underlying structural factors. The focus should be on why the gap exists and how it can be closed.

Addressing Achievement Gaps

Castagno and Brayboy (2008) reviewed the literature on culturally responsive schooling. They highlight that students who are not part of the 'culture of power' need to learn about its particular rules and codes, so they are better able to negotiate within it. The authors

suggest that for Indigenous students to achieve success, it is important that they are held to the same high expectations as their non-Indigenous peers, which requires clear instruction about dominant cultural and academic norms, expectations, and skills (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008).

Emphasis on teacher qualities that support Indigenous learners has been adapted from studies of multicultural literature by Pewewardy and Hammer (2003):

1. Cultural literacy of Indigenous cultures, history, and disposition to learning

2. Teacher self-reflection and analysis of their own attitudes, beliefs, and stereotypes

3. Facilitation of caring, trusting and inclusive classrooms

4. School context that models respect for diversity, Indigenous knowledge and alternative ways of knowing

5. A transformative curriculum that values critical thinking, equity, and social justice

Context of Erickson, Manitoba Schools

Rolling River First Nation

Ditibineya-ziibiing is Ojibwe for the river that rolls. Rolling River First Nation is one of four First Nations in Manitoba that entered into Treaty No. 4 in 1874. This treaty coincided with the disruption of First Nations' fluid relationship and inhabitation of their traditional lands. Indigenous families were increasingly bound to their reserves, disrupting their cultural and traditional lifestyles (Peckett, 1999).

Oral history, as shared by White Bird (in Peckett, 1999), tells us that Rolling River Band identified Riding Mountain as their preferred Indian Reserve (IR). These lands were abundant in resources, and the geographical location provided safety and seclusion, which became even more relevant during the Riel Rebellion. During this time, efforts were made to cut Plains People off from their traditional food supply in order to facilitate Euro-Canadian settlement, and, by 1880, Buffalo had been exterminated in the area. In addition, soldier settlement lands were awarded to First World War soldiers, which interfered with the treaty rights of Rolling River First Nation to hunt, trap, and fish between Rolling River IR and Riding Mountain Forest Reserve.

This disruption is significant given the depth of connection between First Nations and their traditional lands, as is stated in the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (1996): "Land is absolutely fundamental to Aboriginal identity… and is reflected in the language, culture, and spiritual values of all Aboriginal peoples" (as cited in Peckett, 1999).

Currently, the total registered population of Rolling River is 979, and the total population on the reserve is 519. Rolling River First Nation does not have school on the reservation; therefore students travel to Erickson to attend elementary and secondary school.

Challenges for Erickson, Manitoba Schools in the Rolling River School Division

Rural school divisions often experience a unique set of challenges such as isolation, limited resource allocation, community resistance to change, staff turnover, transportation costs, and infrastructure maintenance (Lamkin, 2006). The Rolling River School Division faces many of these challenges; however, as a division, it is committed to providing culturally competent education to its students.

The Erickson schools have a mandate to provide education to students residing in the rural municipality of Erickson, Manitoba (population 600) and to those students traveling from Rolling River First Nation (population 345). The Rolling River School Division Strategic Plan identified and responded to the need for improvement in the areas of literacy, numeracy, health and well-being, and cultural proficiency within the Division schools. For example, Erickson Elementary School has a literacy program, reading recovery, literacy intervention, co-teaching model for resource and guidance, and small group instruction.

Based on school achievement data collected between September 2016 and March 2017 provided by Rolling River School Division and the Erickson schools, 50% of the Rolling River First Nation youth enrolled in Erickson Elementary School grades 1-6, were performing below reading level one and two on their Manitoba report card. The other 50% are at or above level three and four on their Manitoba report card. Numeracy data were not available at the time of this report. Absenteeism, transiency, and late arrival are reported as ongoing concerns at Erickson Elementary. The average absenteeism between September 2016 and March 2017 was ten to fifteen days per First Nation student. Other concerns identified include struggles with student self-regulation, negative self-concept, suicidal ideation and self-harm, feelings of exclusion amongst friends (females were identified as most at risk of isolation), negative perception of school and their own learning, and hostile social interactions among peers (i.e., intimidation and altercations).

Cultural Proficiency: A Rolling River School Division Priority

Cultural proficiency is a perspective that provides a basis for interactions with people who are culturally different. The authors of *Cultural Proficiency: A Manual for School Leaders* (Lindsey, Nuri-Robins, Terrell, & Lindsey, 2018) offer four tools for developing cultural competencies:

1. The Barriers to Cultural Proficiency - Caveats that assist in overcoming resistance to change.

2. The Guiding Principles of Cultural Proficiency - Underlying core values of the approach.

3. The Cultural Proficiency Continuum - Language for describing both health and nonproductive policies, practices, and individual values and behaviors.

4. The Essential Elements for Cultural Proficiency - Behavioral standards for measuring and planning for growth toward Cultural Competence or Cultural Proficiency.

Competencies, as they relate to working with distinct cultural groups, have been described in many different ways in different contexts over time (i.e., cultural proficiency, culturally responsive schooling, Indigenization, and Indigenous inclusion). We are differentiating between cultural proficiency and Indigenization due to the context of colonialism and the recommendations of the TRC that are unique to a Canadian context (i.e., teaching about Indigenous history, Residential Schools, treaties and rights, Aboriginal-Crown relations, anti-racism, etc.). Various forms of culturally responsive schooling (CRS) for Indigenous youth have been advocated for the past 80 years. The Meriam Report (Meriam, 1928) recommended employing more Indigenous teachers, early childhood programs, and incorporating language and culture in schools. Unfortunately, many of the studies on culturally responsive schooling show a lack of impact in terms of praxis due to the concepts "being reduced to essentializations, meaningless generalizations, or trivial anecdotes" (p. 941) and therefore initiatives are not leading to systemic changes (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008). Castagno and Brayboy (2008) have identified the need for reforms in teaching methods, curricular material, teacher dispositions, and school-community relations.

The Rolling River School Division has articulated the commitment to improving in the area of cultural proficiency by identifying five elements (Rolling River School Division, 2018):

1. Assessing cultural knowledge: curriculum provides opportunity for educators and students to learn about self and other.

2. Valuing diversity: curriculum reflects diversity.

3. Managing the dynamics of difference: promoting multiple perspectives.

4. Adapting to diversity: integration of cultural knowledge into curriculum.

5. Institutionalizing: values and policies support culturally responsive curriculum.

There is a particular focus on creating a culturally responsive curriculum to cause equitable outcomes for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Learners. In RRSD's five year strategic plan, they identified the following six goals:

1. By June 2021, all schools will report progress toward cultural proficiency in the five elements of a culturally responsive curriculum to cause equitable outcomes for First Nations, Métis, Inuit (FNMI) Learners. The five essential elements are: assessing cultural knowledge, valuing diversity, managing the dynamics of difference, adapting to diversity, institutionalizing.

2. Incorporate FNMI content and ways of knowing in the curriculum, so all learners (both Aboriginal and general populations) have knowledge and appreciation of the unique contributions of FNMI peoples in Canada.

3. Based on the five elements of cultural proficiency, provide a culturally responsive curriculum to cause equitable outcomes for FNMI Learners.

4. Increase the percentage of students of Aboriginal ancestry who enroll in and complete post-secondary transition programs in career development programs such as career exploration, work experience, and apprenticeship programs.

5. Increase the percentage of students of Aboriginal ancestry graduating in grade 12 with one of Applied Mathematics, Pre-Calculus, and one of Physics, Chemistry, or Biology.

6. Track Aboriginal student participation in extracurricular and leadership programs to inform planning and practices.

RRSD is aiming to assess for cultural proficiency based on a rubric that identifies a spectrum of social change posited to move linearly through the following stages: cultural destructiveness, cultural incapacity, cultural blindness, cultural pre-competence, cultural competence, and cultural proficiency.

Indigenization through the Application of Mino-Pimaatisiwin and the Ojibwe Good Life Principles

Erickson schools and Rolling River School Division applied Mino-Pimaatisiwin and the Ojibwe Good Life Principles to their school environment. The stated goals were for teachers and staff to develop professionally in the areas of cultural proficiency, Indigenization of curricula, experiential instruction, community exchange, and Elder involvement.

The Ojibwe Seven Teachings of the Good Life

In October of 2017, an external assessment of current practices at two Erickson schools began. The researchers then began the task of looking at "ideal types of information." The ideal type means achieving validity through pragmatic application rather than correspondence to truth and replicability. It is not a hypothesis but offers directions toward the development of a hypothesis (Doty & Glick, 1994). While theoretically abstract, it allows for the interpretation of phenomena, such as teacher behavior, in relation to the ideal types of information identified. The ideal types of information chosen for this particular study were drawn from the Ojibwe Seven Teachings of a Good Life (Toulouse, 2008). The seven "Living Teachings" include:

1. ***Respect:*** having high expectations for the Aboriginal student while honoring their culture, language, and worldview in the school context.

2. ***Love:*** is shown by the educator who demonstrates their commitment to each Aboriginal students' learning and teaching style.

3. ***Bravery:*** the courage to change the school curriculum by including the contributions, innovations, and inventions of Aboriginal Peoples.

4. ***Wisdom:*** sharing what has been effective in Aboriginal education and engaging in ongoing professional development and research focused on equity.

5. ***Humility:*** acknowledging that we need to learn more about the diversity of Aboriginal People and by accessing First Nations resources to facilitate that learning.

6. ***Honesty:*** accept that we have much to learn from one another and review factors that encourage change in the education system (such as increased family involvement and teacher education).

7. ***Truth:*** the development of measurable outcomes for Aboriginal student success and utilization of them as indicators regarding curricular and pedagogical inclusivity.

Mino-Pimaatisiwin

Gray, Coates, and Yellow Bird (2008) describe Mino-Pimaatisiwin as the Good Life or as a life lived in the fullest, healthiest sense. Mino-Pimaatisiwin is the goal of growth and healing and includes efforts by individuals, families, communities, and people in general, in fact, all living forms, including the more than human world.

Deer and Falkenberg (2016) identified the following core values:

- ***Respect*** or the showing of honor, esteem, deference and courtesy to all, and not imposing our views on others.

- ***Sharing*** including the sharing of all we have to share, even knowledge and life experiences, which show that everyone is important and helps develop relationships.

- ***Spirituality*** is the recognition that there is a non-physical world. It is all-encompassing in Aboriginal life and is respected in all interactions, including this helping approach, and is demonstrated through meditation, prayer, and ceremonies that guide good conduct (in Deer & Falkenberg, 2016, pp. 2–3).

The autonym Anishinaabe is used by Indigenous People in Manitoba and elsewhere to distinguish themselves as Algonquian speaking nations. Bell (2016) writes that Mino-bimaadiziwin (an orthographic variation of Mino-Pimaatisiwin) was given to Anishinaabe people as original instruction from the Creator and includes lessons about connecting, feeling, thinking, and acting to nurture healthy relationships to the self and others.

Part 2: Needs Assessment of Student Assessment Instruments

The first stage of this process was to complete a needs assessment of existing data and information; and, the ideal types of information based on the framework of the Ojibwe Seven Teachings. This assessment identified what data Erickson schools are currently collecting. This information was compared to the range of student outcomes and implications for practice identified as indicators of the Ojibwe Seven Teachings.

The traditional Western framework of education places the weight of its assessment on academic indicators of success. Erickson Elementary School and Erickson Collegiate Institute administer assessments and collect data that meet academic, provincial, and school planning needs for each of their school, respectively. Table 1 reflects the summary of present practice for Erickson Elementary and Erickson Collegiate Institute.

Table 1: *Data Collection and Assessment Inventory for Erickson Elementary and Erickson Collegiate Institute*

Erickson Elementary	Erickson Collegiate Institute
Early Development Instrument	mRLC Math Assessment
Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning	Provincial Report Card
Grade 3 Numeracy and Literacy Assessment	Tell the From Me Survey
mRLC Math Assessment	Attendance
Provincial Report Card	Provincial Math Exam
School Climate Survey	Provincial ELA Exam
Tell Them From Me Survey	Provincial Grade 7 Numeracy Assessment
In-house referral data	Provincial Grade 8 Literacy Assessment
Classroom/School Profile	Suspension Report
Reading Recovery	Credit Achievement Rate
Literacy Wall	Failure Rate
Attendance	Incomplete Rate/Credit Recovery
Cultural Proficiency Rubric	Indigenous Student Enrollment in Sciences
	Indigenous Student Enrollment in Mathematics
	Cultural Proficiency Rubric

The premise of Mino-Pimaatisiwin is that each student is looked at individually in all areas of their being; that success is not measured simply by a summative evaluation of the curricular content that they have been presented and are able to ingest. Mino-Pimaatisiwin focuses on all four aspects of student well-being. True success is seen through the student's mental, social, physical and cognitive health, and relevant and effective assessment is also done on an ongoing basis (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Mino-Pimaatisiwin: Four Aspects of Student Well-being.
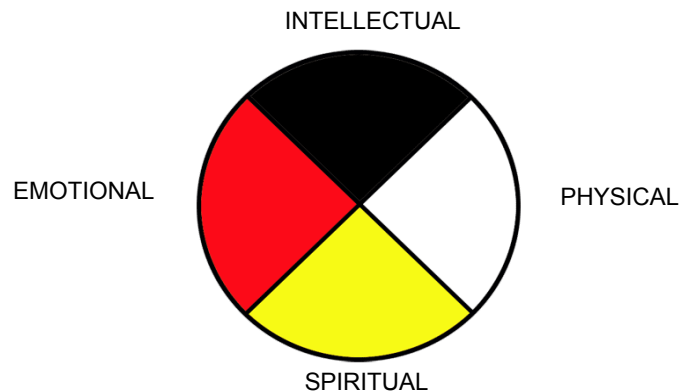
When looking at effective and relevant student assessment, there are several key points of reference that need to be acknowledged.

1. Quantifiable data needs to provide evidence that children are learning successfully, as well as becoming successful learners.
2. Summative Assessment (assessment of learning) does not sufficiently portray the entire picture of a learner's progress.
3. Formative Assessment (assessment for learning) provides a means of examining the successive experiences and growth of the learner.
4. A balanced assessment process between assessment of learning and for learning provides educators with an indication of success but also will provide insight into the cause of the success.
5. Clear articulation of goals and standards and specific markers of progress, allow the learner to understand where they are on the road to learning; but also, how they can progress farther along the path (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, 2008; Tunison, 2007; Joint Advisory Committee, 1993).

If we examine the data and assessment tool summary, once again, and scrutinize the correlations between the listed tools and their connection to the Principles of Mino-Pimaatisiwin; as well as, whether they are formative or summative, we begin to see gaps in the use of assessment tools, that reflect the Indigenous lens of student success (see Table 2).

Table 2: *Data Collection and Assessment Inventory for Erickson Elementary and Erickson Collegiate Institute and Mino-Pimaatisiwin*

Data Collection Instrument	Erickson Elementary	Erickson Collegiate Institute	Mino-Pimaatisiwin	Formative or Summative
Early Development Instrument	X			S
Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning	X		X	S
Grade 3 Numeracy and Literacy Assessment	X			S
mRLC Math Assessment	X	X		S
Provincial Report Card	X	X	X	S
School Climate Survey	X		X	F
Tell Them From Me Survey	X	X	X	F
In-house referral data	X			S
Classroom/School Profile	X		X	F
Reading Recovery	X			S
Literacy Wall	X			F
Attendance	X	X		S
Provincial Math Exam		X		S
Provincial ELA Exam		X		S
Provincial Grade 7 Numeracy Assessment		X		S
Provincial Grade 8 Literacy Assessment		X		S
Suspension Report		X		S
Credit Achievement Rate		X		S
Failure Rate		X		S
Incomplete Rate/Credit Recovery		X		S
Indigenous Student Enrollment in Sciences		X		S
Indigenous Student Enrollment in Mathematica		X		S
Cultural Proficiency Rubric	X	X	X	F

The data collection tools listed have a strong focus on the intellectual dimension of an Indigenous student. There is a legitimate place for this type of data collection as a means of meeting standardized governmental recordkeeping; as well as it is integral to academic planning for divisions, schools, and students.

Indigenous Perspective on Learning

The Canadian Council on Learning (2007) presents several key attributes that are characteristic of an Indigenous perspective on learning.

1. Learning is holistic – it encompasses and develops the whole individual – emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual.

2. Learning is lifelong – it is knowledge that is passed down by generations from before birth until old age.

3. Learning is experiential – it is a lived experience that is connected to traditional ceremonies, observation, and storytelling.

4. Learning is rooted in Aboriginal language and culture – language depicts the uniqueness of a community's worldview and stabilizes the culture's strength.

5. Learning is spiritually oriented – it is a fundamental connection to spiritual understanding.

6. Learning is a communal activity – all community members have a role and responsibility for the learning process.

7. Learning is an integration between Indigenous ways of knowing, and Western pedagogies – processes are adapted to meet the needs of all (p. 5).

For learners receiving their instruction off-reserve, the integration of Indigenous and Western ways of knowing becomes the greatest challenge for educators. The balance between the two lenses will create the ideal learning environment for Indigenous students.

The following are some of the ideal characteristics of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Learner focussed practice that would fall within the common ground of the learning perspectives diagram, previously presented:

- Learners are aware of their strengths, gifts, and capacities as a learner and director of their learning journey.

- Connection to culture, community, and literacy (language) are common threads to success.

- Protecting and reclaiming language, culture, and tradition while focussing on transitions to the next steps in a learner's journey: middle school, graduation, post-secondary workforce.

- Rigorous and relevant curricula, programs and materials.

- Community-based, locally developed, and hands on activities make practices more relevant and engaging to learners.

- When the entire community is involved in a student's education through:

    o Parental and community involvement;

    o Developing community development centers (Headstart, Adult learning centers); and

    o Programs that enable Aboriginal students to gain part-time jobs.

- Integration of Aboriginal Teachings into traditional Western frameworks.

- Courses with specific Indigenous content.

- Artists-in-residence and Elders-in-residence programs.

- Creating and delivering anti-racism courses.

- Systematic, frequent assessment of student progress and needs, in all four domains of learner development (Tunison, 2007).

Pamela Rose Toulouse's (2013) perspective on the importance of honoring Indigenous culture in our schools affirms that an inclusive mindset requires educators and community stakeholders to actively represent the local First Nations communities, respectfully, through the school's culture. This can be executed through classroom activities, celebrations, planning, educator professional development, and the procurement of relevant resources:

> Honouring Indigenous contributions is a challenge that we will have to respectfully address and it is absolutely necessary for critical knowledge exchanges to occur. This exchange will be a process where we learn to humble ourselves by acknowledging our own limited knowledge of Indigenous peoples. It is also a way where we will learn to build stronger educational foundations for all students. To honour the gifts of Indigenous peoples is to validate the experiences of Indigenous students in school. And this, in itself, is a step towards building trust and meaningful connections. (Toulouse, 2007, p. 10)

Within the journey of supporting Indigenous learners, the dominant culture mindset still presents challenges for educators and administrators. Administrators and educators are being directed to make decisions encompassing cultural traditions and ways of understanding. In many cases, this is an area in which those involved have limited training and expertise. As a result, the elements of Indigenous knowledge may be transformed and subdued, as they are included in the strategies and pedagogical choices made by educators (Corson, 1998). Hermes (2005) states, "lesson plans, subject areas and course content, all attempt to act as containers for culture-based curriculum" (p. 44). The necessity for meeting provincial curricular requirements and standards, in tandem with insufficient knowledge and understanding of the Indigenous Principles of learning, result in the Indigenization of curriculum becoming a "thing we do" instead of a way we do things (Hermes, 2005; Richardson, 2011).

This obstacle then becomes the utmost challenge for educators and administration when planning and strategizing the steps that are required to provide opportunity for Indigenous students to have their greatest success. In her master's thesis "Conversations with First Nations Educators" (2000), Theresa Wilson presents an excellent summary of best practices for teaching Indigenous students. She articulates the results of her research into four themes: identity, political consciousness, teacher-student interactions, and observing the importance of relationship.

The following points were adapted from Theresa Wilson's (2000) master's thesis.

Identity:

1. Knowing who you are and where you come from.

2. The importance of relationships in forming connections with Aboriginal students is foundational for educators.

3. Understanding the relationships with human beings and with all living and non-living things.

4. Knowing who you are in the Aboriginal culture means knowing your community, and knowing where you come from is based on your connection with the earth.

5. Best practices with Aboriginal learners are grounded first in relationships.

6. Important for Aboriginal learners to find a sense of place and belonging within schools.

7. Values central to Aboriginal education: trust, autonomy, confidence, encouragement and acceptance.

Political Consciousness:

1. Aboriginal education should not be seen as a single activity or a token preservation of folkways.

2. Aboriginal education is more than Beads to Bannock; Aboriginal education must be woven throughout the curriculum.

3. Teachers must be sensitive and aware to the loss and grieving that is historically and politically a significant part of the Aboriginal student's lives.

4. Combine critical challenge with issue of importance to Aboriginal students and their communities.

5. A critical investigative attitude deploys skills such as inference, direct observation, or identifying bias and angles of vision.

6. Critical challenges help non-Aboriginal learners develop a new appreciation for indigenous sources of knowledge and to discern how the truth is portrayed to the media.

7. Becoming aware of the privilege that participation in a dominant literacy confers.

Teacher-Student Interactions:

1. Acknowledging the existence of a community beyond the classroom to which the teacher is responsible.

2. Participate and initiate activities outside the classroom, many involving the local Aboriginal community.

3. Rely on high, yet attainable expectations.

4. Effective teachers demonstrate an openness to other ways of knowing and other ways of valuing how they teach and handle the materials they use in the classroom.

5. Involved students in thinking and valuing what they learned.

Observing the Importance of Relationships:

1. Acknowledging the relationships that exist in young people's lives (family, friends and community).

2. Acknowledge the need of students to find a place of belonging within school and community.

3. Recognizing the student's desires to connect with the curriculum, or how it is being taught.

4. Providing students with opportunities to participate in culture.

5. Honoring the many Aboriginal ways of knowing and learning.

6. Being there for students: acknowledge them as individuals.

7. Having faith and confidence in them as learners.

8. Building on their strengths.

9. Participating in extracurricular activities.

10. Creating a relationship with the local Aboriginal communities.

Once educators and administrators have established strong pedagogical practices within their schools and classrooms, the next piece that holds great importance is finding a means of assessing student progress and growth, which gives a complete picture of the student's well-being. The following section will explore examples of and the strengths and benefits of appropriate assessment into classroom and schoolwide assessment practices, with a focus on embedded formative assessment.

Appropriate Assessment

When addressing assessment, many authors have explored the definition and implications of culture-fair assessment (Klenowski & Gertz, 2009; Klenowski, Tobias, Funnell, Vance, & Kaesehagen, 2010; Klug & Whitfield, 2003; Landsman & Lewis, 2011; Nelson-Barber & Trumbull, 2007). Assessment results have a significant influence on grade promotion, graduation, and overall student well-being. It is essential that these decisions are made based on more than one type of assessment. This diversity of assessment must also reflect the integrity that accompanies cultural differences. Culture-fair testing is not an attempt to favor, in any way, the culturally different group. However, it is recognized that cultural differences can impact on performance (Klenowski et al., 2010, p. 2) Student competence will be demonstrated when there is a correlation between requirements of the task, the context in which it is embedded and culturally developed skills of the learner (Nelson-Barber & Trumbull, 2007). Indigenous ways of knowing can resemble a salmon swimming upstream when put in the context of a western-framework of curricular delivery. The western-framework depicted in the majority of educational institutions takes on a positivist lens. Within this lens, the educators is the imparter of knowledge.

> The highly transmissive approach to teaching privileged within positivism can be useful for some areas of learning, particularly those that focus heavily on content-specific knowledge. However, such an approach can be problematic when used as an overarching philosophy for developing and implementing other types of curricula. Process-oriented or relational learning aimed at responding to the more

holistic needs of the learner are not well served by a strictly positivist approach (Tanaka, 2016, p. 176).

When functioning within an Indigenous framework, a more constructivist learning approach needs to be taken. A constructivist viewpoint moves away from the learner being a static vessel that is filled, to learners being involved in their journey, through the engagement of prior personal knowledge, values, and beliefs that impact meaning (Tanka, 2016). True assessment finds the balance between the requirements set out in the positivist perspective on learning and the insertion of design adaptations that weave the learning needs of the students being assessed.

The factors of self-identity also play a role in determining appropriate assessment processes when considering the needs of Indigenous learners. Suzuki & Ponterotto (2007) resent the argument that, "understanding an individual's acculturation status can add valuable information to evaluation procedures and intervention decisions" (p. 87). Acculturation can be defined as a dynamic process of change and shifting that individuals undertake, as a result of contact, with members of different cultures. This change will influence the individuals' attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviours. When examining an individual's acculturation status, two constructs plan an important role in relation to where an individual sees themselves. One's sense of self, in relation, to an ethnic group that develops over time as an individual, is exposed to other ethnic groups thus bringing to light their differences, is referred to as ethnic identity. Racial identity refers to the extent to which individuals identify or do not identify with a particular racial group and the quality of that identification, that is, positive or negative. The perspective individuals take of themselves in relation to the dominant culture weighs heavy on their feelings of value and self-worth—taking these factors into account when developing and administering assessment processes is crucial to determining an accurate account of a student's development and progress.

The greatest impact on student achievement of outcomes is through appropriate, relevant, and timely assessment. The use of summative assessment has its place in the overall achievement determination of a student; however, the use of consistent formative assessment strategies will give the best picture of a student's strengths and areas of need.

Formative evaluation was first introduced by Michael Scriven in 1967 (Wiliam, 2011). Since that time, formative assessment, infused into daily instruction, has shown substantial evidence of increased student achievement. Wiliam (2011) defines formative assessment as encompassing "all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged" (p. 37). In order for assessment to improve learning, it needs to provide timely, relevant feedback, actively involve the students in their own learning journey, allow for opportunities of self-assessment and influence change in teacher knowledge presentation (Andersson & Palm, 2017; Cauley & McMillan, 2010; Wiliam, 2011; Wiliam & Leahy, 2015).

Effective formative assessment can take many forms. The following are a condensed list of possible activities and strategies:

1. Students keeping track of their learning;

2. reflective thinking;

3. conversations using open-ended questions, positive feedback and scaffolding questions;

4. group work;

5. problem solving; and/or

6. peer assessment.

The use of formative assessment in the classroom can substantially improve student performance. As educators, we can not predict what students will learn and how they will learn it. By implementing strategies of formative assessment, educators receive the most effective evidence of student achievement and can determine what modifications to instruction may be necessary; as well as, what next steps should be.

After determining what the ideal factors were for Aboriginal students to experience success through the framework of Mino-Pimaatisiwin, Principles of the Good Life, and the Ojibwe Seven Teachings, we reflected on the data collection that was already happening at Erickson Schools. Because the schools and school division function within the framework of a provincially mandated curriculum, it was important to find that common intersecting space where shared perspectives of learning and well-being could be determined along with appropriate indicators to monitor progress and intervene in a timely manner when challenges arise (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Common Intersecting Space between Holistic Learning and Government Reporting Frameworks.

Aboriginal perspectives concerning holistic life-long learning and community well-being.

Government reporting frameworks and notions of learning and well-being.

Intersecting space: shared perspective of learning and well-being and appropriate indicators.
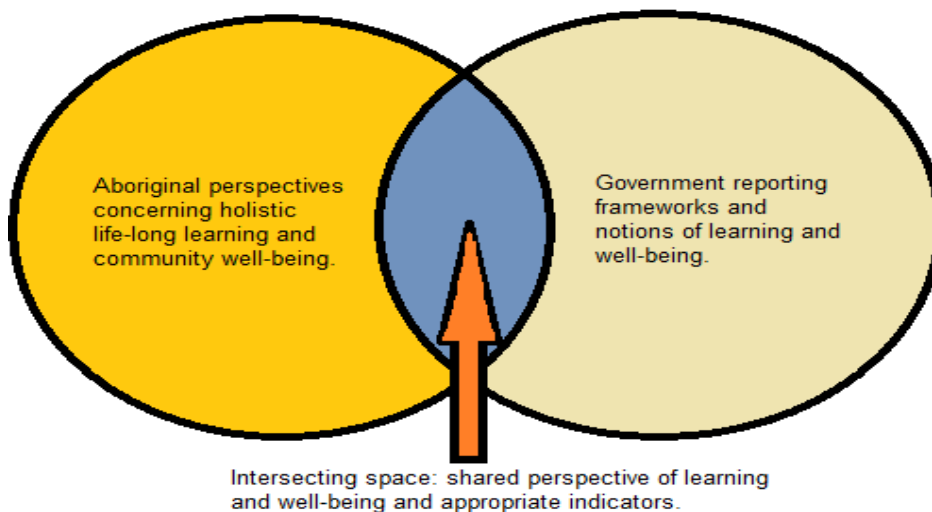
The Canadian Council for Learning (2009) noted:

> Current measurement approaches typically focus on the discrepancies in
> educational attainment between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth (in
> particular, high-school completion rates) and often overlook the many aspects of
> learning that are integral to an Aboriginal perspective on learning. As a result,
> conventional measurement approaches rarely reflect the specific needs and
> aspirations of Aboriginal people (p.4).

The State of Aboriginal Learning in Canada: A Holistic Approach to Measuring Success
(Canada Council for Learning, 2009) provided an innovative approach to a more
complete assessment of Indigenous learning in Canada. The three main components it
identified are:

- Sources and Domains of Knowledge

- The Lifelong Learning Journey

- Community Well-being

These components are affected by concrete decisions about how resources are distributed,
which structures are privileged, and the kinds of processes, norms, and relationships that
are promoted at the school. These kinds of indicators are highlighted to encourage
policymakers and educators to look beyond test scores and to view context indicators as
'enabling conditions' for teachers and learners, rather than assessing them for direct
effects on outcomes. This relates to both the indicators of success that RRSD identified,
and to the Indicators of Indigenization identified in relation to the work being done at
Erickson Schools.

According to Canadian Council for Learning (2009), assessment processes that include
informal and experiential learning, "including participation in social, cultural and
recreational activities—help foster a desire to learn among Aboriginal youth while
helping with the acquisition of new skills" (p. 6). A review of the current assessment
practices at Erickson Elementary School and Erickson Collegiate revealed that the
common intersection space between Aboriginal Perspectives concerning lifelong learning
and community well-being (Mino-Pimaatisiwin) and government frameworks and
notions of learning and wellness was small, with an emphasis on formalized learning and
assessment with little exploration of informal learning and on data from summative rather
than formative assessments particularly at ECI (see Table 1).

One of the main objectives of a holistic approach to assessing learning is to focus on the
strong connection that exists between learning and well-being for Indigenous people.
To move forward with a more holistic approach to learning and assessment, Rolling
River School Division (2018) identified a broader range of indicators of success. These
included:

- FNMI content, perspectives, and ways of knowing integrated into curriculum.

- Increase in the number of FNMI students achieving 'good understanding and application of concepts and skills in literacy' on the provincial report card.

- Increase in the number of FNMI students achieving 'good understanding and application of concepts and skills in numeracy' on the provincial report card.

- Professional Development opportunities in Indigenous curricula and teaching for teachers and students.

- Tell It From Me survey data regarding the supportiveness of the school environment.

Part 3: Review of Relevant Literature: Indigenous Pedagogy in a Canadian Context

In reviewing the literature, key philosophical and ontological concepts of relevance to Indigenous learning and education were identified. These concepts provide the framework to explain, describe, conclude, and recommend actions that support Erickson schools' efforts to create and sustain school climates based on the Principles of Mino-Pimaatisiwin. In doing so, we acknowledge that while these concepts are relevant, they may not be readily visible at the school and classroom level.

The following sections define key terms pertinent to the program evaluation. These terms are connected to what researchers Madden and Glanfield (2017) have identified as *four pedagogical pathways* that are used to indigenize teacher education:

1. Learning from Indigenous traditional models of teaching;

2. Decolonization pedagogy;

3. Indigenous and anti-racist education; and

4. Indigenous and place-based education.

Defining Indigenous

Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) writes: "The term 'Indigenous' is problematic in that it appears to collectivize many distinct populations whose experience under imperialism have been vastly different" (p. 6). However, Smith (2012) goes on to write, "'Indigenous peoples' is a term that was supported by the American Indian Movement and the Canadian Indian Brotherhood as a way of internationalizing the experiences, issues and struggles that many of the worlds colonized people share" (p. 6).

It is important to recognize that the world's Indigenous populations belong to a network of peoples who have been subjected to colonization of their lands, cultures, and languages, as well as being denied sovereignty by a colonial power (Smith, 2012).

Even when Indigenous people incorporate and/or perform colonial cultural norms, Moreton-Robinson (2003) asserts that the Indigenous relation to land remains fixed. The ontological relation to land constitutes an identity that differs from non-Indigenous identities in a settler colonial context. Keep in mind that Indigenous identity does not replace the diversity of nations and cultural traditions, rather it is based on a common struggle to continue a "place-based existence" (Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 14) under the conditions of settler colonialism.

This is the intention with which we use the term Indigenous in this document.

Settler Colonialism

Veracini (2010) defines colonialism as exogenous domination with two components. First, colonizers move to a new territory, and second, the colonizer establishes dominance but does not remain in the territory. This form of colonialism is not settler *colonialism*. There is a particular kind of colonization that occurs in countries like Canada, where Indigenous populations are constrained within the borders of a colonial state that re-purposes lands for *ongoing settlement*.

Lowman and Barker (2015) identify three pillars of settler colonization:

1. An initial invasion is supported by the imposition of social, political, and economic structures that facilitate the further settlement of invading people.

2. Settlers take up permanent residency and impose ideologies like private property. They rely on state support to justify their sovereignty and to contain and/or remove Indigenous people with connections to the coveted territory.

3. The end goal of settler colonialism is to transcend colonialism. The settler society becomes the naturalized, normalized, and unquestioned society.

This final strategy relies on concealing colonial violence through euphemisms such as the settler as a benevolent peacemaker, pioneer, adventurer, or explorer (Regan, 2010) and referring to Indigenous internment camps as residential 'schools' (Richardson & Reynolds, 2014). The difference between colonialism and settler colonialism is that colonialism reinforces the distinction between colonizer and colonized, whereas settler colonialism seeks to hide it (Veracini, 2010).

Defining Settler

Settler colonialism is not only upheld by governments and corporations, but by people commonly referred to as Canadian citizens (Lowman & Barker, 2015). Authors Lowman & Barker (2015) state their intention for using the term 'Settler'—with a capital S— to identify a group of people who have an affinity and common practices that occur on lands that they occupy in relation to Indigenous people. They define the term 'Settler' as a situated, process-based, and pervasive identity in Canada (as well as in other settler societies globally):

*   Settler identity is *situated* according to the lands they occupy, or upon which they work, and;

*   understood in relation to pre-existing Indigenous claims on those same territories.

*   Settler identity is *process-based* due to the identification of self through *ways of doing* that bind them to the lands upon which they plan to stay;

*   hence the *pervasiveness* of the settler identity.

Regan (2010) writes that the term settler is situated "within Canada's multicultural context, Western European philosophy, political systems, law and values that define dominant Canadian culture" (p. 240). The term identifies recent immigrants from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds in addition to Euro-Canadians, both of whom constitute contemporary settler society.

Some scholars have avoided the use of the term settler due to the negative reaction of others; however, when this specific language is not utilized, insights about the workings of settler colonialism are lost (Davis, Hiller, James, Lloyd Nasca, & Taylor, 2017). Far from being a pejorative or an insult, Lowman and Barker (2015) share how the term relates to a commitment, "to understand ourselves as Settler Canadians, as colonizers, and as people with deep moral and ethical responsibilities to change our relationships to the lands we call home" (p. 15). This is the intention with which we use the term settler in this document.

Settler/Indigenous Identities in Canada

Identities are complex and negotiated in relation to social and environmental contexts (Stets & Burke, 2000; Ethier & Deaux, 1994). Lowman & Barker (2015) state that Indigenous and "Settler" identities are always in a relationship, always in tension and not necessarily clearly demarcated. They offer the example of the Métis people of the Red River whose unique Indigenous identity is an example of the non-binary possibility available to peoples, cultures, and communities when assimilation does not require one identity disappearing into the other.

There are many people in Canada who do not fit into settler or Indigenous categories. For example, refugees who would return to their homelands if it were safe to do so, or slaves who were transplanted from their homelands against their will.

The intention with which we use the terms Indigenous and settler as a relational pair in this document is discussed by Lowman and Barker (2015):

> When people identify as Indigenous, they identify with entire histories and creation stories of how they belong on certain lands, with cultural, spiritual, and political practices that are embodied in those stories that connect them to those lands. When we say we are Settler people, we are recognizing that our stories are different, and when we ask others to identify as Settler people, we are likewise asking them: How do you come to be here? How do you claim belonging here? And, most importantly, can we belong in a way that doesn't reproduce colonial dispossession and harm? (p. 18–19).

Reconciliation

Reconciliation encompasses a dual process (Regan, 2010). First, Canadians are invited to open themselves to Indigenous truth-telling about the past injustices against Indigenous

People and, second, to commit to the sincere nation to nation partnerships that share a common goal of working toward a more just future for Indigenous People in Canada. Education researchers Pratt and Danyluk (2017) suggest that reconciliatory pedagogy needs to be informed by community-identified needs. They found that teachers spending time in local Indigenous communities increased the trust of community members and improved Indigenous cultural competencies in the teachers.

Scholars and researchers have criticized the way that colonized people have been represented as vulnerable, damaged, hopeless, and endangered (Smith, 2012; Tuck, 2009; Wade, 1995). Veracini (2010) writes that the fact that Indigenous people 'will not go away' undoes connections between the concept of Indigeneity and notions of Indigenous fragility and disappearance. This also postpones a final 'settled' status of the settler. Finally, Veracini (2010) suggests that a postsettler move toward reconciliation must emphasize an open-endedness to the future.

In the article *Rethinking Collaboration: Working the Indigene-Colonizer Hyphen*, Jones and Jenkins (2008) articulate a collaborative research and practice model that addresses the colonial relationship between a Maori researcher and a settler (Pakeha) researcher. "Maori" and "Pakeha" are Indigenous terms that define the colonial relationship that exists between the Indigenous Maori and the non-Indigenous settler population. They posit the use of a hyphen (that which marks the gaps between Indigene-Colonizer) to articulate the ethnic, cultural and historical differences between them. The hyphen also marks the relationship of power and inequality that accords particular forms of cultural dominance and social privilege to one group and not the other. The hyphen represents critical engagement with reconciliation as an important ethical commitment to professional relationships and is symbolic of the honest and hard work yet to be done (Jones & Jenkins, 2008).

Decolonization

To talk about Indigenization without discussing decolonization is a problematic omission because the long history of Indigenous resistance to settler colonialism is an important part of a largely untold history (Coulthard, 2014; Smith, 2012; Veracini, 2010; Wade, 1995).

Leading scholars of Indigenous education have written that "decolonization is not a metaphor" (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Problems related to land, language, self-government, capitalist exploitation of the environment and traditional Indigenous education need to be addressed in a clearer manner than current mainstream curriculum accounts for (Corntassel, 2012; Smith, 2012; Simpson, 2004; Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000).

Decolonization combines a thoroughgoing critique of colonial ideologies that appeared during "colonized time" (Smith, 2012, p. 25). This encompasses learning the hidden histories and strategies of settler colonialism and understanding its effects on traditional Indigenous ways of life. It also involves the revitalization of Indigenous

knowledge and pedagogy as it existed during "pre-colonized time" (Smith, 2012, p. 25). These pre-colonized knowledges and pedagogies are relevant to Indigenization in the education system.

Decolonization, as defined by Mitchell, Thomas & Smith (2018), requires that educators develop a deeper understanding of the ongoing effects of colonialism (housing conditions, water contamination issues, food scarcity, or prohibitive food costs) that can be contrasted with the privileges of settler life off-reserve.

Feeling 'unsettled' about settler 'colonial complicity' (Lowman & Barker, 2015) is an indicator that is supported by scholars of Indigenous education as it relates to the growing settler awareness regarding the multitude of problems Indigenous People experience that are related to the ongoing presence of settlers, colonial infrastructure and the ecological footprints of capitalist industry on traditional lands (Mitchell, Thomas & Smith, 2018; Coulthard, 2014; Tuck & Yang, 2012; Regan, 2010).

Veracini (2010) makes a distinction between decolonization and settler decolonization. Decolonization is clear in the case of colonization (i.e., the colonist goes home) and less so in settler colonialism where the settler will stay. Under settler colonial conditions, i.e., the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous peoples' land and self-determining authority (Coulthard, 2014). Veracini (2010) argues there is no possibility for independence, for the discontinuity of colonization, which is the condition required for decolonization.

Glen Coulthard (2014) describes situations where the colonial rule does not depend solely on the exercise of state violence; it produces power relations that are asymmetrical and non-reciprocal. He argues that both the subjective (i.e., the psychological effects of ongoing colonization) and objective (i.e., land, language, and ways of life) aspects of Indigenous life negatively affected by settler colonialism need to be attended to interdependently. Leanne Simpson (2004) invites academics, Indigenous knowledge holders, and the political leaders of Indigenous nations and settler governments to work together in dismantling the colonial projects that threaten the protection, recovery and practice of Indigenous knowledge systems. Decolonization is a collective project that is critical to the survival of Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous peoples (Lowman & Barker, 2015; Coulthard, 2014, Smith, 2012; Simpson, 2004).

Veracini (2010) proposes a solution to some of the problems related to settler colonialism:

1. Maintaining focus on settler-Indigenous relations;

2. Listening to Indigenous claims for self-determination; and

3. Facilitating conditions that guarantee Indigenous permanence.

Critical Race Theory

In their study of the pedagogical pathways that are used to Indigenize teacher education, Madden and Glanfield (2017) found that Indigenous and anti-racist education was a common pedagogical pathway for pre-service teacher education programs but not for in-service teacher education. It was reported that teachers identified this gap and requested in-service anti-racist education.

Scholars of Indigenous education have written about the complex forms of racialized exploitation that took place when the traditional territories that we all call home were settled and became 'property' (Coulthard, 2014; Smith, 2012). Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) have identified the complex relationship between colonialism, slavery, racism, white supremacy, and property ownership. The parallel process that occurred, in which landless chattel slaves also became the property of landowners, is an often omitted piece of history that will need to be integrated into history curriculums to continue moving toward more culturally proficient education. The need to explore anti-Indigenous racism specifically in relation to settler colonialism and white supremacy is considered a crucial developmental step by scholars of Indigenization and decolonization (Smith, 2012; Coulthard, 2014; Smith, Tuck & Yang, 2018).

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) argue that, because the civil rights movement focused on promoting democracy rather than resisting the structural inequality of imperialism and capitalism, the influence of property rights on equity and the removal of Indigenous people from their lands were not addressed.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) addresses problems related to the undertheorization of race in the social sciences. Race is understood by scholars as a concept that was constructed alongside a series of historically situated projects that organized human bodies, cultures, and social structures in unequal ways. CRT in education focuses on three major propositions (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995): (1) race is a significant factor in inequity at schools; (2) North American society is based on property rights rather than human rights; and (3) The intersection of race and property creates an analytic tool for understanding inequities in schools.

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) have shown that those with higher property values typically have children who attend better quality schools with higher expenditures per student. In addition, the curriculum varies with the property values of schools, and intellectual property is bolstered by science labs, computers, and other state of the art technology. In addition, these schools are more likely to have properly certified and well-prepared teachers.

Links between inequity and race are exemplified by studies showing that African American males are disproportionately suspended or expelled from school for what they term "non-contact violations." For example, African American students were wearing banned items of clothing (i.e., hats, jackets) in an unauthorized manner (i.e., backward or inside out) (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Indigenous students are generally suspended in disproportionately high numbers in Canadian schools as well (Woodbury, 2017).

Indigenous scholars of critical race theory have written that racialized people do not merely engage in critical race theory but rather are part of the analysis, in that they live the realities of colonization (Cruz, 2005).

Moreton-Robinson (2004) argues that settler colonialism has been the context in which Indigenous people have become experts in the areas of whiteness and racialization. Tribal Critical Race Theory (Brayboy, 2005; 2013) lists nine central tenets that are foundational to an Indigenous critical race theory:

1. Colonization is endemic to society;

2. Government policies toward Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, white supremacy and a desire for material gain;

3. Indigenous peoples occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialized natures of our identities;

4. Indigenous peoples have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination and self-identification;

5. The concepts of culture, knowledge and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens;

6. Governmental policies and education policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around;

7. Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions, and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups;

8. Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being; and

9. Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work toward social change.

In their anti-racist training manual, Estable, Meyer, and Pon (1997) point out that white people are rarely asked to explain how 'white' culture works. Research shows that race categories are often reserved for non-whites, while ethnicity is often the category used to describe European descendants (Moreton-Robinson, 2004).

Tator and Henry (2006) write that "Whiteness" functions, like "colour" and "Blackness" functions as a social construct that is applied to human beings. Bonds and Inwood (1996) discuss that whiteness is manifested through social, political, economic, and cultural norms. Once white culture, behaviour, and values are rendered normative and natural, they can be used as a standard against which other cultures, groups, and individuals are measured and often found to be inferior. For example, studies have shown that White

teachers are often biased against Minority students with cultures and languages different than their own (Vang, 2006).

'Whiteness Studies' is an academic discipline founded by researchers of racism in the US (Allen, 1994; Roediger, 1999). Theodore Allen (1994) found whiteness to be a historical intervention engineered by plantation owners to disrupt the working-class solidarities that existed between European-American and African-American laborers regarding their shared experience as exploited laborers. The separation occurred when 'poor whites' were granted privileges based on skin color that protected them from the enslavement that was imposed upon Africans and African Americans. This incentivized white workers to oppose Slavery Abolition.

The concept of whiteness is said to be defined by particular characteristics (Gillborn, 2005):

1. Inequity (i.e., in employment, wealth) is explained by factors other than the actions of white people;

2. By othering the idea of ethnicity, which presents white as the natural backdrop against which other races stand out; and

3. Minimizing problems related to a legacy of racism and the ongoing historic, economic, and cultural implications.

Bonds and Inwood (2016) declare white supremacy as a foundational aspect of settler colonialism. They argue that we need to look beyond individual recognition of white privilege and examine the structures that distribute material privileges based on white supremacy. They argue that the current focus on individualized whiteness is a distraction from the interconnections between colonization and anti-black and anti-Indigenous racisms as ongoing structures, rather than historic events. Indigenous researcher Moreton-Robinson (2004) has described how whiteness often has the effect of reducing Indigenous people to being a function or means of knowing and defining what is white/not white. This is one of the ways that whiteness as a form of racial oppression remains hidden and therefore undertheorized in a colonial context.

The Hidden Curriculum and Responding to Linguistic Cultural Biases

In their work on teaching and learning of and about reading and writing in schools, teachers, policymakers, and researchers necessarily take a stand, however explicitly, on what kind of puzzle they take literacy teaching and learning to be (Freebody, 2007).

At the turn of the 20th century, Edmund Huey (1908) identified problems related to literacy in Western education. He identified biases toward phonics over emphasis on meaning, reading as natural rather than as a cultural artifact, learning techniques rather than learning cultural values. Hidden curriculum (Sari & Doganay, 2009; Vang, 2006; Anyon, 1980) is a concept that describes the unspoken ways schools are deliberately organized through programs, policies, and school environments to promote the goals and

values of the school. This is often not what is best for the student, particularly those with low socioeconomic status (Vang, 2006).

Hoover and Taylor (1992, in Vang, 2006) demonstrated that 34% of standardized language tests are biased based on dominant cultural values. They identified that test makers have very little in common with the test takers, as studies have shown, the demographic of standardized test developers is about 80% white, with about 90% holding a graduate degree, or other educational experience beyond a bachelor's degree. Most standardized tests reflect the values of European culture, containing language and assumptions that are not relevant to the cultures of many students (Vang, 2006).

Students' cultural understandings inform the way they answer test questions. For example, the Negro Educational Review showed that vernacular Black English speakers scored higher on academic assessments when the materials were relevant to their own cultural backgrounds. Therefore equality in language testing requires cultural competencies in order to accurately measure academic abilities (Vang, 2006).

Vang writes (2006), the hidden curriculum targets students who speak languages other than Standard American English. Encouraging these students to speak differently is often a deviation from the forms of language and grammar that define who they are in their family and community. By changing the student's speech and learning style, school also changes their cultural and personal identity.

Hilary Janks (2000) suggests a critical literacy education that explores the multiple relationships that exist between language and power. She proposes an interdependent model that accounts for the major strands of critical literacy that deal with problems in education related to domination, access, diversity, and design:

- *Domination* describes how language, and other means of communication, can be used in ways that preserve relations of domination.

- *Access* relates to how dominant forms of language and literacy are made accessible to students. The *access paradox* refers to the fact that students need to understand the value and importance of dominant forms of knowledge without perpetuating unequal power relations in society. Scholars have written that, by making generic features visible to critical analysis, students can learn dominant knowledge in ways that do not marginalize their own cultural knowledge. Pedagogies that promote critical systemic analysis may have larger health implications for racialized people. For example, LaVeist, Sellers and Neighbors (2001) provide longitudinal data showing that racialized individuals who engage in system-blame attribution outlive those who internalize perceived racism.

- *Diversity* attends to the multitude of ways that reading, speaking and writing are linked to social identities and institutions. When difference/diversity is not organized in accordance with dominance, and attention to diversity and

inclusivity increases, teachers can draw upon student creativity and cultural diversity. This also avoids problems related to marginalizing students' diverse ways of speaking.

- *Design* relates to the idea of productive (as opposed to dominant) power. By embracing diversity, we are better able to explore and understand dominant meanings and create new ones. The concept of multi-literacies stresses the importance of teaching students how to select and use words from pools of diverse linguistic resources to make meaning and solve problems. This provides a constructive avenue that can arise once dominance and access have been uncovered.

Part 4: Review of Relevant Literature: Indigenization of Curricula

Description

The stated project goals were for teachers and staff to develop professionally in the areas of cultural proficiency, Indigenization of curricula, experiential instruction, community exchange, and Elder involvement.

Indigenization

Indigenization is a transformative process that highlights the importance of centering Indigenous people, cultures, knowledge systems, experiences, and priorities in education (Smith, 2012; Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000). In the document "Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into Curricula (2003)," it is written that Aboriginal perspectives encompass a view that humans are:

Living in a universe made by the Creator and needing to live in harmony with nature, one another, and oneself. Each Aboriginal culture expresses this same world view in a different way with different practices, stories, and cultural products.

The following principles by Gray, Coates and Yellow Bird (2008) are identified as important for Indigenous education:

- The concept of *wholeness* is about incorporating all aspects of life by exploring ourselves in relation to the universe.

- *Balance:* We explore the whole as well as the parts, and one aspect is not focused on to the detriment of the other parts.

- All aspects of the whole are related. These *relationships* require attention and nurturing to strengthen the connections between them. Nurturing connections leads to health, while disconnection leads to disease.

- *Harmony* involves all entities fulfilling their obligations to each other and to themselves.

- *Growth* is a life-long process that involves developing aspects of oneself, such as the body, mind, heart, and spirit, in a harmonious manner.

- *Healing* is a daily practice-orientated to the restoration of wholeness, balance, relationships, and harmony. It is not only focused on illness but on disconnections, imbalances and disharmony.

- *Mino-Pimaatisiwin* is the Good Life or life in the fullest, healthiest sense.

In December 2015, the Manitoba School Boards Association came together with Manitoba's six universities and three colleges to sign the Manitoba Collaborative Indigenous Education Blueprint (Martin, 2015). The blueprint includes the following recommendations:

1. Engaging with Indigenous peoples in respectful and reciprocal relationships to realize the right to self-determination, and to advance reconciliation, language and culture through education, research, and skill development;

2. Bringing Indigenous knowledge, languages and intellectual traditions, models and approaches into curriculum and pedagogy;

3. Promoting research and learning that reflects the history and contemporary context of the lives of Indigenous peoples;

4. Increasing access to services, programs, and supports to Indigenous students, to ensure a learning environment is established that fosters learner success;

5. Collaborating to increase student mobility to better serve the needs of Indigenous students;

6. Building school and campus communities that value diversity, foster cultural safety and are free of racism;

7. Increasing and measuring Indigenous school and post-secondary participation and success rates;

8. Showcasing successes of Indigenous students and educators;

9. Reflecting the diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis cultures in Manitoba through institutional governance and staffing policies and practices; and

10. Engaging governments and the private and public sectors to increase labor market opportunities for Indigenous graduates.

Indigenous Models of Teaching

Story

Leanne Simpson (2014) says Indigenous theory is not only for academics, it is for everyone in the form of stories and, because the practice of storytelling occurs from the ground up, its analytic power also resonates with individuals and communities.

Cajete (1994) states that while stories are integral to Indigenous education, all "modern education disciplines" are actually bodies of stories. He says that the difference is in the transfer of knowledge. For example, in Western education, information is often separated from stories and presented as data, description, theory, and formula. He calls for teachers

to become storytellers, to include context, and for students to become active listeners. Indigenous pedagogy in mainstream education requires teachers to re-story disembodied information in culturally sensitive and holistic ways (Cajete, 1994).

Land-Based Pedagogy and Decolonization

Tuck, McKenzie, and McCoy (2014) write that Indigenous understandings of land (which include land, water, and air) are rooted in longstanding relationships that have contributed to complex spiritual, emotional, and intellectual knowledge. Calderon (1994) writes that Land teaches and acts as a sacred geographical memory. Land is not a separate body from the human body, but rather together, they form an interconnected relational existence (Calderon, 2014; Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy, 2014; Cajete, 1994). Cajete (1994) says, "People make a place as much as a place makes them" (p. 84), and that, because Indigenous people interacted with the land for such a long time, the landscape became a reflection of their soul. When they were forcibly relocated to reservations, it was tantamount to "a form of soul death" (p. 85).

Calderon (2014) discusses that land-based pedagogy needs to ask educators and students to re-think their relation to land as an ecological and cultural project of recovery. This entails an analysis of how people's identities with place have been constructed in settler curricula. She writes about the importance of a land-based education that resists colonial settler land ethics (such as land privatization and forcible removal of Indigenous peoples) by analyzing territoriality and settler colonialism, centering Indigenous realities, and acknowledging how global imperialism shapes the local (Calderon, 2014).

Language

Scholars have argued that traditional Indigenous languages are languages of the land that have evolved to speak with and through human beings (Tuck, McKenzie, & McCoy, 2014). Battiste and Youngblood Henderson (2000) write that cognitive imperialism is a colonial feature of the English language that truncates the relationality and non-binary nuances of Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies.

Battiste & Youngblood Henderson (2000) assert that Indigenous languages are critical to communicating the full range of human experience of Indigenous people and moreover, that this knowledge is crucial to the survival of Indigenous people. Therefore the teaching of traditional languages is seen as an indispensable aspect of Indigenous education.

Andrea Bear Nichols (in McDonald, 2016) recommends that schools partner more with Indigenous communities that need help preserving their languages. She suggests that providing teaching techniques to fluent language speakers would help with culture retention. The idea is to help First Nations reclaim what has been destroyed by education systems in the first place, rather than positioning the school as a lifeline to Indigenous knowledge preservation (McDonald, 2016).

Vision

Visions are said to mirror what we deem sacred, and they integrate all aspects of one's life as it moves toward wholeness. They form a contextual frame of reference to measure, relate, and act during daily life. Visions are elaborated through rituals and ceremonies, like the Sundance. This is a form of education that integrates myths, dreams, art, philosophy, community, and spirit to develop a complete and fully potentiated life (Cajete, 1994). Cajete (1994) states that teaching visioning would revolutionize contemporary education and that it is essential to integrate this traditional work into Indigenous education.

Anishinaabe Pedagogy

Chartrand (2012) cautions against the institutionalization of Indigenous education at the expense of more nuanced and local understandings of the diverse and distinct Indigenous cultures that inform Indigenous pedagogies.

The Anishinaabe worldview focuses on the holistic development of children and their spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental capacities. Bell (2016) writes that Anishinaabe pedagogy utilizes ceremony, teachings, and stories to nurture spiritual growth; land-based practices to teach the physical; oral teachings about how to maintain a balance between the "heart and the head (emotional);" and ancestral languages and integrative learning to develop mental capacities.

Importance of Community

Research has shown that the integration of the cultural strengths of local communities for education reform has led to increased interest and involvement of Indigenous People in education in this rural community (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2003).

Culture and Tribal identity are expressions that Indigenous learning communities develop through their quest for health and wholeness (Cajete, 1994). Bell (2016) says this is spiritual work that occurs on individual and cosmological levels and therefore requires methodologies that include physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual understandings.

The concept of community encompasses more than the human world (i.e., plants, animals, and all other elements of Place) with which the human community seeks to harmonize (Cajete, 1994). Interconnectedness is the basis of holistic education, and Bell (2016) writes that student learning should include how parts work interdependently to create wholes.

Indigenous education teaches the environmental and spiritual ecology of the people. Community is the context where timeless rules about individual and group identity evolve within a web of relationships through language, religion, art, technology, laws, ethics, values, and other forms of education and institutional norms (Cajete, 1994).

Cajete states, "It is through community that each successive generation of people has expressed the million faces of culture. Civilizations are not the enduring human systems—communities are" (p. 166).

Research highlights the importance of educator involvement and commitment to building relationships in Indigenous communities (Pratt & Danyluk, 2017). A model from Alaska, the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative, serves as an example of successful rural school reform and culturally proficient reconstruction of the role of schooling. Teachers incorporate more place-based pedagogy to engage students in studies related to the surrounding physical and cultural environment. Engaging students in the community with elders, parents, and local experts, school curricula better reflects the knowledge, values, and practices of traditional life in the local community (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2003).

Elders and Indigenous Knowledge

Elders and Knowledge Keepers have, across their lifespan, learned the practices and ceremonies of their Indigenous ancestors (Cajete, 1994). Leanne Simpson (2014) writes that the embodiment of Indigenous theory starts with young people who, at first grasp the literal meaning, later grasp the conceptual meaning, and as they gain life experience, they incorporate the metaphoric meaning. At that point, they can begin to apply the processes to their own lives. By living each stage of life through that story, after six decades or so, they can begin to communicate their lived wisdom. This is how Elders come to be teachers.

These community leaders transmit Indigenous knowledge from previous generations to future generations through ceremony, story, and role modeling (Hart, 2007). Indigenous scholars responding to the culture of competition and debate about ideas promoted in academia suggest that educational institutions develop greater tolerance and respect for the broad spectrum of Indigenous ideas and for the keepers of these ideas (Hart, 2007).

Battiste and Youngblood Henderson (2000) present three issues related to the protection and practices associated with Indigenous knowledge:

1. Identify the traditional owners (i.e., individuals, family groups or whole nations) of the knowledge under Indigenous peoples own laws.

2. Respect the customary procedures for learning and using this knowledge. The circumstances for borrowing knowledge are determined under the authority of the original owners.

3. Provide compensation for the right to learn this knowledge. Cajete (1994) calls this mutualistic logic, which is founded upon relationships rather than economics or policies. Any object (i.e., a sacred site, ceremonial tool, song, or story) has no meaning outside relationships (Cajete, 1994).

Cajete (1994) writes that traditional Indigenous leadership manifests in acts of service to the community and the promotion of community values. Leadership itself was never a goal in traditional Indigenous communities but came as a result of living in community and striving to be complete. Therefore, leaders arose based on their service to the people. Cajete (1994) compiled the following list of traditional Indigenous leadership qualities:

- *Guidance*: Parenting is undertaken by all adult members of a child's community. Any adult member of a group can guide, discipline, and play other roles in the education and wellness of a child.

- *Kinship*: The extended family and clan within a community provide a web of relationships that influence the child. Family, responsibility, respect, and relationships are significant.

- *Diversity*: Children interact with people of diverse ages, abilities, genders, marital statuses, personalities, and statuses.

- *Special status*: All children are a gift from the Creator, and their unique qualities are respected and prized by the community. They have a direct connection to spirits in nature and play an important role in developing the stories of some tribes. They are seen as the carriers of the future.

- *Ethical models*: The family and community model ethics, showing respect for the elderly and the sick. Honesty is valued as is respecting differences and other living beings such as plants and animals... It is important to follow protocol during ceremony.

- *Clear roles*: In traditional Indigenous communities everyone knows their relationship to other people

- *Customs*: Community roles define specific relationships and designate regular practices (i.e., marriages, initiations, dances, and celebrations) in response to births, deaths, and other cyclical events. These traditions preserve community values and relationships.

- *Recognition*: Naming, rites of passage, gifting, feasting are events that honor the achievement of people and serve to motivate each member of the community to perform acts of service for the community.

- *Unique learners*: Each child is unique and learns in their own way and at their own pace. This is why traditional Indigenous education was experiential. Each person chose the way they would learn, the extent of learning, which was based on their own way of learning and doing.

- *Community work*: Every member of the community works on projects (i.e., agriculture, honing, building, art-making, food gather, and ceremony) that are for the good of the people. Traditionally the day-to-day practice of community forged the spirit for learning and understanding the nature of relationships.

- *Environment*: The natural world is the essential frame for teaching Indigenous cosmology, social organization, geography, art, etc.

- *Spirit*: The sacred permeates all aspects of the traditional Indigenous community. The quest to find "that place that Indian People talk about" (p. 173) is the complete expression of community where people understad the nature of successful relationships and recognize the importance of each role in the community.

Culture

Cajete (1994) writes:

> Human cultures are constructs that create environments through which humans are able to live. As human social environments, they conform to the same general principles as physical environments. For example, cultures evolve, adapt and react in response to ever-changing internal and external environmental factors (p. 165).

Western notions of Indigenous culture have been fraught with bias and oversimplification, particularly as they relate to Indigenous culture as homogenous and unchanging (Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000). Place plays an important role in Indigenous cultures with orientations to the earth and universe that extend thousands of years into the past and include the stars, mountains, deserts, rivers, lakes, oceans, plants, animals, and spirits of a Place (Cajete, 1994).

Battiste and Youngblood Henderson (2000) have written about the important role that art and other sacred objects serve in Indigenous cultures. These sacred expressions are sensitive to the roles that capitalism and consumption play in the appropriation and misuse of Indigenous culture. Battiste and Youngblood Henderson (2000) articulate concern about the mass reproduction of traditional arts and crafts, which threatens the spiritual and psychological well-being of authentic practitioners of traditional arts and the people who these arts and crafts express. They also raise concerns about globalization and economic expropriation, such as overseas production and cheap labor to produce appropriated images and objects. Finally, the mass production floods the market with cheap, poor quality work and imitations that misrepresent the original expressions (Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000).

Battiste and Youngblood Henderson (2000) explain copyright as a Eurocentric law that attributes ownership to a single person. There is a lack of understanding that it is Indigenous peoples, not individual artists that create and own Indigenous cultural heritage. Indigenous traditional knowledge is confidential and proprietary. Traditions for

the transmission and use of traditional Indigenous knowledge are localized and are considered Indigenous intellectual property, and many objects have a sacred and secret character under Indigenous law (Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000).

Teacher Professional Development, Indigenization and Indigenous Knowledge

Studies show that professional development has positive effects on teacher learning. High quality professional development that includes group-work is related to improvements in teacher knowledge about the subjects they teach, and critical examination of one another's teaching practices provides insight into their own teaching (Borko, 2004).

The willingness to critically and collectively examine issues with each other's teaching requires trust in the community, which calls for professional development leaders who are skilled in structuring safety and trust among teachers to develop a culture of respectful critical dialogue and inquiry into their own teaching practices (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Borko, 2004). This is of particular relevance in a settler-colonial state where teacher education programs retain a decidedly Euro-Western understanding of knowledge (Smith, 2012).

The Euro-Western culture of positivism attempts to delimit contradictions in knowledge and promotes a belief in one truth that can be measured (Battiste, 2008). This approach informs many of the school-based models of teaching and assessment, which are founded upon mechanistic cognitive theories of intelligence. While Indigenous inclusion offers an adjunct to pre-existing Euro-Western beliefs, it does not undo the habits and beliefs that teacher training programs have instilled in teachers (Kincheloe, 2010).

In order to teach students concepts, teachers must have a deep understanding of the central facts and concepts of their teachable subjects, describe how ideas are connected, and the ability to facilitate processes that can be used to establish new knowledge and determine validity (Borko, 2004). Teacher professional development, Indigenization, and decolonization introduce extra layers of complexity for teachers who are not familiar with the traditional ontologies and epistemological understandings of the Indigenous students they are teaching (Smith, Tuck, & Yang, 2018; Kincheloe, 2010).

The move toward Indigenization and incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing, requires a simultaneous loosening of the Euro-centric grip on certainty to allow for subjugated knowledges (forms of intelligence that colonialism targeted for extinction) to be recovered and used to inform a new era of education as one possibility for reconciliation between Canadian institutions and Indigenous nations (Regan, 2010). Professional development is more successful when there is a specific focus on the subject matter, and teachers are engaged as learners in activities (Borko, 2004).

Scholars and researchers of Indigenous education make a clear distinction between general cultural competency, multiculturalism, and Indigenous specific cultural competencies (Lowman & Barker, 2015). Therefore there are specific kinds of professional development that are recommended for competencies in Indigenous education.

In addition, teacher training programs (and non-Indigenous teacher culture) generally overemphasize Western teacher theory and/or practice and tend to overlook the importance of the teacher and their particular approaches to the work in the cultural context of their particular school. This is problematic because generally, teacher education provides little in terms of critical-thinking about colonization, state power, and institutions (such as schools, school boards, and funding agencies), critical race theory, intersectionality, and process-based education practices. In other words, teachers are not typically trained to handle colonial social dynamics in the classroom (Denzin, Lincoln, & Smith, 2008; Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000).

Finally, teacher training programs offer little in terms of self-analysis; therefore teachers have very little understanding regarding the messy unconscious processes that blur the boundaries between cognition, affect, and motivation (Korthagen, 2017).

Paulette Regan (2010) writes that an "unsettling pedagogy" needs to address the often unconscious "benevolent imperialism and colonial attitudes" (p. 23) that are dominant in our homes, schools, workplaces, and communities. She argues that transformative experiential learning is of particular relevance for teachers and other social service workers who come to understand the history of anti-Indigenous racism and violence that buttresses cultural genocide, land theft, and nationalism. Regan (2010) states that a combination of critical reflection and social action is required to overcome the hopelessness and cynicism that accompanies the truth about colonialism.

Challenges to Determining the Impact of Indigenization of Education

Several challenges exist with regard to determining the impact of the Indigenization of education.

- First, the process of Indigenization is so multi-faceted, and it is difficult to measure the movements of multiplicities, as Indigenization is a *process* rather than an end-point.

- Second, there are no agreed-upon indicators to measure what constitutes successful Indigenization; therefore this project seeks to identify indicators that could be of value in future studies.

- Third, finding culturally appropriate measures for evaluation will depend upon agreement of the aforementioned concrete indicators and further training in Indigenous cultural competencies.

- Finally, the ongoing effects of colonization on the relationships between Indigenous communities and representatives of Euro-Western education institutions continue to be a challenge to understanding what Indigenization means and what it looks like in the mainstream curriculum.

Dimensions of Decolonization and Impact on Indigenous Education

Proceeding with the knowledge that Indigenous education and everyday life are not separate entities (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2003), developing a set of indicators for Indigenization requires a different framework for measurement than traditional Euro-Western educational indicators. In addition, indicators might look different depending on the racial and cultural locations of the teacher. Due to these challenges, it might be helpful if future Indigenous education projects clarify teacher roles in terms of Indigenization, reconciliation, and/or decolonization work. Indigenization should include a thorough understanding of local cultural protocols as they relate to teachings and permissions to share those teachings (Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000).

Because the majority of educators are non-Indigenous settlers raised in a colonial context, it becomes important to understand what kinds of indicators infer a transformative and culturally competent settler engagement with Indigenization, which might be understood by some educators and researchers as decolonization. Madden & Glanfield (2017) invite teachers to re-consider both their personal and professional lives with Indigenous people and knowledges. They suggest that decolonizing pedagogy entails dismantling oppressive colonial systems and finding ways to support Indigenous self-determination. Educational goals should include teaching students to be critical thinkers who will work towards more socially just and ecologically responsible understandings of place-based relations (Madden & Glanfield, 2017).

Mitchell et al. (2018) identify four principles for decolonization as it applies to life within and outside of educational institutions:

1. Indigenous lens/worldview informs decolonization, with Indigenous leadership and participation;

2. Decolonization interrupts colonial power dynamics, holding non-Indigenous faculty and students responsible for understanding and engaging in respectful relations with Indigenous Peoples;

3. Decolonization progresses as conscientization to action; beginning with a foundational understanding of history and settler-Indigenous power relations as a foundation to decolonial policy and action; and

4. Decolonization transforms policy, curricula, and institutional spaces.

Part 5: Findings from Cultural Competency, Belonging and Resilience Student Surveys

Erickson Schools project teachers and administrators reported making efforts to achieve greater cultural proficiency, with a particular focus on Indigenous cultural competency, through the introduction of Mino-Pimaatisiwin into the school culture. The stated intention of this intervention was to improve First Nation youth self-regulation, self-concept (to reduce suicidal ideation and self-harm), critical thinking and independence, feelings of exclusion amongst friends (females were identified as most at risk), positive youth engagement toward school and their learning, and positive social interactions among peers (reducing intimidation and altercations).

With the knowledge that building students' self-esteem and resiliency skills may impact their academic, physical, and mental well-being (Ciarrochi, Heaven, & Davies; Yang, Tian, Huebner, & Zhu, 2019) and that weaving culturally and traditionally relevant material and stories into the curriculum can not only strengthen students' resilience, but also increase their literacy skills (Jackson & Heath, 2017), EES and ECI staff made a collective decision to weave Indigenous perspectives throughout the school with a focus on building self-esteem, resiliency, and cultural connectedness within the entire student population. The premise of the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives is that the whole child will benefit and find a way towards the Good Life, Mino-Pimaatisiwin.

Cultural Connectedness and Self-esteem and Belonging Survey Findings 2017-2018

Erickson Elementary School

A survey pertaining to areas the cultural connectedness and self-esteem and belonging was administered to all students in grades K-6 in fall of 2017 (survey 1) and again in fall of 2018 (survey 2). The K-G3 survey contained yes/no items only. The G4-G6 survey contained a set of statements on a 4-point Likert scale where 4 = Strongly agree; 3 = Agree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree. Table 3 shows the number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants in both years.

Table 3: *Number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Participants in 2017 and 2018*

Year	# of Participants			
	K-3 Indigenous	K-3 Non-Indigenous	G4-6 Indigenous	G4-6 Non-Indigenous
2017	36	23	42	18
2018	33	11	36	22

The cultural connectedness surveys (K-G2 and G3-6) contained seven items:

1. At school I think others around me respect my culture.

2. At school, we spend time learning about Indigenous culture, history, traditions.

3. If an Elder or grandparent spoke to me about my culture, I would listen to them carefully.

4. It is important to me that I know my culture and language.

5. I see my culture and background in my school.

6. I feel accepted in school for who I am.

7. I am happy and proud of my culture and who I am.

Figure 4 compares the percentage of K-G3 students who agree with each of the statements on the cultural connectedness survey in 2017 and in 2018. It indicates that the majority of K-G3 Indigenous and non-Indigenous students agree with the survey statements (90% or over for six of the seven statements), and we can conclude that K-G3 Indigenous students feel connected to their culture in school. The lowest scoring item was *At school, I think others around me respect my culture* (88%, 85%).

Figure 4. Comparison of K-G3 Indigenous Students' Responses to the Cultural Connectedness Survey 1 (Fall 2017) and Survey 2 (Fall 2018).
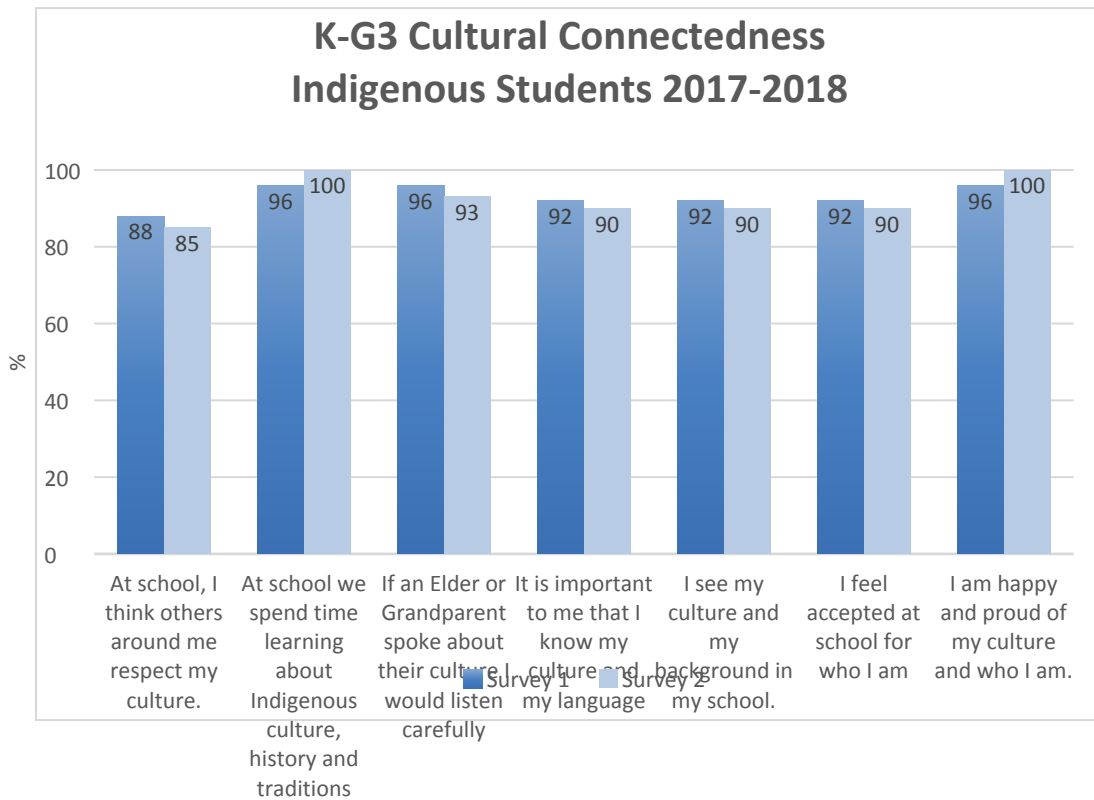
Figure 5 indicates that the majority of the grades 4-6 Indigenous students agree with the statements on the cultural connectedness part of the survey. An increase in the percentage of students agreeing is evident on most items from fall 2017 to fall 2018, and in fall 2018, six of the seven items had 90% or greater agreement. The item with the lowest agreement is *I feel accepted in school for who I am* with an 83% agreement in 2017 and 80% in 2018.

Self-esteem and Belonging Survey

The K-G3 survey contained five statements with a yes/no response choice.

1. I like the person I am.

2. I am able to do most things well.

3. I can make friends easily.

4. I can ask my teacher for help when I need it.

5. I am good at my schoolwork.

Figure 6 shows the percentage of K-G3 Indigenous students who responded 'yes' to the survey statements in 2017 and 2018. For some items, the degree of agreement decreased slightly, and for others, it increased. The item with which most students agreed was *I can ask my teacher for help when I need it* (86%, 94%), and the item with which fewest students agreed was *I can make friends easily* (78%, 63%).

Figure 6. Comparison of K-G3 Indigenous Students' Responses to the Self-esteem and Belonging Survey 1 (Fall 2017) and Survey 2 (Fall 2018).
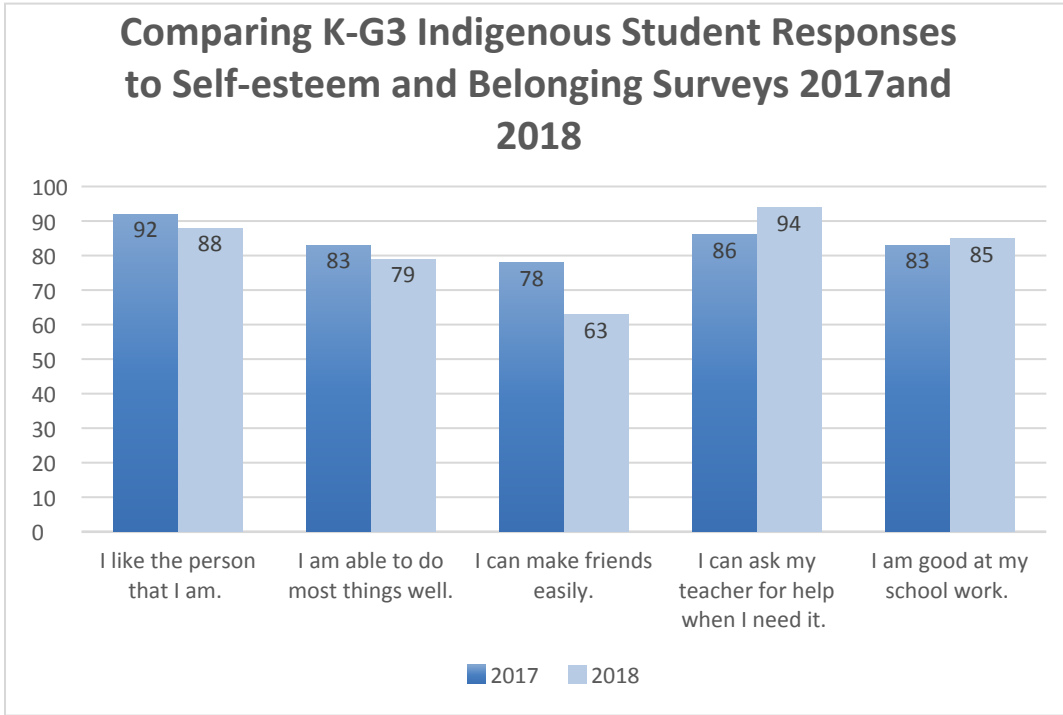
Figures 7 and 8 compare the percentages of K-G3 Indigenous and non-Indigenous students who agreed with each statement on the self-esteem and belonging survey in 2017 and in 2018. Non-Indigenous students agree to a greater extent with four of the five items in 2017 and all five items in 2018 than do Indigenous students. The item (2017) that the fewest students agree with is *I can make friends easily* (78% Indigenous students and 70% non-Indigenous students). The concerning part here is that the percentage of K-G3 Indigenous students who agreed with that statement decreased to 63% in 2018, whereas the percentage of non-Indigenous students who agreed increased to 91%.

Figure 7. Comparing Indigenous and Non-Indigenous K-G3 Student Responses to Self-esteem and Belonging Survey 2017.

Comparing Indigenous and Non-Indigenous K-G3 Student Responses to the Self-esteem and Belonging Survey 2017
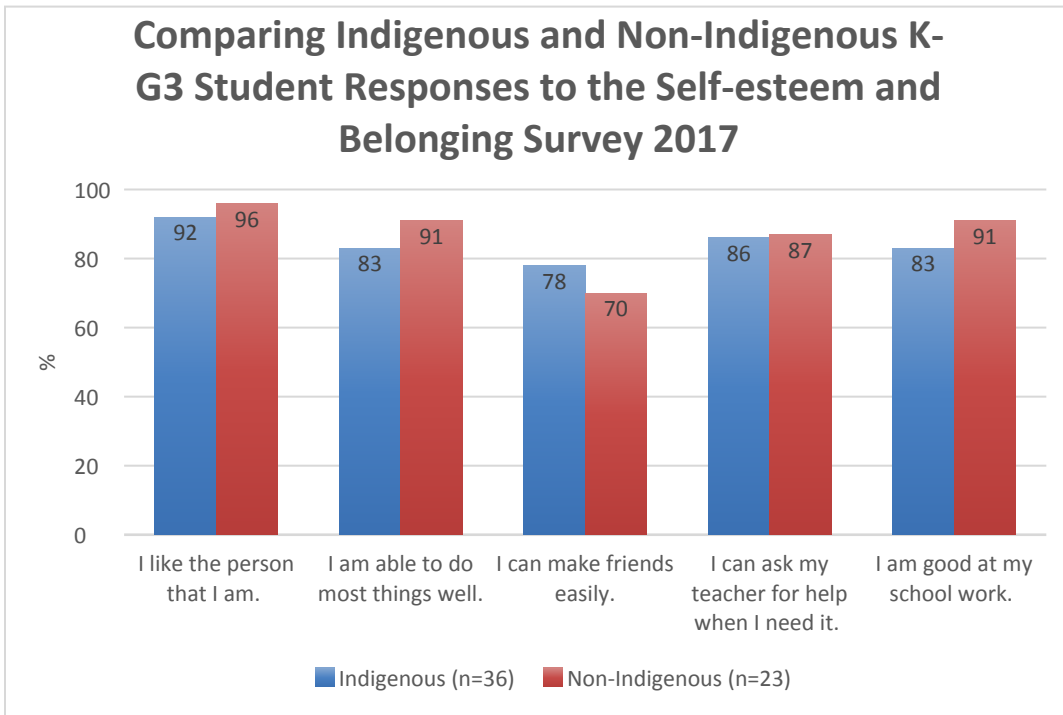
Figure 8. Comparing Indigenous and Non-Indigenous K-G3 Student Responses to Self-esteem and Belonging Survey 2018.

Comparing Indigenous and non-Indigenous K-G3 Student Responses to the Self-esteem and Belonging Survey 2018
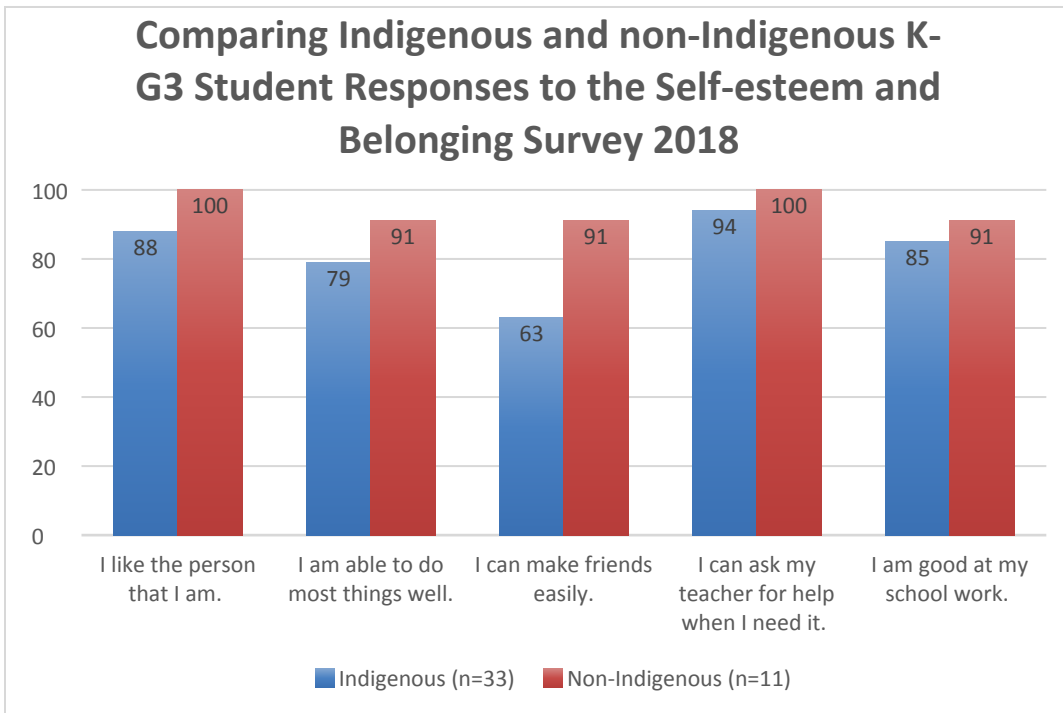
The grades 3-6 self-esteem and belonging survey contained ten statements:

1. I am proud of myself.

2. I like the person I am.

3. I am able to do most things well.

4. I feel proud of my work.

5. I can make friends easily.

6. I can work peacefully with others.

7. I can express my opinions well to others.

8. I can accept others' opinions even although they are different.

9. I feel successful in my school work.

10. I can ask my teacher for help when I need it.

Figure 9 shows the percentage of grades 3-6 Indigenous students who agreed or strongly agreed with the survey statements. Increases in the percentage of students in agreement are evident in all the items from 2017-2018. It is evident in 2018 that most of the Indigenous students *are proud of themselves*, *like who they are, feel successful in their school work*, and *ask their teacher for help when needed*. Similar to K-G3 Indigenous students, the lowest levels of agreement are for the items *I can make friends easily* (66.5%-72%), *I can work peacefully with my classmates* and *I can express my opinions well to my classmates* (71%-83%).

Figure 9. Comparison of Grades 3-6 Students' Responses to the Self-esteem and Belonging Survey 1 (Fall 2017) and Survey 2 (Fall 2018).
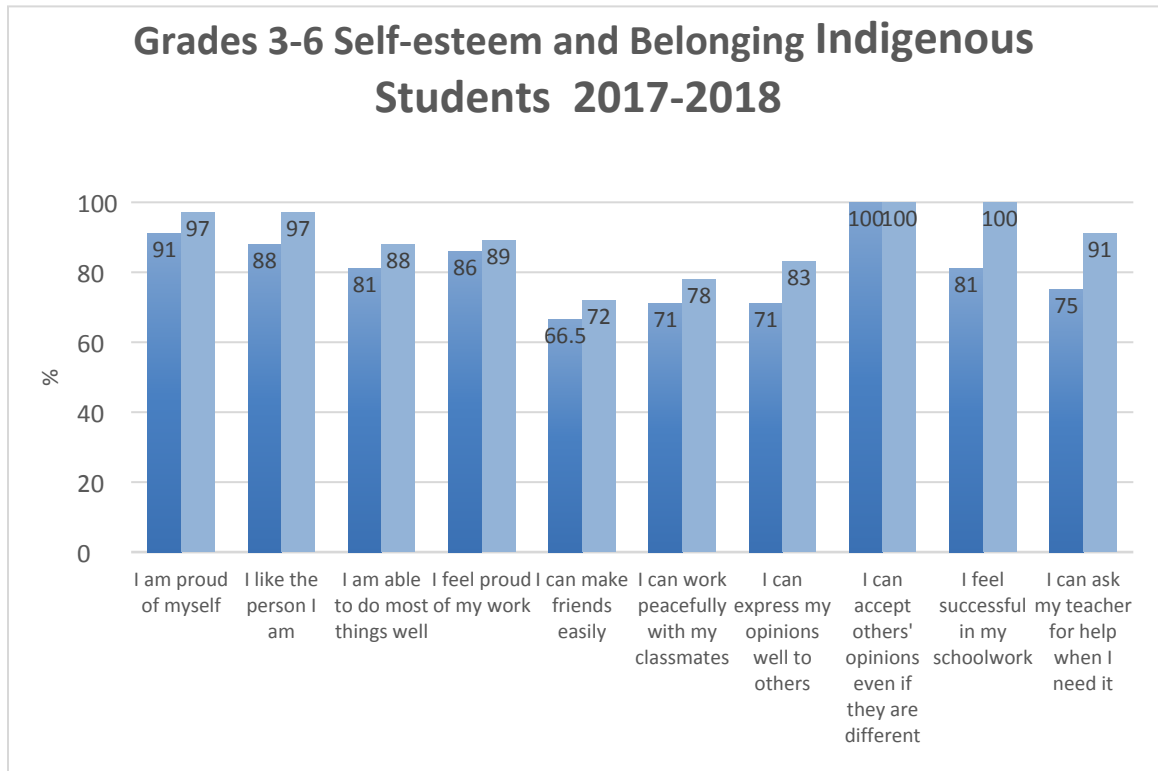
Figures 10 and 11 compare the percentage agreement of grades 4-6 Indigenous and non-Indigenous students with the statements on the self-esteem and belonging survey. It can be seen that the gaps in agreement levels between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students have decreased from 2017 to 2018.

As was evident in the K-G3 survey, the item with the lowest agreement level for grades 4-6 Indigenous students was *I can make friends easily* (67% in 2017 and 70% in 2018). This item also had the lowest level of agreement for non-Indigenous students (73%) in 2018. Other items with a lower agreement for Indigenous students were *I can work peacefully with my classmates,* and I can express my opinions well to others. One item that showed greater agreement for Indigenous students from 2017 to 2018 was *I feel comfortable asking my teachers for help* (75% to 92%).

Figure 10. Comparison of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students' Agreement with Items on the Self-esteem and Belonging Survey 1 (Fall 2017).

Self-esteem and Belonging
Grades 4-6 2017

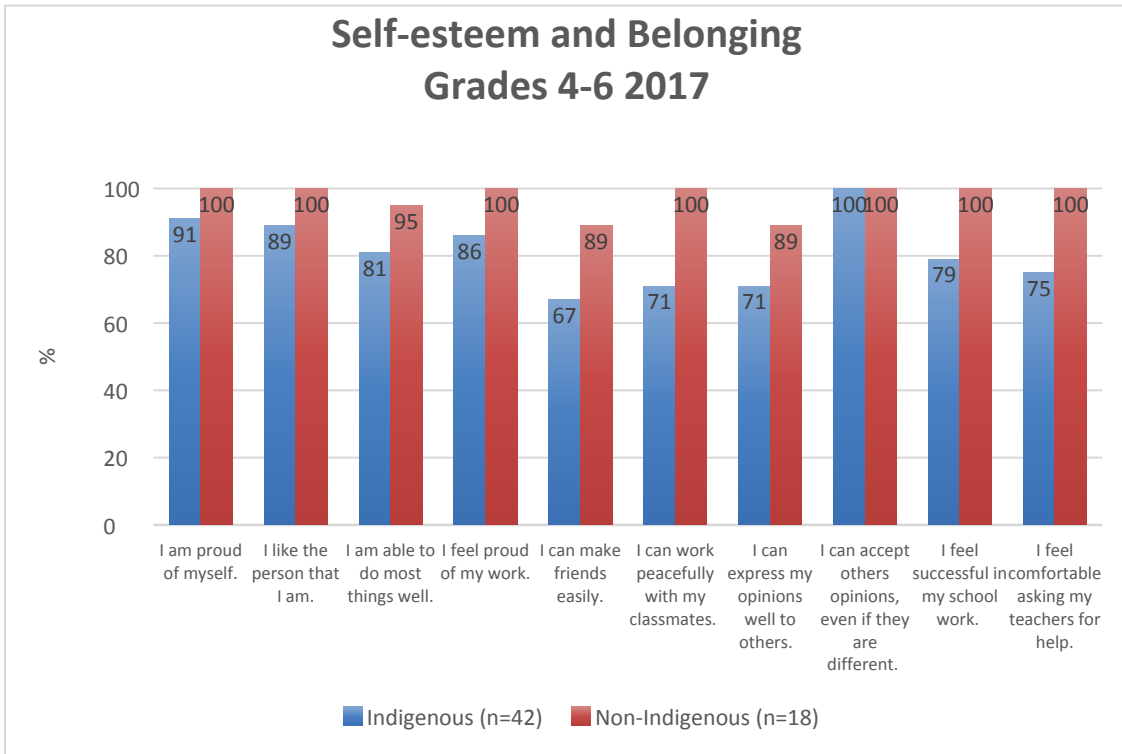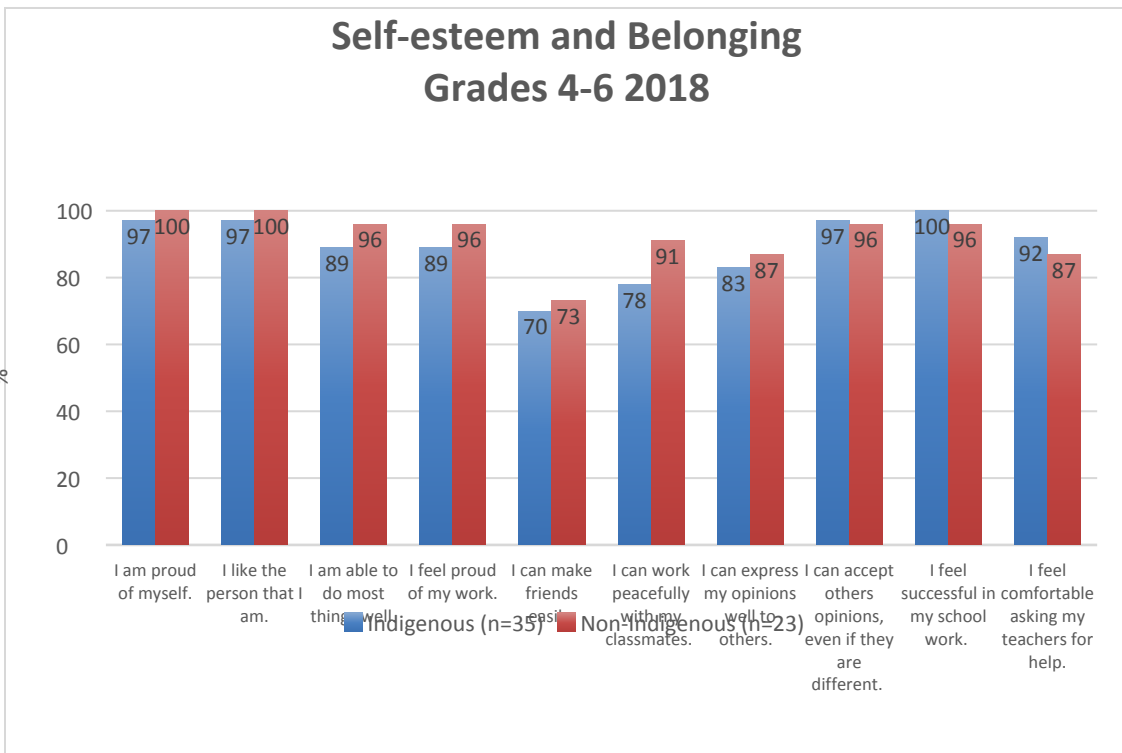*Figure 11.* Comparison of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students' Agreement with Items on the Self-esteem and Belonging Survey 1 (Fall 2018).

Self-esteem and Belonging
Grades 4-6 2018

Points to note:

- With regard to cultural connectedness, high levels of agreement (90% or over in 2018) were seen for all the items with the exception of those in K-3, *At school, I think others respect my culture* (88%, 85%), and in G4-6, *I feel accepted at school for who I am* (83%, 80%).

- Self-esteem appears to be healthy across grades 4-6 grade levels in Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. There was strong agreement across the board on items such as *I am proud of myself, I like the person that I am, I can accept others' opinions even although they are different, I feel successful in my school work*, and *I feel comfortable asking my teachers for help*.

- Indigenous students in K-3 and grades 4-6 indicated lower overall feelings of agreement with most of the statements on the self-esteem and belonging survey.

- In 2018, in all grade levels, there was a high agreement with the statement, *I feel comfortable asking my teachers for help*. This finding shows that all teachers at ESS have built positive working relations with their students.

- The lowest level of agreement in all grades was with the statement *I can make friends easily*. This may be an area that ESS chooses to focus on in the future.

Cultural Connectedness, Resiliency, and Feelings towards School Survey Findings

Erickson Collegiate

A survey pertaining to three areas of cultural connectedness, resiliency, and feelings towards school was administered simultaneously to all students in grades 7-12 in fall of 2017 and again in fall of 2018 (with the exception in 2017 for non-Indigenous students in G8 and all G12 students). Both surveys contained a set of statements on a 4-point Likert scale where 4 = Strongly agree; 3 = Agree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.
The numbers of participants in the 2017 and 2018 Surveys appear in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4: *Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Survey Participant Numbers 2017*

	Number of Participants					
Grade Level	7	8	9	10	11	12
Indigenous (45)	13	14	9	2	7	No data
Non-Indigenous (43)	4	No data	16	14	9	No data

Cultural Connectedness Survey

Students were asked respond to the following statements on a 4-point Likert scale where 4 = Strongly agree; 3 = Agree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.

1. I have spent time trying to find out more about my culture, such as its history, traditions, and customs.

2. I have a strong sense of belonging to my cultural community.

3. My culture is an important reflection of who I am.

4. I have done things that will help me understand my cultural background better.

5. I feel a strong attachment towards my cultural community.

6. If a traditional person or Elder spoke to me about my culture, I would listen to them carefully.

7. My cultural background means that I sometimes have a different way of looking at the world.

8. I am proud of my culture.

9. It is important to me that I know my ancestral language.

10. In general, others respect and view my culture in a positive manner.

Cultural Connectedness Survey Findings 2017

Figures 12-16 show the mean responses of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to the survey items in grades 7-11. Indigenous students scored higher than non-Indigenous students in most categories. Interestingly, in grades 7 through 11 both Indigenous and non-Indigenous agreed fairly strongly with the statement *"If a traditional person or Elder spoke to me about my culture, I would listen to them carefully,"* which indicates that Erickson schools have promoted a culture in which elders are valued no matter what race the students are.

Figure 12 shows that Indigenous students enter G7 in Erickson Collegiate from Erickson Elementary with high levels of cultural connectedness. Means for each statement indicated agreement with each item. As might be expected, non-Indigenous students who come from varied cultural backgrounds scored lower on some items on the survey which were more targeted towards Indigenous students, but still indicated a sense of pride in their culture and felt that their culture was an important reflection of who they were and that others respected it.

Only Indigenous students were surveyed in G8 in 2017 (see Figure 3). Cultural connectedness scores, on the whole, were lower than their G7 counterparts, although they indicate a strong pride in their culture (3.6), attachment to their community (3.2), and perceived others viewed their culture in a positive manner (3.0).

Figure 12. Cultural Connectedness - G7, 2017.
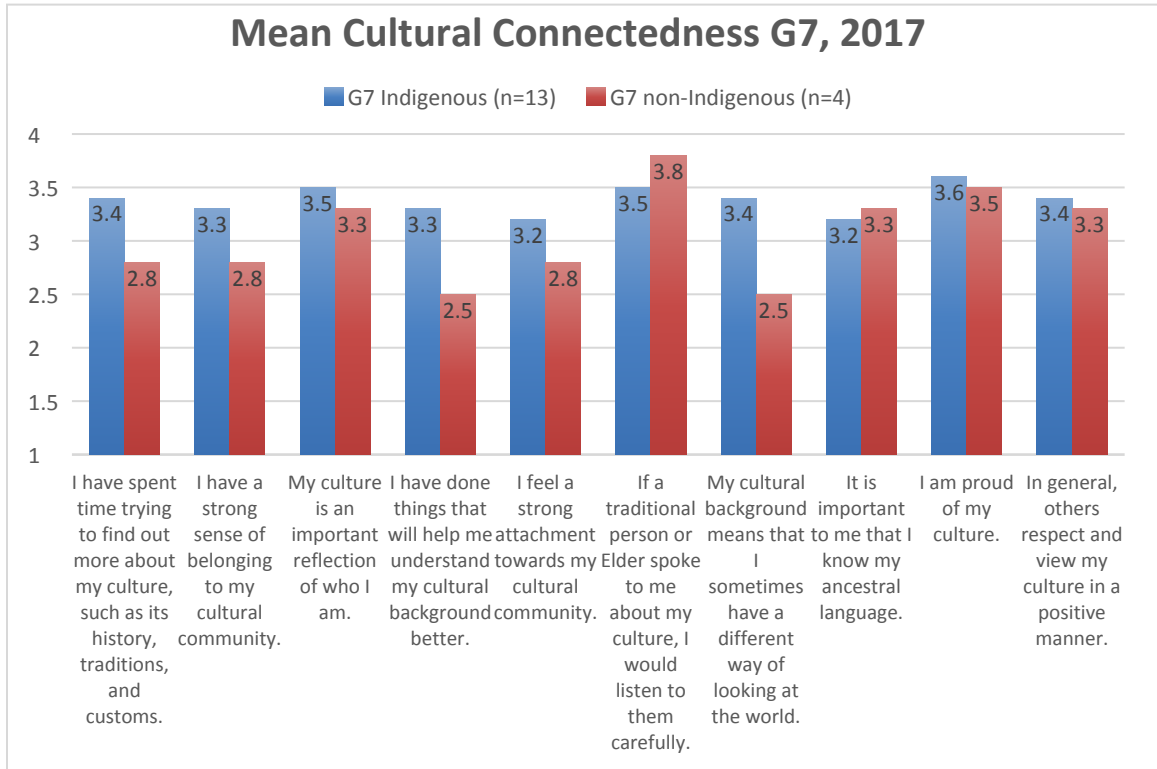
Figure 13. Cultural Connectedness - G8, 2017.
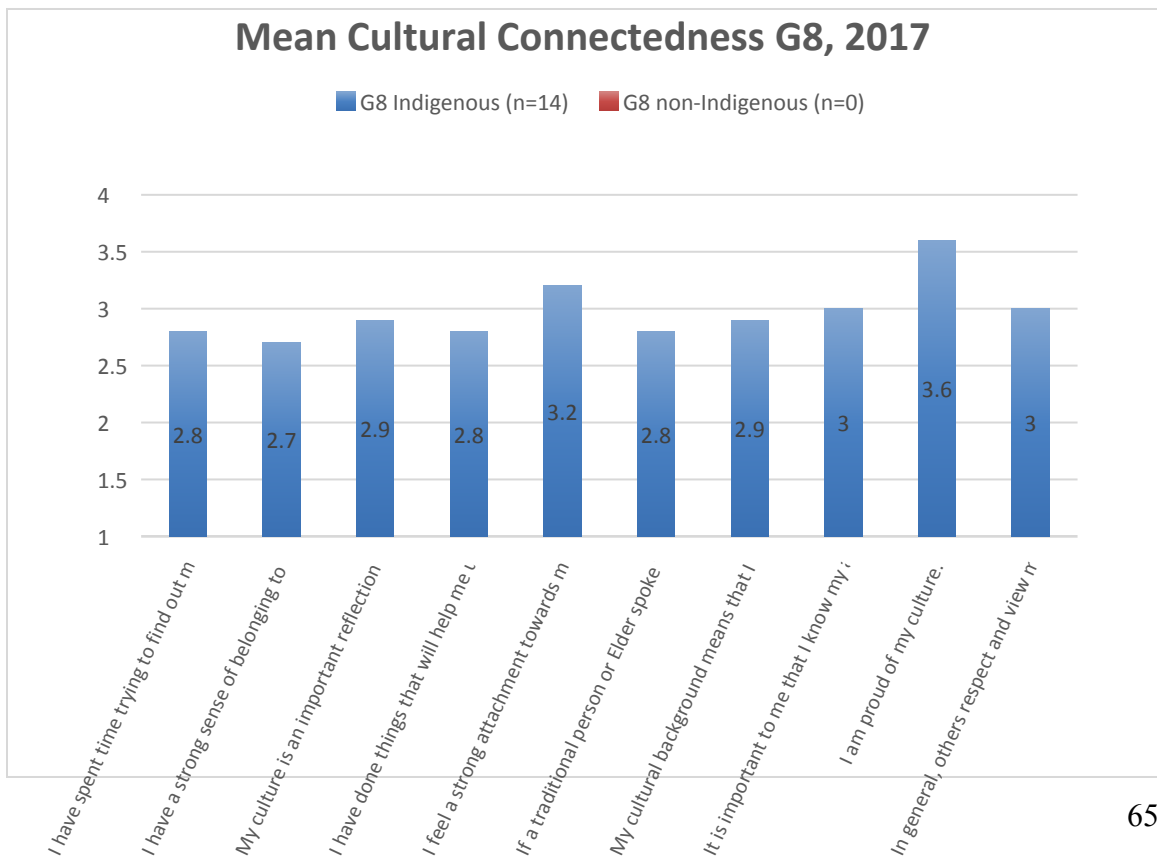
Figure 14. Cultural Connectedness - G9, 2017.

Mean Cultural Connectedness G9, 2017

G9 Indigenous (n=9) G9 non-Indigenous (n=16)

Figure 15. Cultural Connectedness - G10, 2017.

Mean Cultural Connectedness G10, 2017

G10 Indigenous (n=2) G10 non-Indigenous (n=14)
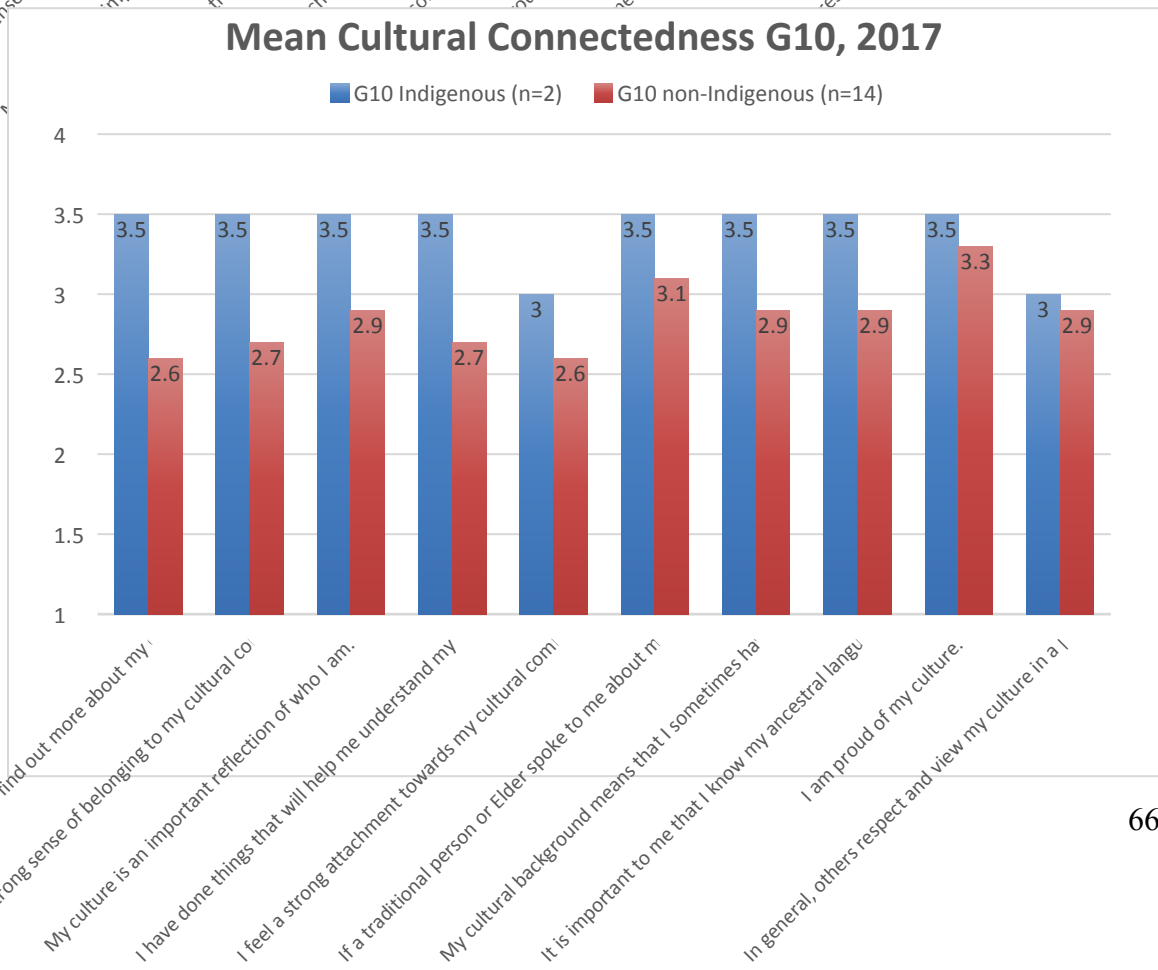
Figure 16. Cultural Connectedness - G11, 2017.

Mean G11 Cultural Connectedness, 2017
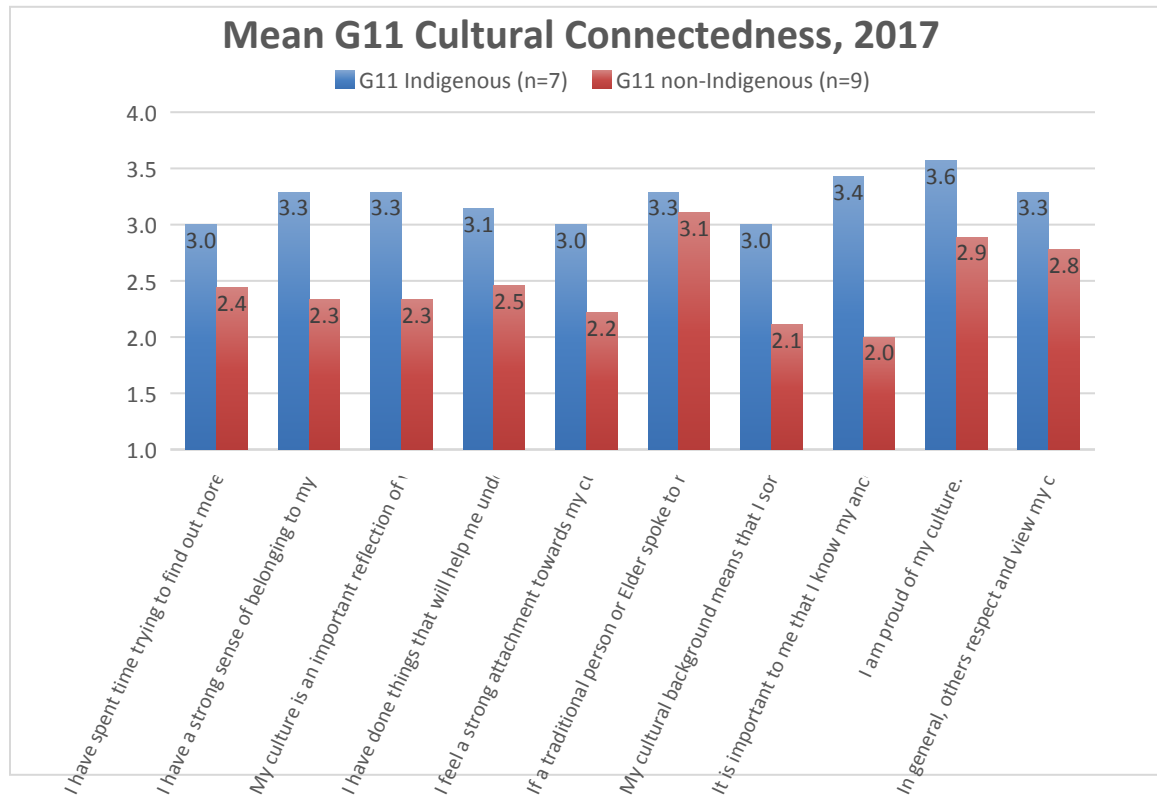
With the exception of G8 students, Indigenous students (G7, G9, G10, G11) on average *agreed* to *strongly agreed* with all the items on the cultural connectedness survey. With the exception of G7, non-Indigenous students on average disagreed with all the items except for *If a traditional person or Elder spoke to me about my culture, I would listen to them carefully*, indicating strong respect across the student body for Elders.

Figure 17 shows the mean ratings of all items on the cultural connectedness survey per grade level in 2017. It shows that Indigenous students, on average, rated the items at three or above indicating that they *agreed* to *strongly agreed* with the items on the survey.

Figure 17. Cultural Connectedness by Grade Level, 2017.

Cultural Connectedness Survey Findings 2018

Table 5 indicates the number of Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants in the 2018 survey.

Table 5: *Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Survey Participant Numbers 2018*

	Number of participants					
Grade Level	7	8	9	10	11	12
Indigenous (55)	14	12	10	12	2	3
Non-Indigenous (39)	3	5	9	13	13	10

Figures 18-23 show the mean responses of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in grades 7-12 to the 2018 cultural connectedness survey items. As with the 2017 survey, Indigenous students scored higher than non-Indigenous students in most categories. On average, Indigenous students in grade 7 *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with most of the survey items with the exception of *I have spent time trying to find out more about my culture, such as its history, traditions, and customs* (2.9), *I have done things that will help*

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me understand my cultural background better (2.9), and *I feel a strong attachment to my cultural community* (2.9). Grade 8 Indigenous students *agreed* to *strongly agreed* with all the survey items.

Grade 9 Indigenous students, although averaging three or more on the 4 point scale for the majority of items, disagreed with four items, *I have a strong sense of belonging to my cultural community* (2.9)*; I feel a strong attachment towards my cultural community* (2.9)*; My cultural background means that I sometimes have a different way of looking at the world* (2.8)*;*and *It is important to me that I know my ancestral language* (2.6)*.* In 2017, these grade 9 students were in grade 8, and their cultural connectedness scores were also lower than other grades. Cultural connectedness average scores for grade 12 students were low for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, but it must be noted that only four Indigenous students participated in the survey and so these scores may not be reflective of all Indigenous students in grade 12.
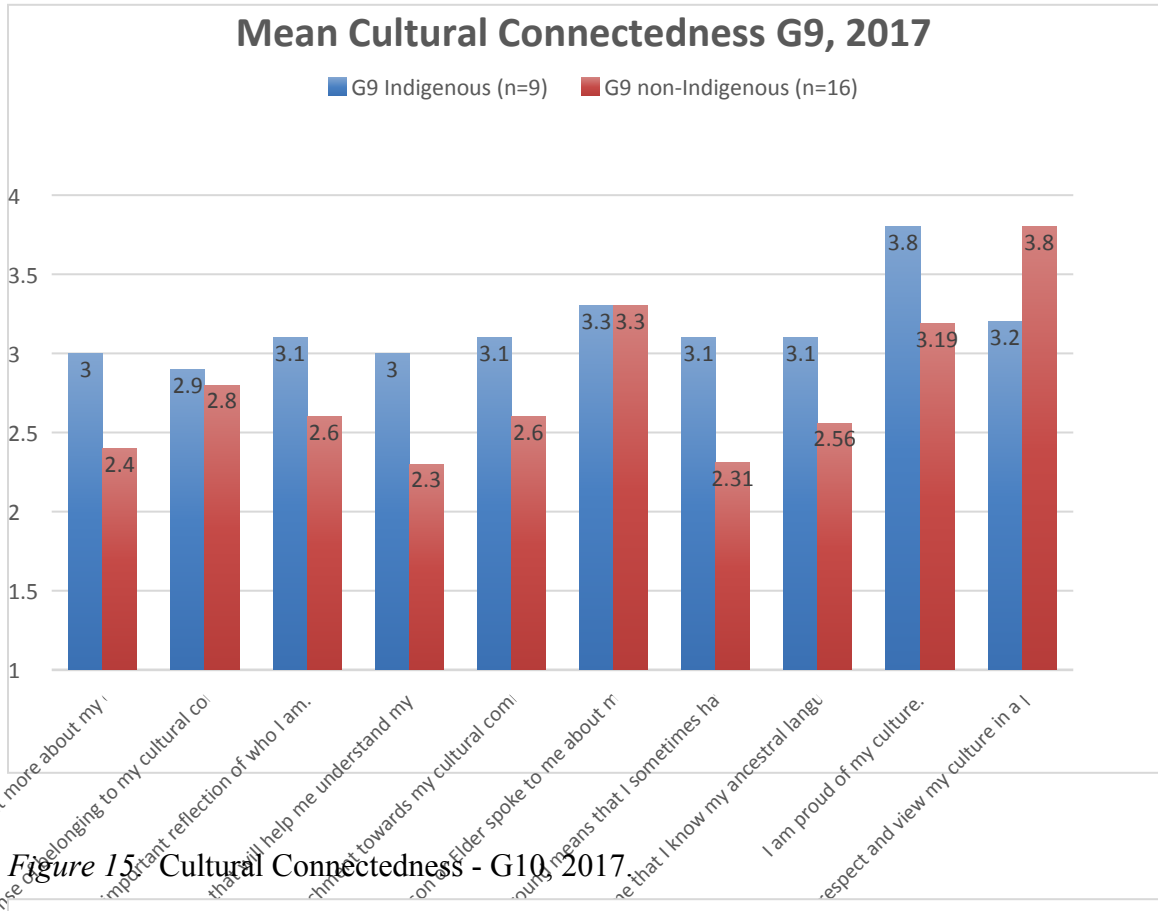
Figure 18. Cultural Connectedness - G7, 2018.

Figure 19. Cultural Connectedness - G8, 2018.

Mean Cultural Connectedness G8, 2018
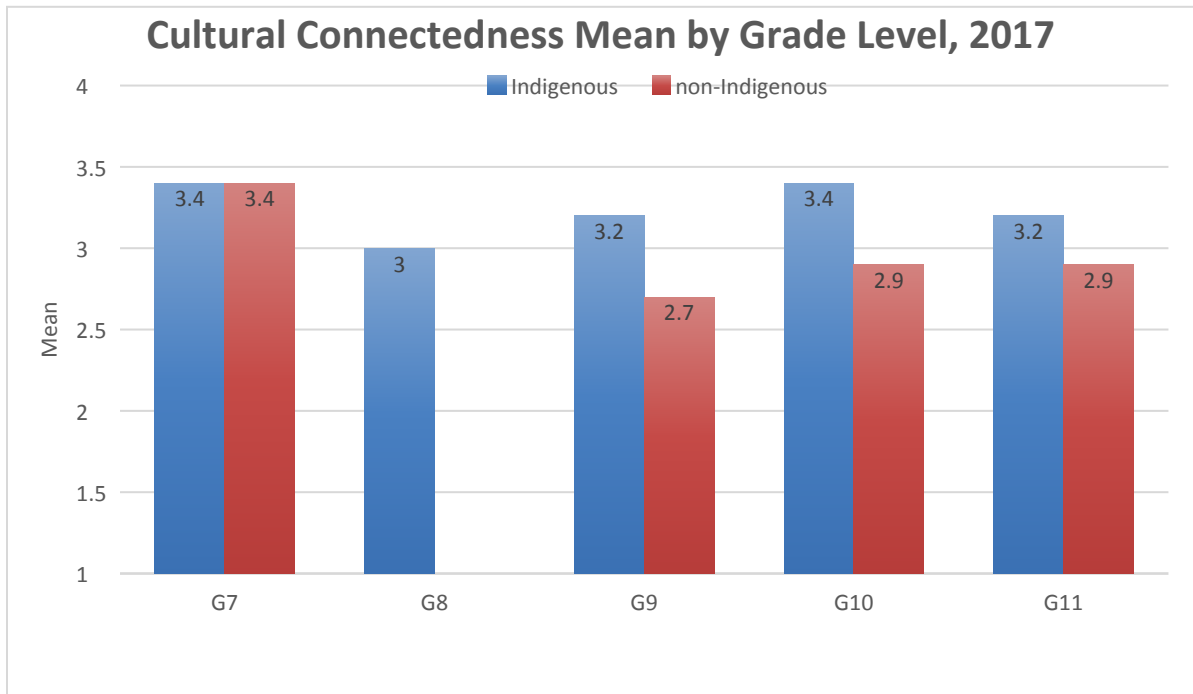
Indigenous (n=12)   Non-Indigenous (n=5)

Item	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
I have spent time trying to find out more about my culture	3.6	3.2
I have a strong sense of belonging to my cultural community	3.2	2.8
My culture is an important reflection of who I am.	3.7	3
I have done things that will help me understand my cultural background	3.3	2.8
I feel a strong attachment towards my cultural community	3	2.8
If a traditional person or Elder spoke to me about m...	3.8	3.4
My cultural background means that I sometimes ha...	3.3	2.8
It is important to me that I know my ancestral langu...	3.4	3
I am proud of my culture.	3.8	3.6
In general, others respect and view my culture in a ...	3.3	2.8

Figure 20. Cultural Connectedness - G9, 2018.

Mean Cultural Connectedness G9, 2018

Indigenous (n=10)   Non-indigeous (n=9)

Item	Indigenous	Non-indigenous
I have spent time trying to find out more about my culture, such as its history, traditions, and customs.	3.1	2.9
I have a strong sense of belonging to my cultural community.	2.9	2.6
My culture is an important reflection of who I am.	3	2.7
I have done things that will help me understand my cultural background better.	3	2.7
I feel a strong attachment towards my cultural community.	2.9	2.6
If a traditional person or Elder spoke to me about my culture, I would listen to them carefully.	3.4	3.3
My cultural background means that I sometimes have a different way of looking at the world.	2.8	2.8
It is important to me that I know my ancestral language.	2.6	3
I am proud of my culture.	3.5	3.1
In general, others respect and view my culture in a positive manner.	3.1	3

Figure 21. Cultural Connectedness - G10, 2018.

Mean Cultural Connectedness G10, 2018

Indigenous (n=12) ■ Non-indigeous (n=13)

	I have spent time trying to find out more	I have a strong sense of belonging to my	My culture is an important reflection of	I have done things that will help me und	I feel a strong attachment towards my c	If a traditional person or Elder spoke to r	My cultural background means that I sor	It is important to me that I know my anc	I am proud of my culture.	In general, others respect and view my c	Average
Indigenous	2.9	3.3	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.8	3	2.9	3.6	3.2	3.23
Non-indigeous	2.5	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.8	3.2	2.7	2.5	3.2	2.8	2.72

Figure 22. Cultural Connectedness - G11, 2018.

Mean Cultural Connectedness G11, 2018

Indigenous n= 3 ■ Non-indigenous (n=12)

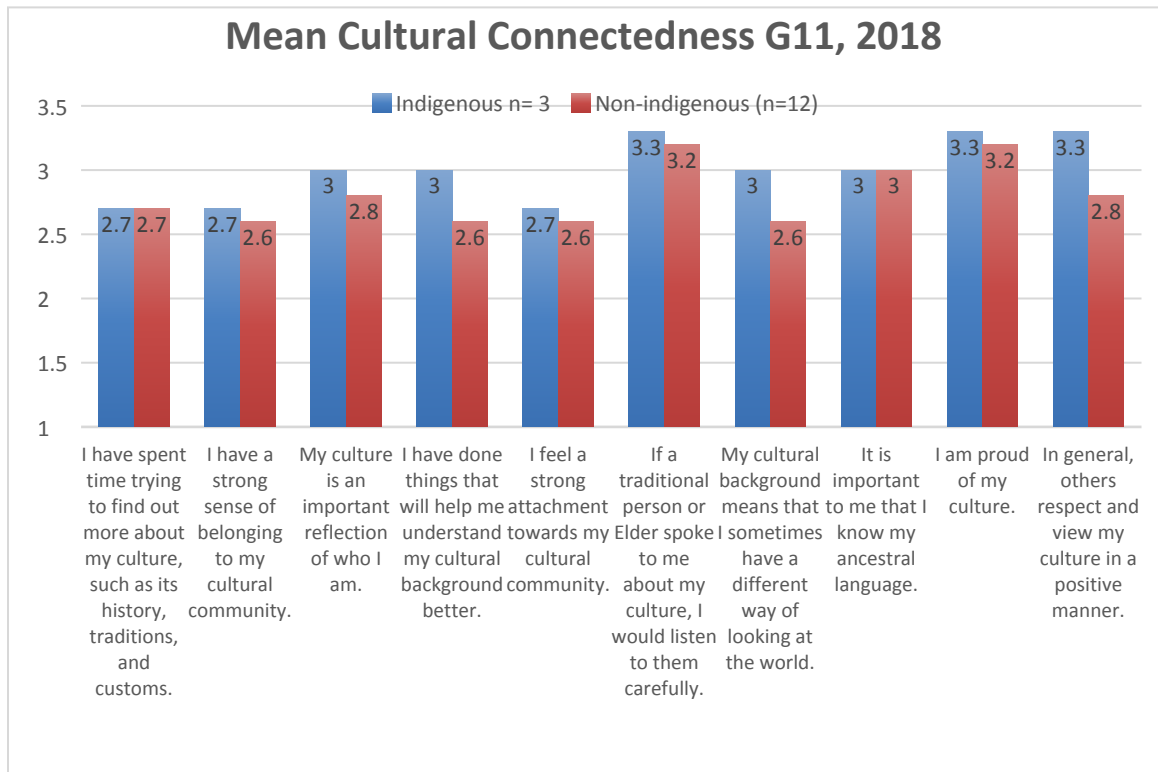|	I have spent time trying to find out more about my culture, such as its history, traditions, and customs.	I have a strong sense of belonging to my cultural community.	My culture is an important reflection of who I am.	I have done things that will help me understand my cultural background better.	I feel a strong attachment towards my cultural community.	If a traditional person or Elder spoke to me about my culture, I would listen to them carefully.	My cultural background means that I sometimes have a different way of looking at the world.	It is important to me that I know my ancestral language.	I am proud of my culture.	In general, others respect and view my culture in a positive manner.
Indigenous	2.7	2.7	3	3	2.7	3.3	3	3	3.3	3.3
Non-indigenous	2.7	2.6	2.8	2.6	2.6	3.2	2.6	3	3.2	2.8

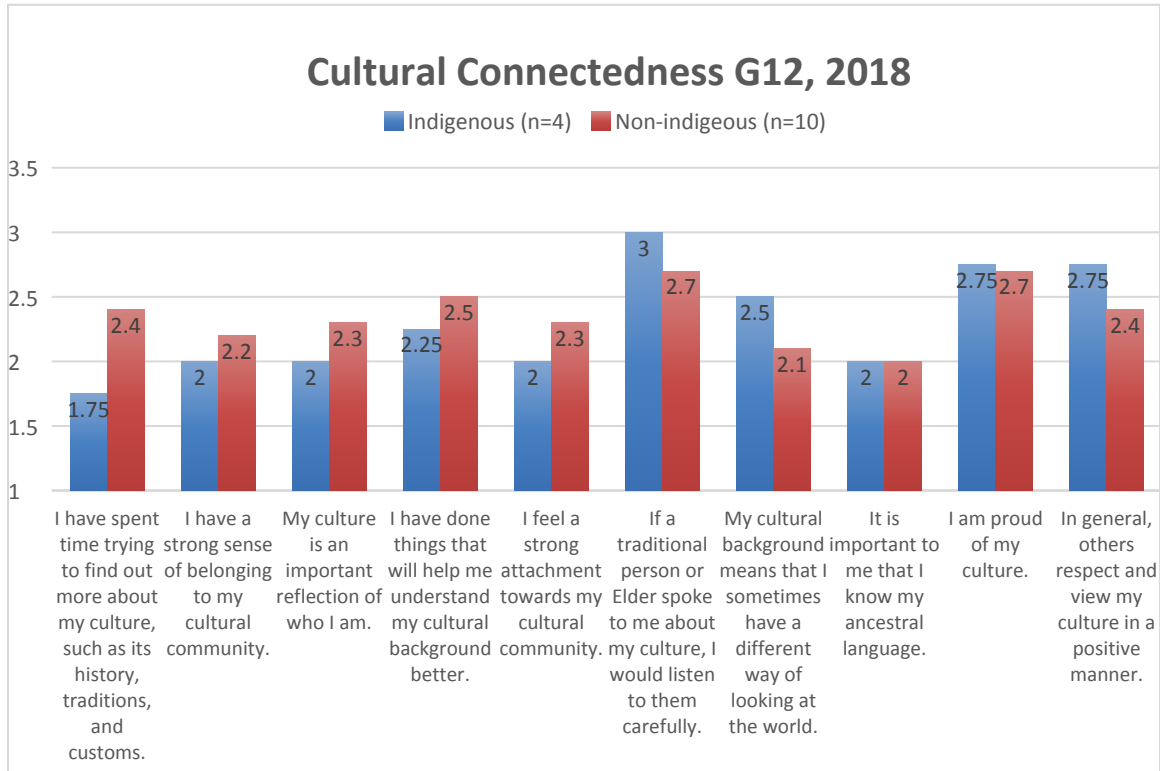*Figure 23*. Cultural Connectedness - G12, 2018.

Figure 24 shows the mean cultural connectedness scores per grade level in 2018. The average cultural connectedness score for Indigenous students in grades 7-11 was three or above, indicating agreement with the items. The comparison of the 2017 and 2018 survey results (see Figure 25), which is grade 7, 2018, compared to grade 8, 2018, etc., indicated no significant gains or losses in the perception of cultural connectedness for Indigenous students.

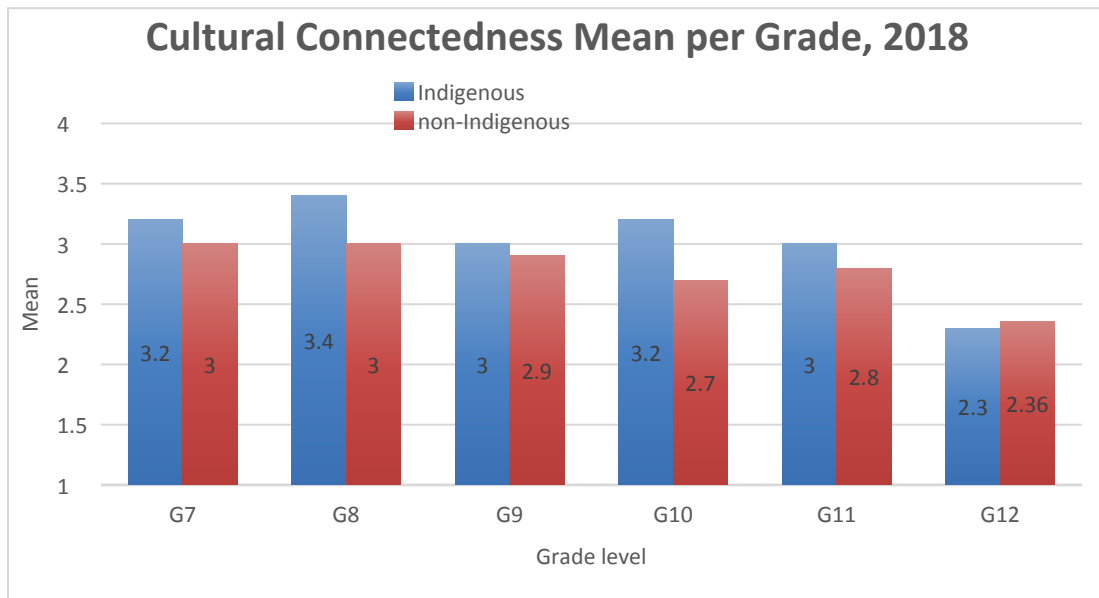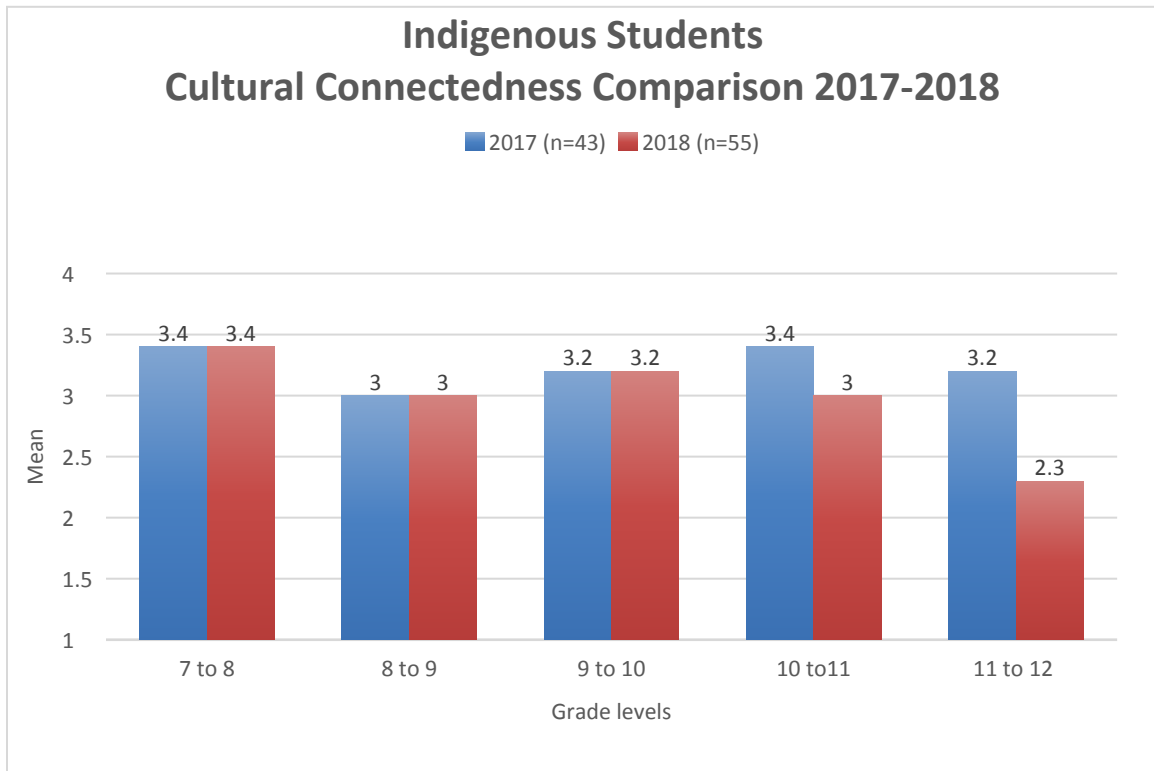*Figure 24*. Cultural Connectedness - Means per Grade, 2018.

Figure 25. Cultural Connectedness - Comparison of Means per Grade, 2017-2018.

Points to note:

1. The average cultural connectedness score for Indigenous students in grades 7-11 was three or above, indicating broad agreement with the items.

2. Grades 7-11 Indigenous students showed moderate to strong agreement with the statements regarding *listening to elders or traditional persons*, *pride in culture*, and *feeling that others respected their culture*.

3. In all grade levels, both non-Indigenous students and Indigenous students agreed with the statement, *If a traditional person or Elder spoke to me about my culture, I would listen to them carefully.*

4. In all grade levels, Indigenous students perceived that others respected their culture to a greater extent than did non-Indigenous students, although the difference was not significant.

5. Although there were no gains in cultural connectedness over the study year 2017-2018, we can conclude that on the whole, Indigenous students at Erickson Collegiate have fairly high perceptions of cultural connectedness and feel pride in their culture.

A resiliency questionnaire was administered to each grade level (7-12) in fall 2017 and then again in fall 2018. It asked the following items:

1. I figure things out one way or another.

2. I am able to depend on myself.

3. I can be on my own.

4. I feel proud that I have accomplished things in my life.

5. I feel that I can handle many things at a time.

6. I take things one day at a time.

7. I can get through difficult times because I've experienced difficulty.

8. I have self-discipline (i.e., I have control over my thoughts and actions).

9. I believe in myself.

10. In an emergency, I'm someone that people can count on.

11. I can usually look at a situation in a number of different ways.

12. Sometimes I make myself do things whether I want to or not.

13. I move on from things that I can't do anything about.

14. When I am in a difficult situation, I can usually solve it.

Responses were on a 4-point Likert scale where 4 = Strongly agree; 3 = Agree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.

Figures 26-31 show the mean level of agreement per grade level with the items in the resiliency category of the 2018 survey. Findings indicate that in 2017 non-Indigenous students entered grade 7 at Erickson Collegiate with higher levels of resiliency than Indigenous students. This trend continued throughout the grade levels.

Figure 26 shows the means for grade 7 students on each item broken down into Indigenous and non-Indigenous categories. The overall mean for the resiliency category was 3.0 for Indigenous students and 3.1 for non-Indigenous students. Grade 7 Indigenous students disagreed with only two of the fourteen statements: *I feel that I can handle many things at one time* (2.7) and *I move on from things that I can't do anything about* (2.6).

Figure 27 shows the means for each item for grade 8 Indigenous students only. The overall mean was 2.8. Grade 8 Indigenous students showed disagreement with eight of

the fourteen resiliency statements. In grade 9, the overall resiliency mean was 3.0 for Indigenous students and 3.3 for non-Indigenous students; in grade 10, the overall mean was 2.8 (Indigenous) and 3.4 (non-Indigenous). However, only two grade 10 indigenous students completed the survey and so the results may not be representative. In grade 11, the overall resiliency score was 3.0 for each group.

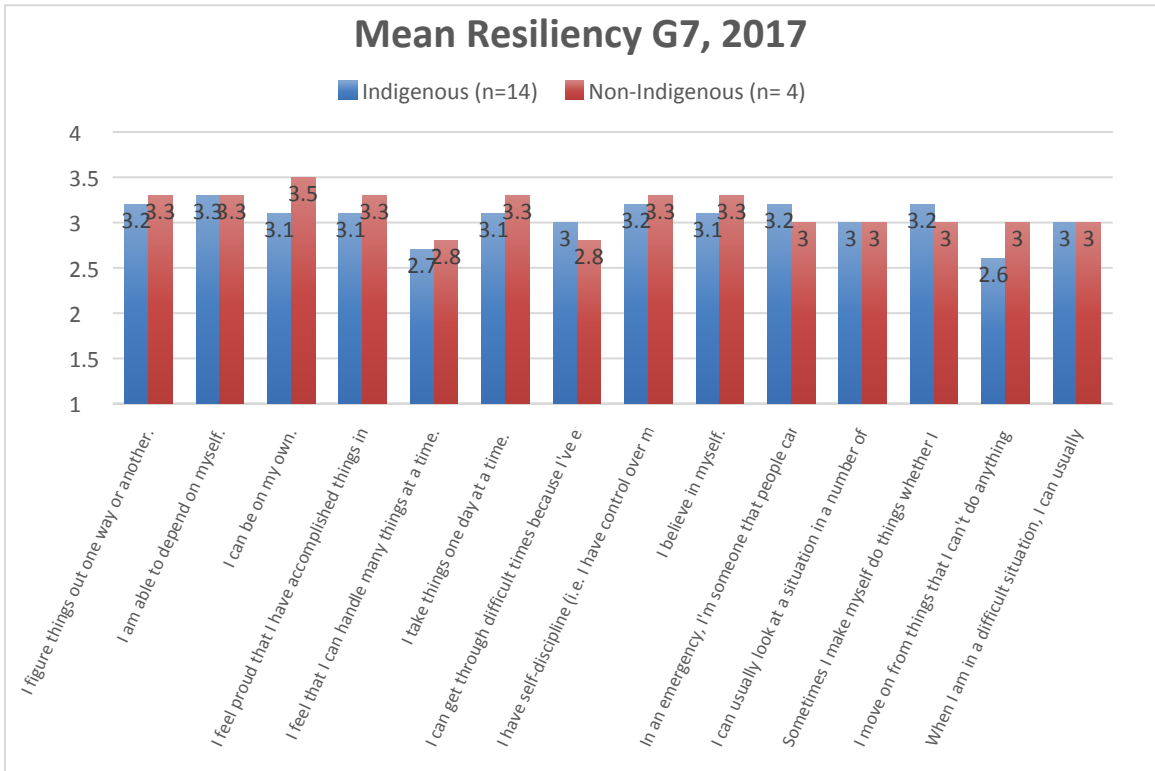*Figure 26.* Mean Resiliency - G7, 2017.
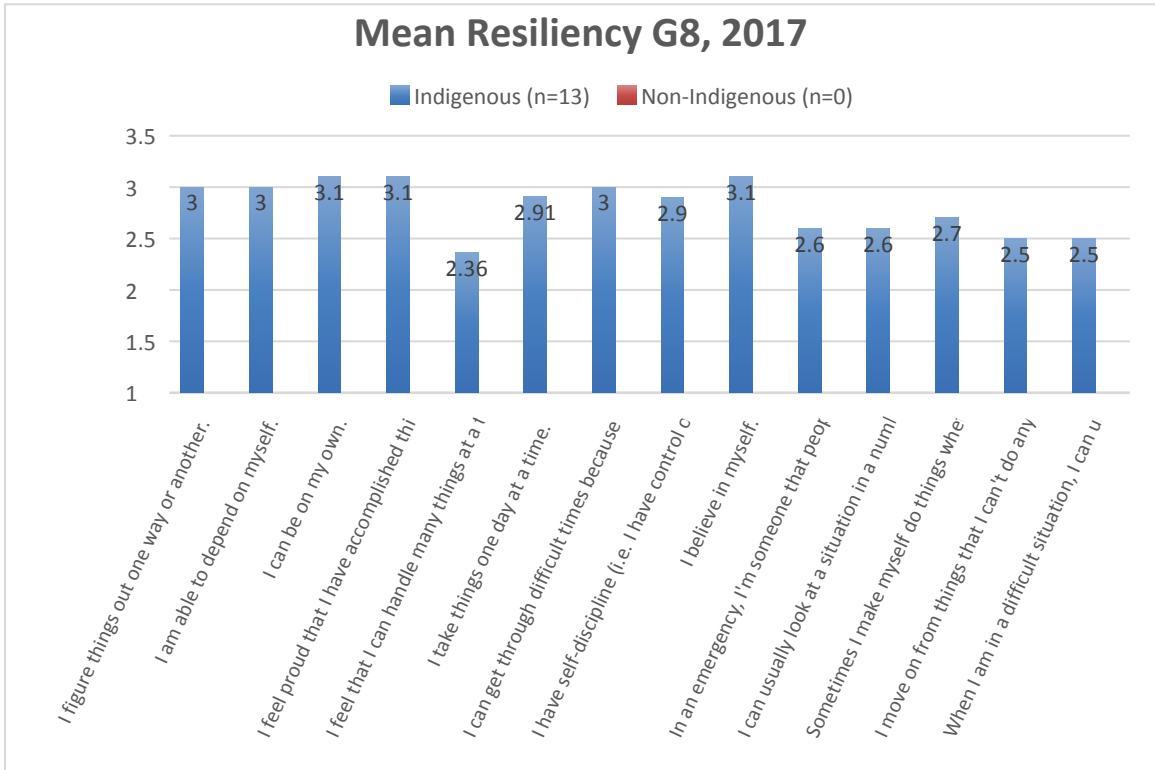
Figure 27. Mean Resiliency - G8, 2017.

Mean Resiliency G8, 2017

Indigenous (n=13)   Non-Indigenous (n=0)

Figure 28. Mean Resiliency - G9, 2017.

Resiliency G9, 2017

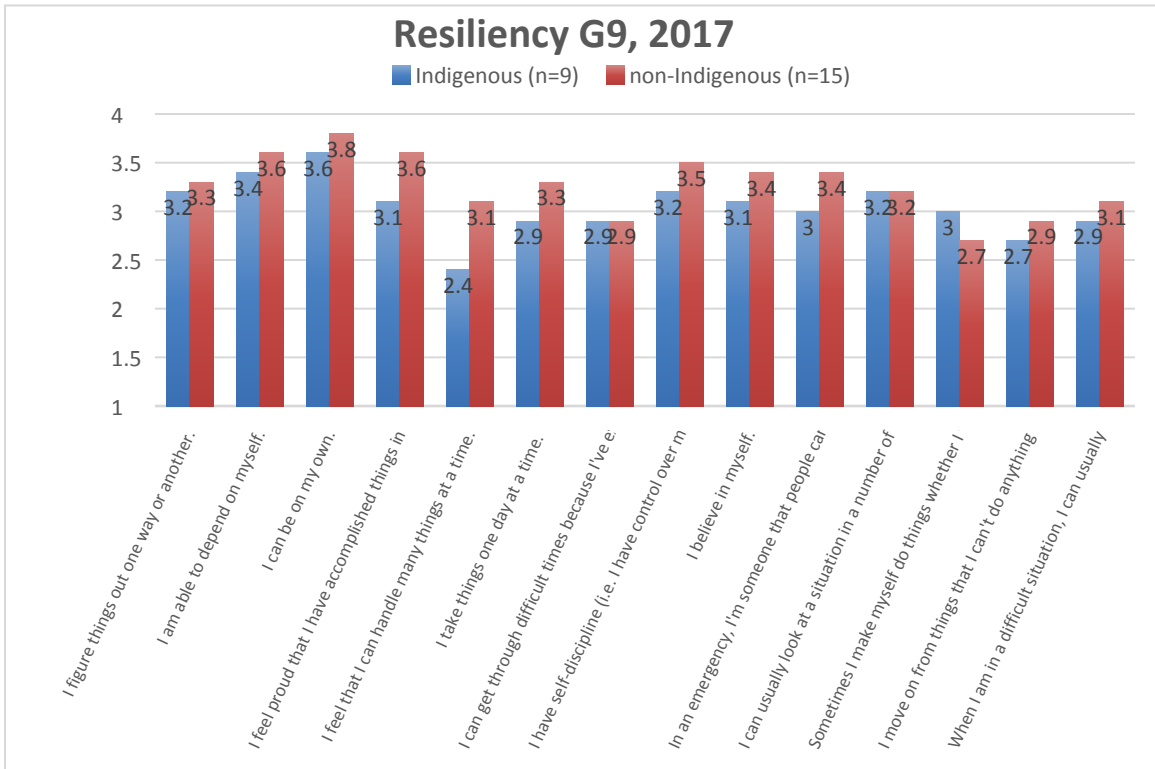Indigenous (n=9)   non-Indigenous (n=15)

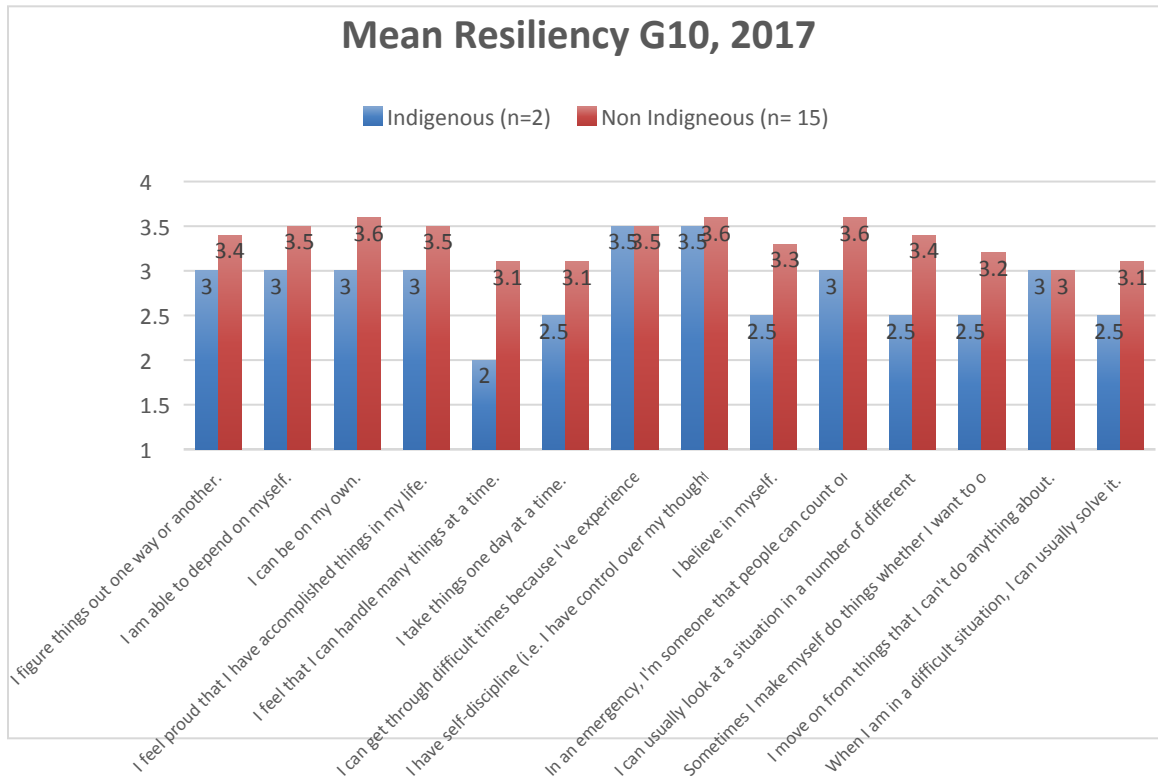*Figure 29.* Mean Resiliency - G10, 2017.

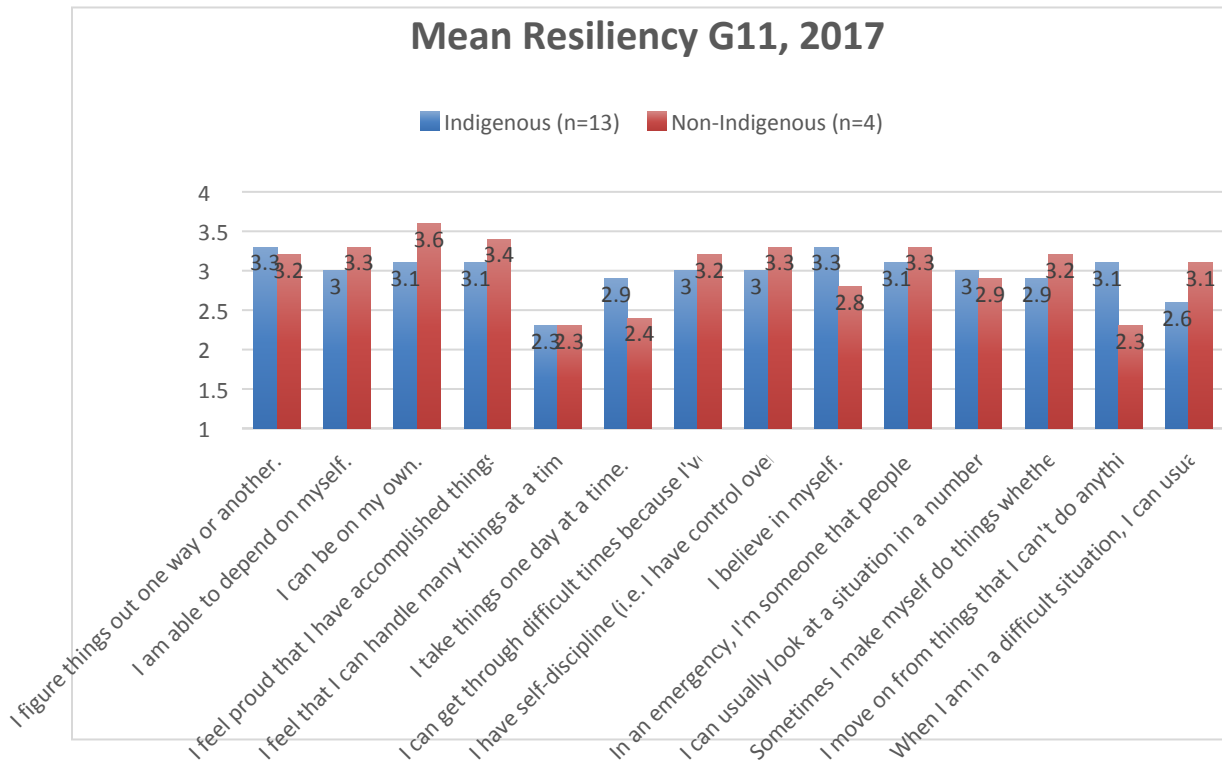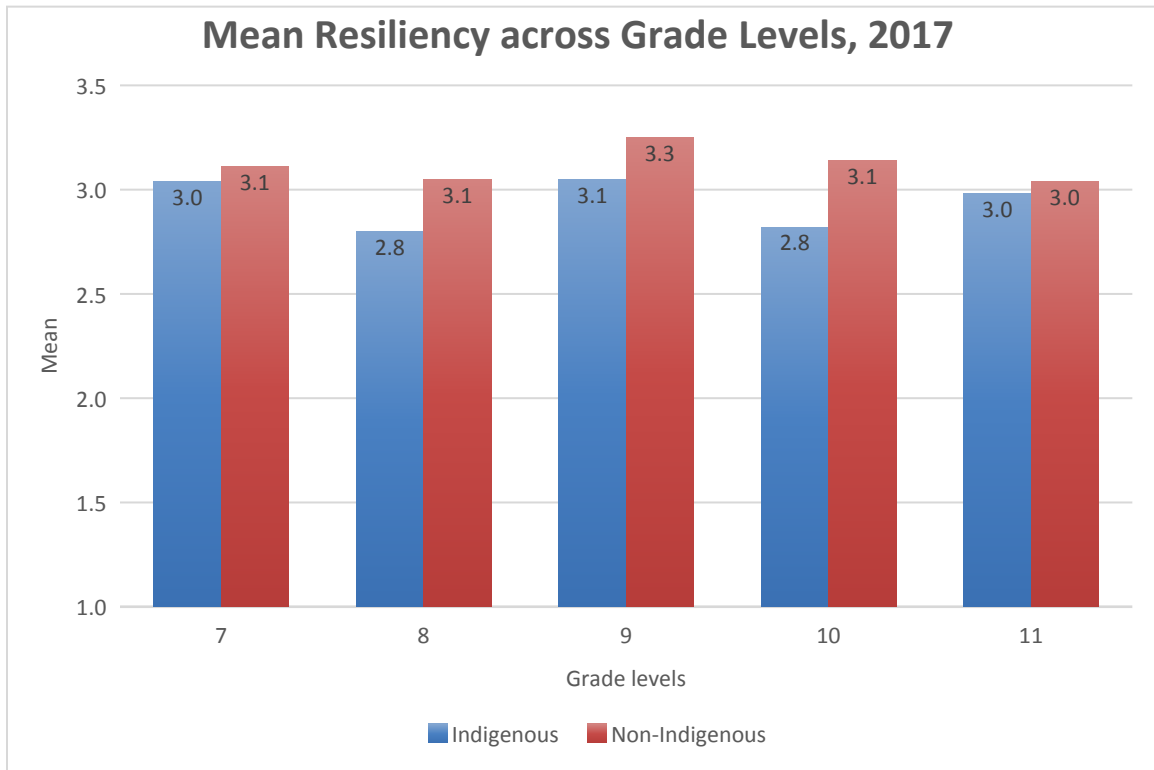*Figure 30.* Mean Resiliency - G11, 2017.

Figure 31. Comparing Resiliency between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students, 2017.

A mean score of 3 or above indicates agreement. A mean score of less than 3 indicates disagreement. Examination of the means for each item aggregated across the entire Indigenous student body (n=43) identified the following items in which the mean indicated disagreement with the statement (below 3): *I feel that I can handle many things at a time* (2.45); *I take things one day at a time* (2.98); *In an emergency, I'm someone that people can count on* (2.98); *I can usually look at a situation in a number of different ways* (2.90); *Sometimes I make myself do things whether I want to or not* (2.93)*; I move on from things that I can't do anything about* (2.69); *When I am in a difficult situation, I can usually solve it* (2.74).

Resiliency Findings 2018

The second resiliency survey (see Figures 32-39) was conducted in fall of 2018 and showed similar gaps in resiliency between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Mean resiliency scores for Indigenous students were again lower than for non-Indigenous students except for grade 12 in which scores for Indigenous students were higher than for non-Indigenous students. However, increases in resiliency were observed across the grade levels for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, although the growth was not significant.

Figure 32. Mean Resiliency - G7, 2018.

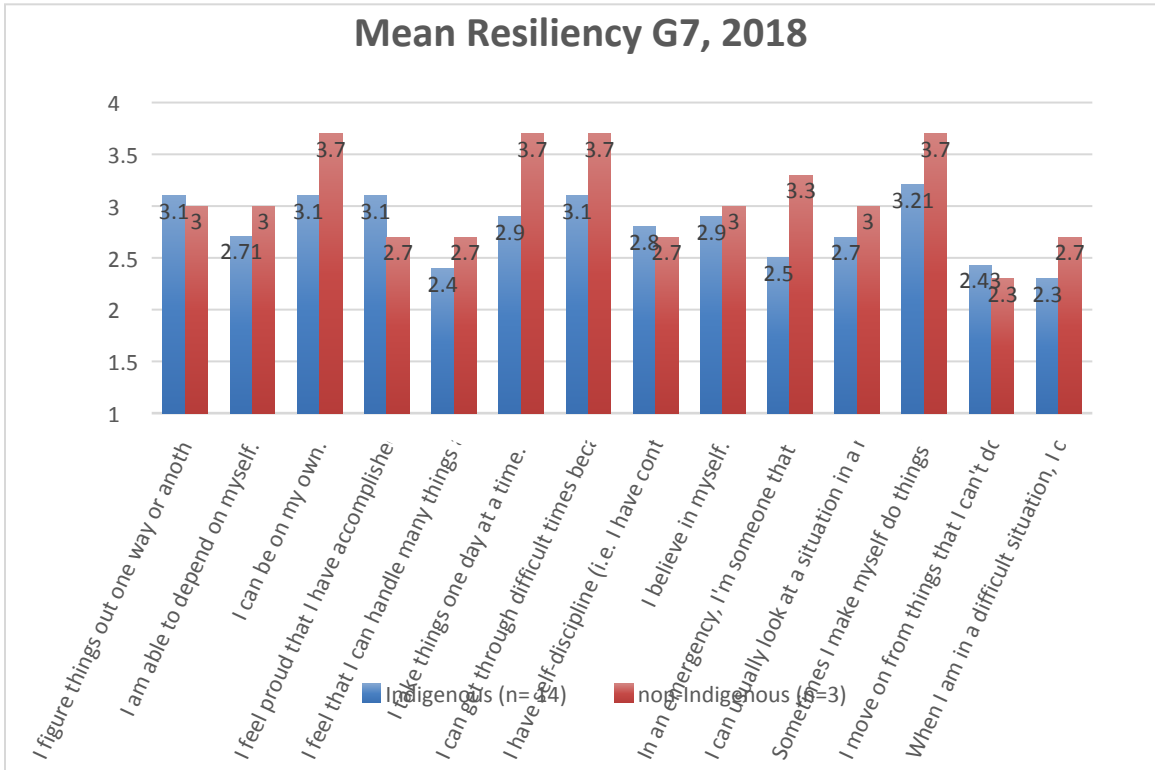Mean Resiliency G7, 2018

Figure 33. Mean Resiliency - G8, 2018.
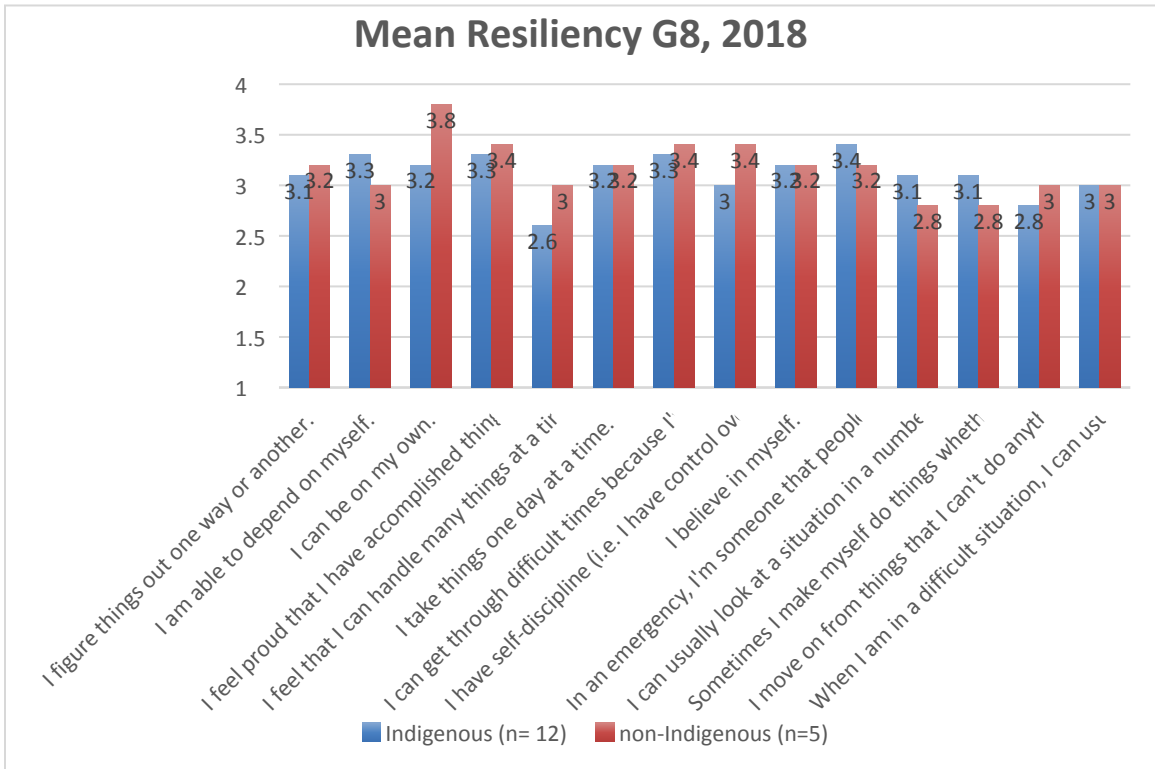

Mean Resiliency G8, 2018

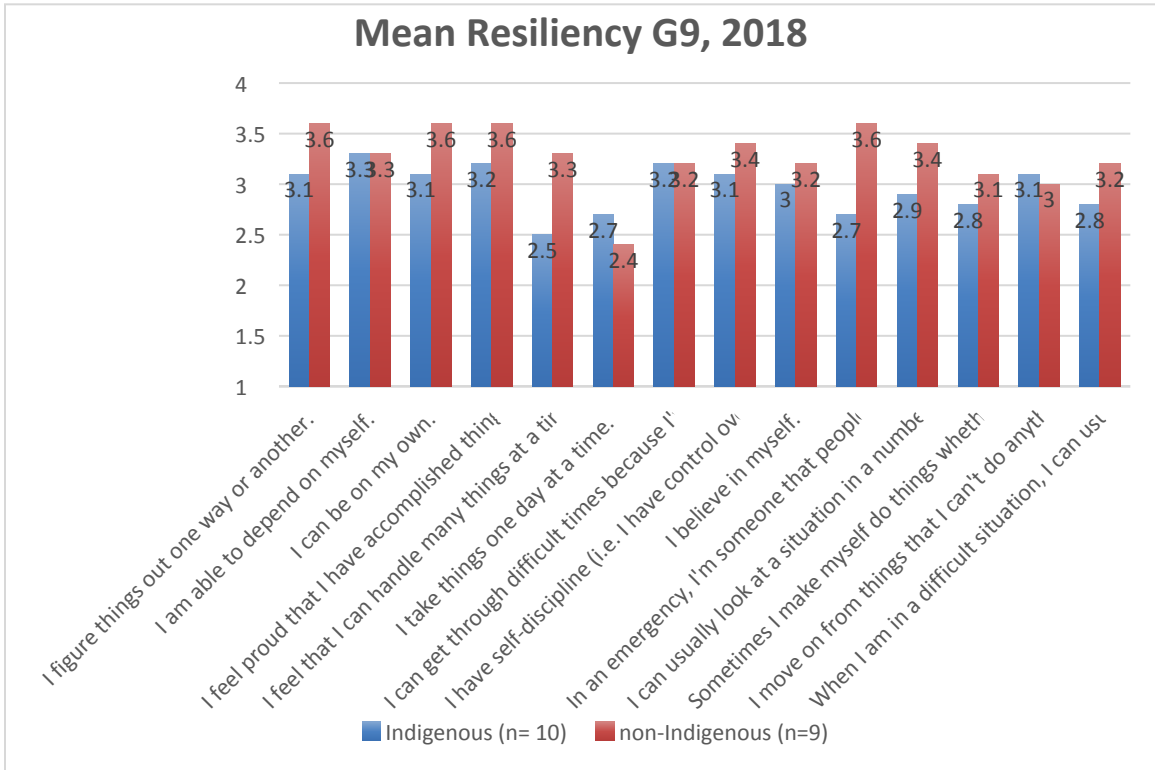*Figure 34.* Mean Resiliency - G9, 2018.

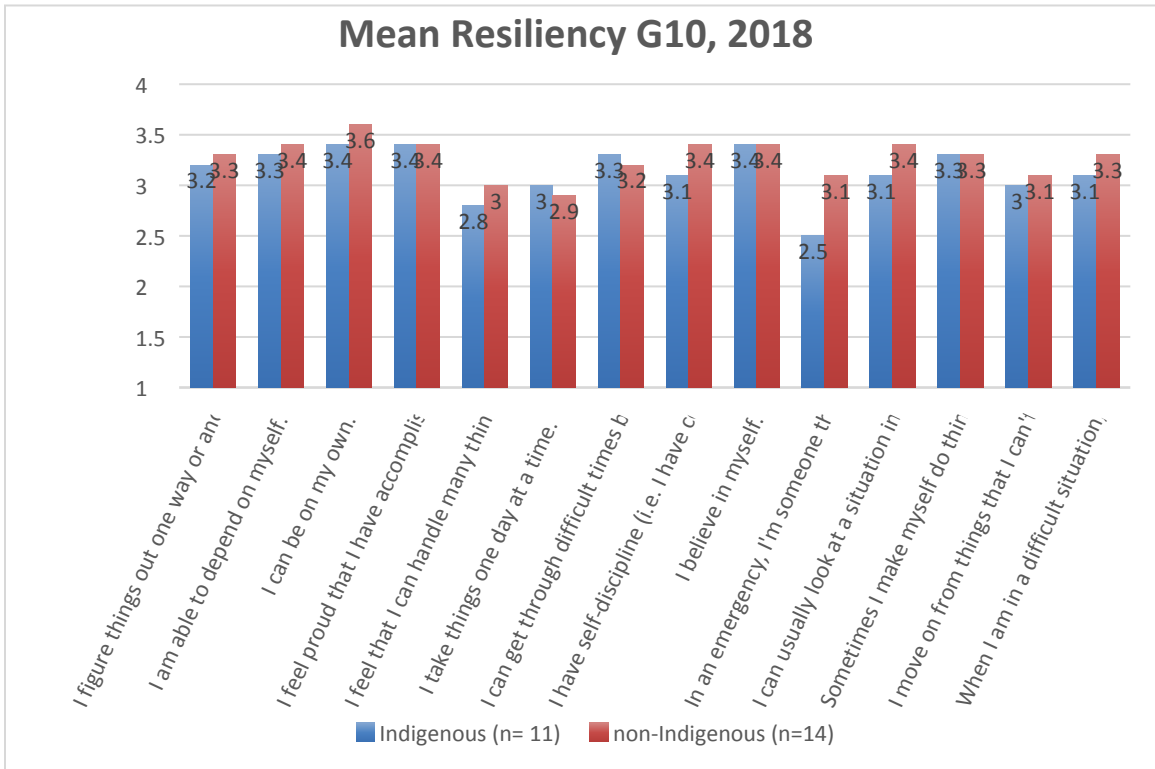*Figure 35.* Mean Resiliency - G10, 2018.
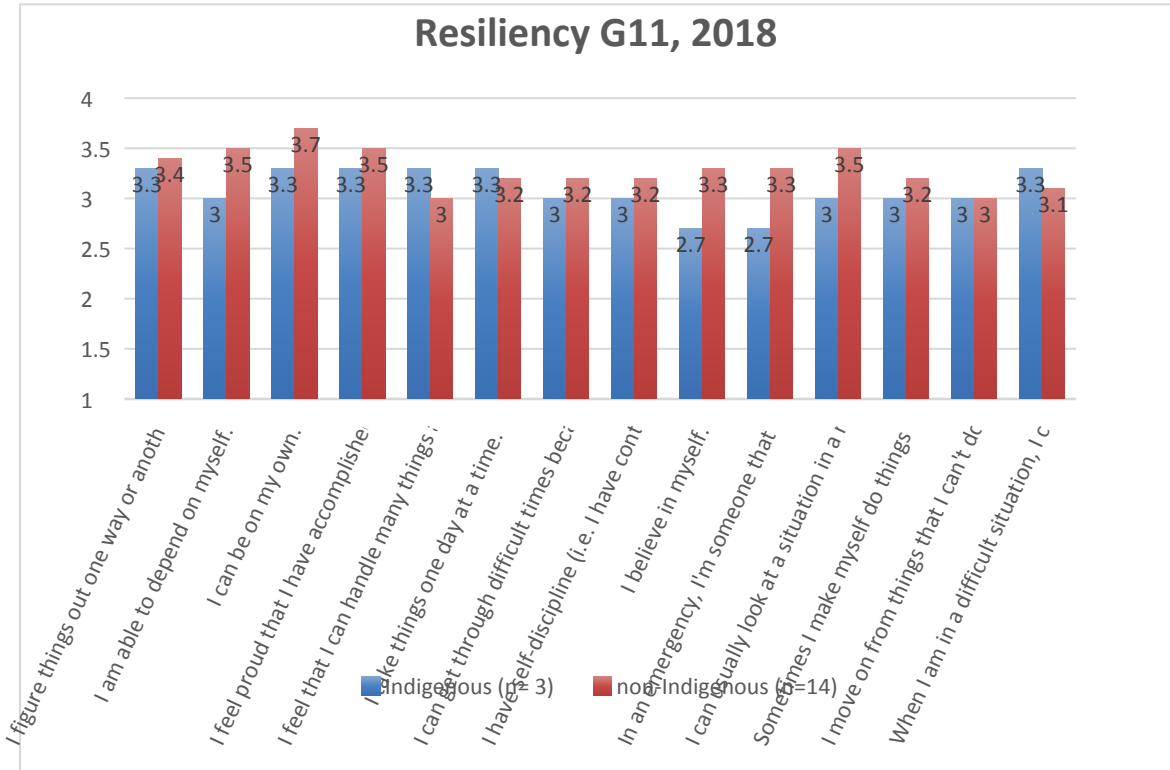
Figure 36. Mean Resiliency - G11, 2018.

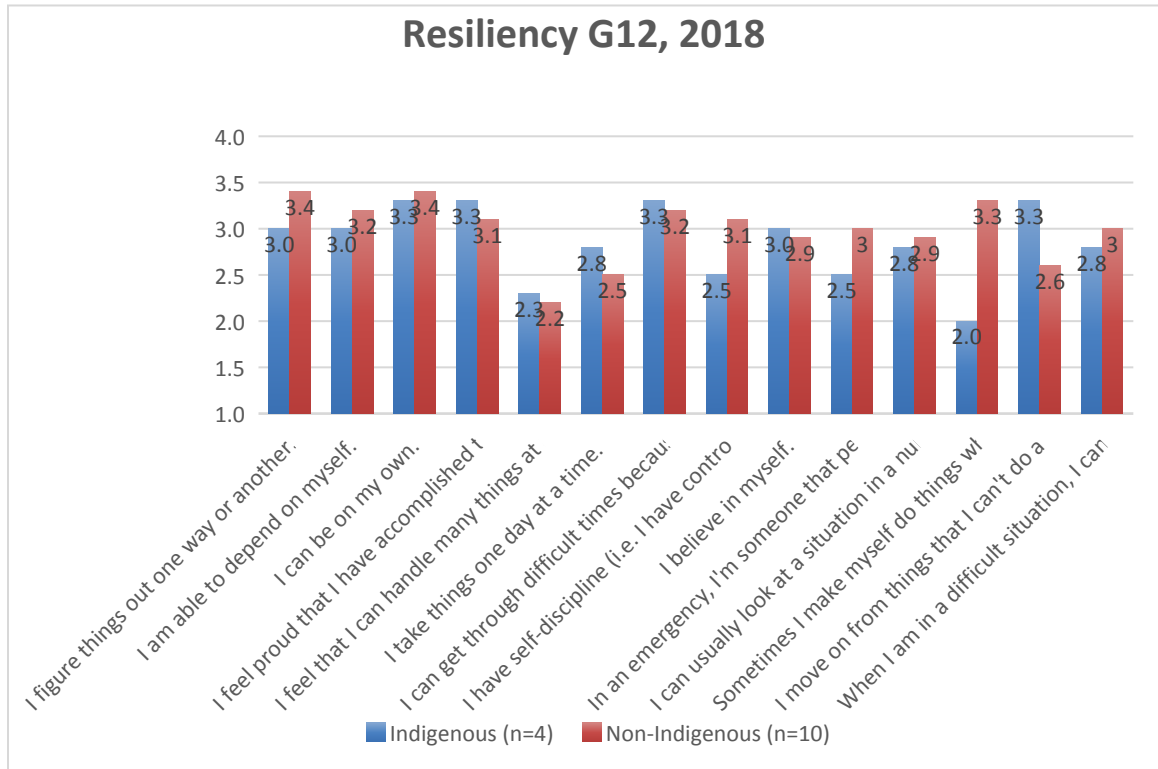*Figure 37.* Mean Resiliency - G12, 2018.

Figure 38 shows the mean resiliency scores (2018) across the grade levels comparing Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. It indicates that mean resiliency scores of Indigenous students are lower than for non-Indigenous students with the exception of grade 12. It should be noted that mean resiliency scores for Indigenous students are at or above 3 in grades 8, 10, 11, and 12.

Figure 38. Comparing Resiliency between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Students, 2018.
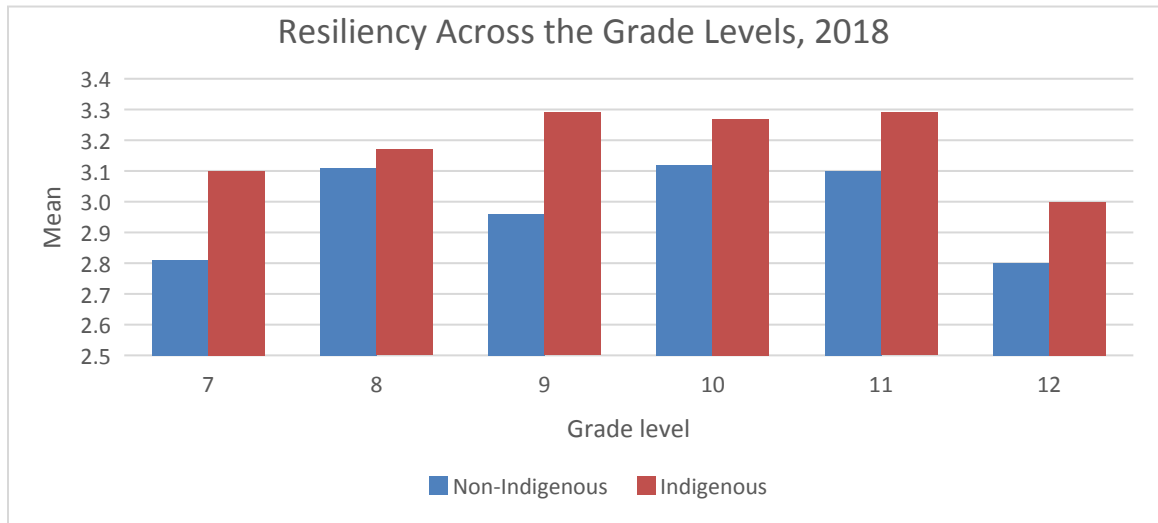
Examination of the means for each item aggregated across the entire Indigenous student body (n=54) identified the following questions in which the mean indicated disagreement with the statement (below 3): *I feel that I can handle many things at a time* (2.59); *I take things one day at a time* (2.96); *I have self-discipline* (2.94); *In an emergency, I'm someone that people can count on* (2.74); *I can usually look at a situation in a number of different ways* (2.93); *I move on from things that I can't do anything about* (2.83); *When I am in a difficult situation, I can usually solve it* (2.80).

Comparison of the 2017 and 2018 responses (see Figure 39) to the resiliency questionnaire for the same Indigenous students (i.e., grade 7, 2017, to grade 8, 2018, etc.) indicated increases in resiliency scores in Indigenous students, with scores in grades 7 to 8, 9 to 10, and 10 to 11 all above 3 (see Figure 39). It should be noted that although the grade 8 into grade 9 scores are still below 3, there was an increase in the mean over the one year period. The exception was in grade 11 to grade12, where a drop in the mean score was observed. Similar increases in resiliency occurred in non-Indigenous students over the one-year period (see Figure 40). However, a t-test indicated no significant increases in resiliency over the one-year period. Please note that care should be taken in interpreting these results as numbers in some instances were low.

Figure 39. Changes in Mean Scores for Resiliency - Indigenous Students, 2017-2018.
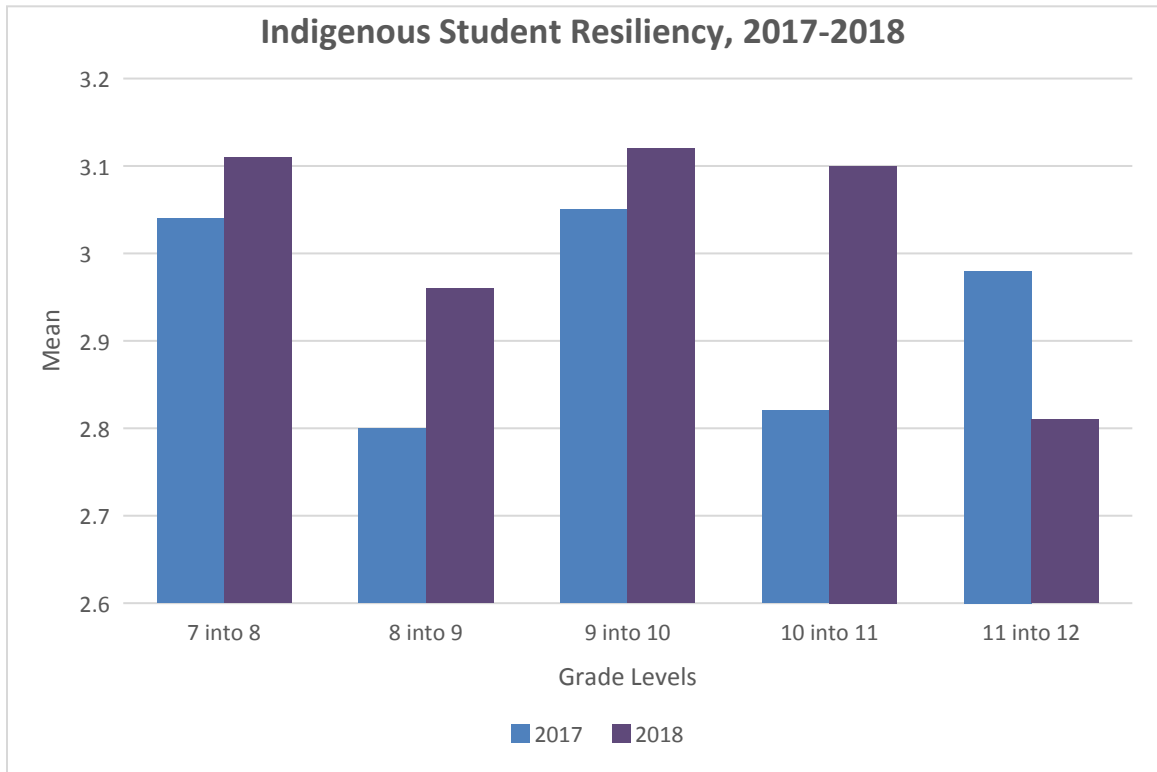
Figure 40. Changes in Mean Scores for Resiliency - Non- Indigenous Students, 2017-2018.
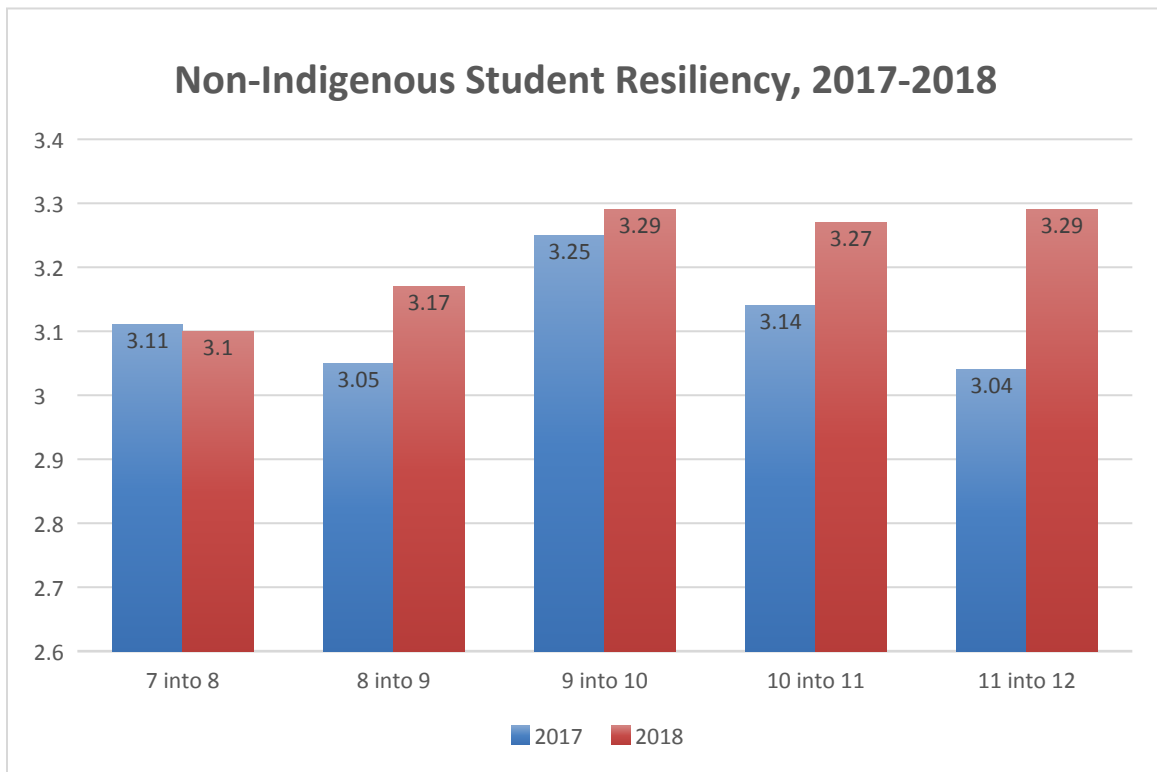
Points to note:

- Non-Indigenous mean resiliency scores were consistently higher than Indigenous mean student scores over the period of the study.

- Mean Indigenous and non-Indigenous student resiliency scores showed an increase from fall 2017 to fall 2018 in all grades except grade 12. A t-test indicated that the increase was not statistically significant.

Feelings towards School

This survey was administered in fall 2017 and again in fall 2018. The items on the survey pertaining to feelings towards school were as follows.

Responses were on a 4-point Likert scale where 4 = Strongly agree; 3 = Agree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.

Students were asked to choose from the following options:

1. I feel confident at school.

2. I feel confident when I take a test.

3. I feel good about trying hard on tough problems.

4. I am comfortable around my peers at school.

5. Right now I am very involved in my classes.

6. Getting good grades is important to me.

7. Graduating is important to me.

8. I take my work as a student very seriously.

9. I consider myself a good student.

10. Regardless of what class I'm in, I try to do my best.

11. I am confident I will succeed in school.

12. I am confident that I will reach my goals.

13. I am involved in some extracurricular activities.

Figures 41-45 show the mean values for items on the feelings towards school section per grade level of the survey. Figure 41 shows that Indigenous and non-Indigenous grade 7 students entered ECI with positive feelings towards school. The overall mean for this category indicated Indigenous students (3.3) and non-Indigenous students (3.4) *agreed* to *strongly agreed* with the items. Indigenous students scored 2.9 on two items: *I feel confident when I take a test*, and *Right now I am very involved in my classes.*

Figure 42 shows the mean values for the items for grade 8 Indigenous students. As with the other two survey areas, cultural connectedness and resiliency, the 2017 grade 8 average (2.8) for the feelings towards school section was below 3. Grade 8 students only *agreed* to *strongly agreed* with two items, *Getting good grades is important,* and *Graduating is important to me.*

Figure 43 shows the mean values for the items for grade 9 students. The average for the feelings towards school items, while lower for Indigenous students (3.0) than for non-Indigenous students, (3.5), still fell into the *agree* category. *Getting good grades is important* (3.7)*,* and *Graduating is important to me* (3.9) were the two most highly rated items for Indigenous students. Indigenous students *disagreed* slightly (2.9) with *confidence in taking tests* and *being very involved with classes.*

Only two grade 10 Indigenous students participated in the 2017 feelings towards schools survey, making it difficult to make comparisons. Averages were 2.8 for Indigenous students, and 3.4 for non-Indigenous students (see Figure 44).

Several similarities occurred between grade 11 Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in the responses to the feelings towards school survey (see Figure 45). The averages for all the items were 3.0 and 3.1, respectively. Each group agreed fairly strongly that graduation was important (3.8 and 3.5); getting good grades was important (3.2 and 3.4); they were comfortable around peers (3.7 and 3.4). Neither group felt very confident at school (2.8 and 2.8) nor in taking tests (2.3 and 2.3). Two main differences were that Indigenous students agreed to a lesser extent than non-Indigenous that they were good students (2.5 and 3.1), and Indigenous students were less likely to agree they participated in extracurricular activities (2.7 compared to 3.3).

Figure 41. Feelings towards School - G7, 2017.

Feelings towards School G7, 2017

Indigenous (n=11)   Non-indigenous (n=6)
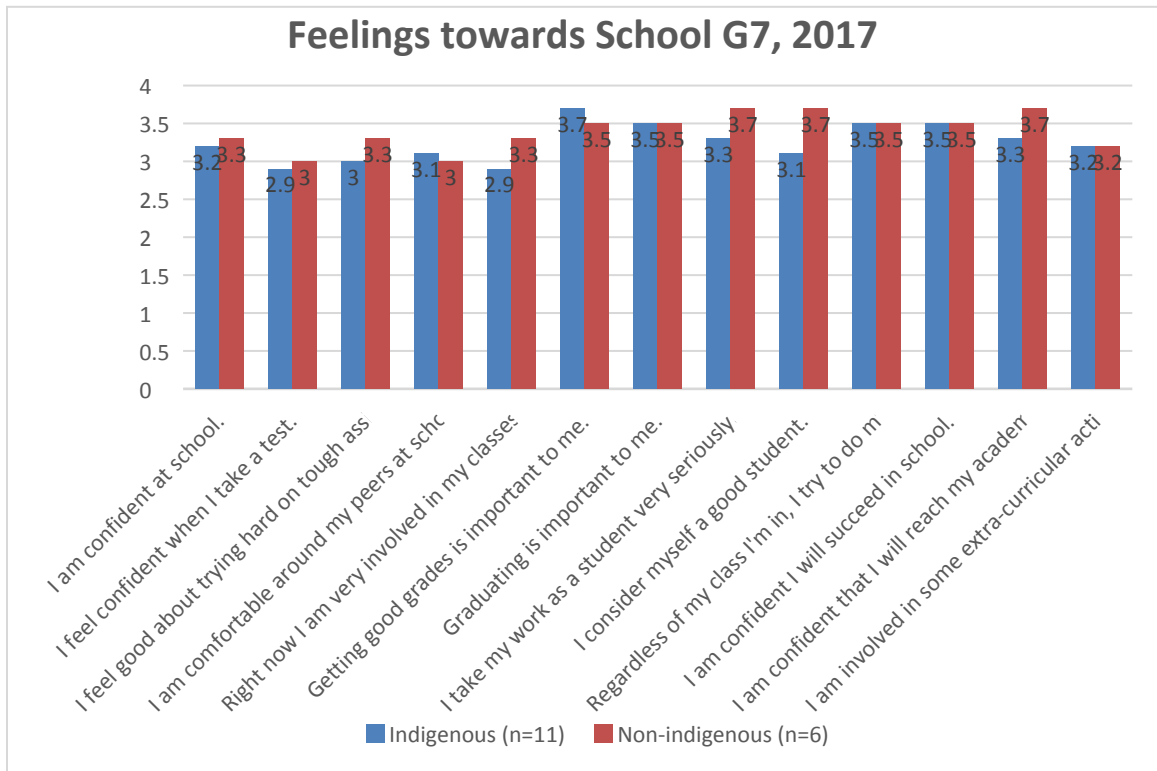
Figure 42. Feelings towards School, G8, 2017.

Feelings towards School G8, 2017

Indigenous (n=11)   non-Indigenous (n=0)
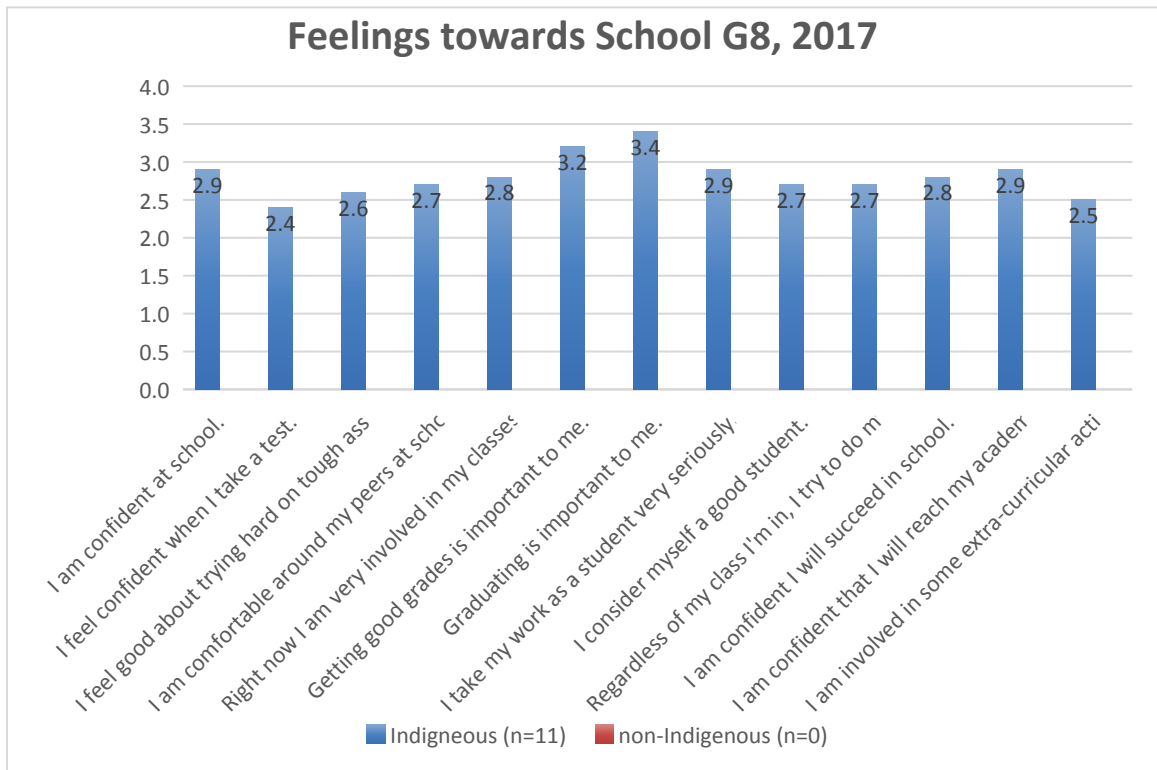
Figure 43. Feelings towards School, G9, 2017.

Feelings towards School G9, 2017

Indigenous (n=9)   non-Indigenous (n=15)
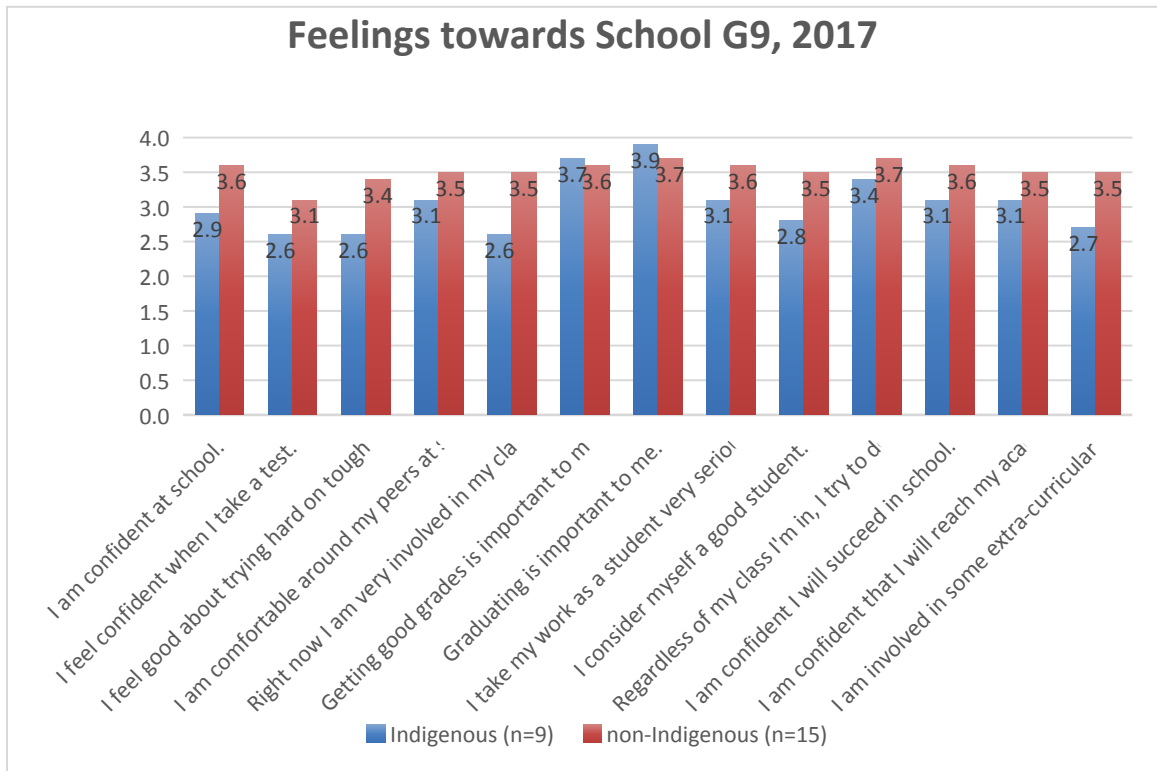
Figure 44. Feelings towards School, G10, 2017.

Feelings towards School G10, 2017

Indigenous (n=2)   Non-indigenous (n=14)
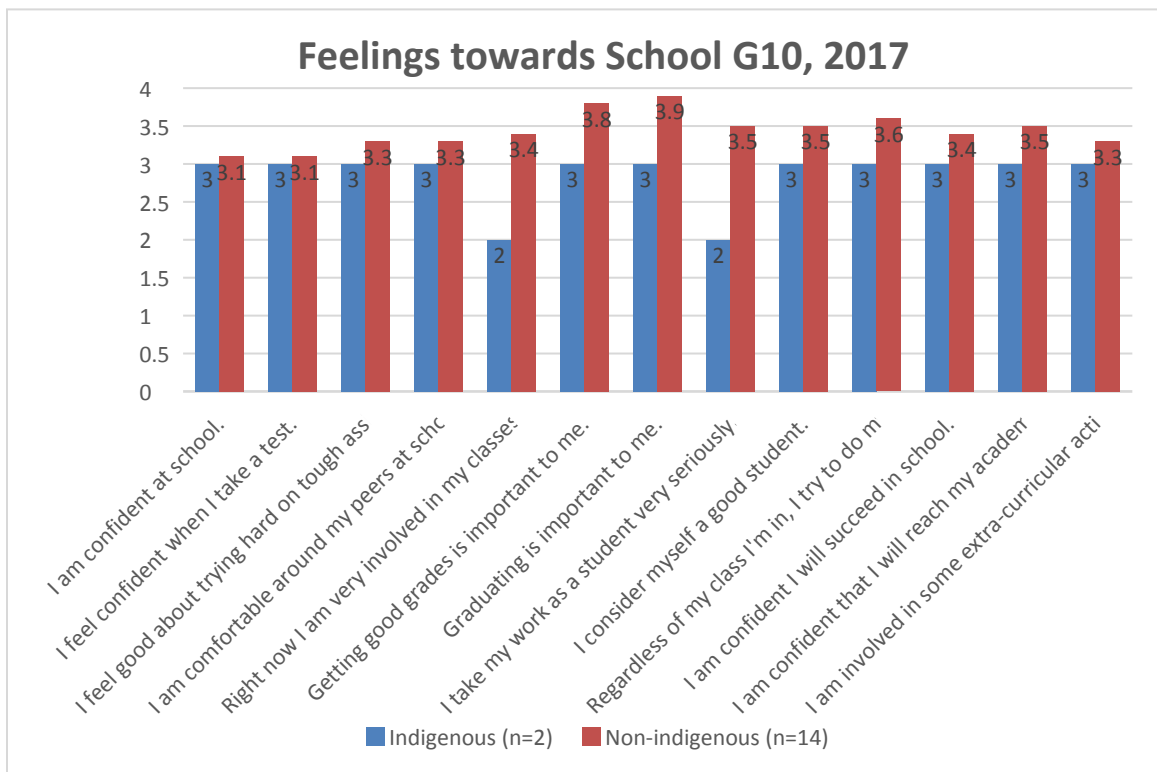
Figure 45. Feelings towards School, G11, 2017.
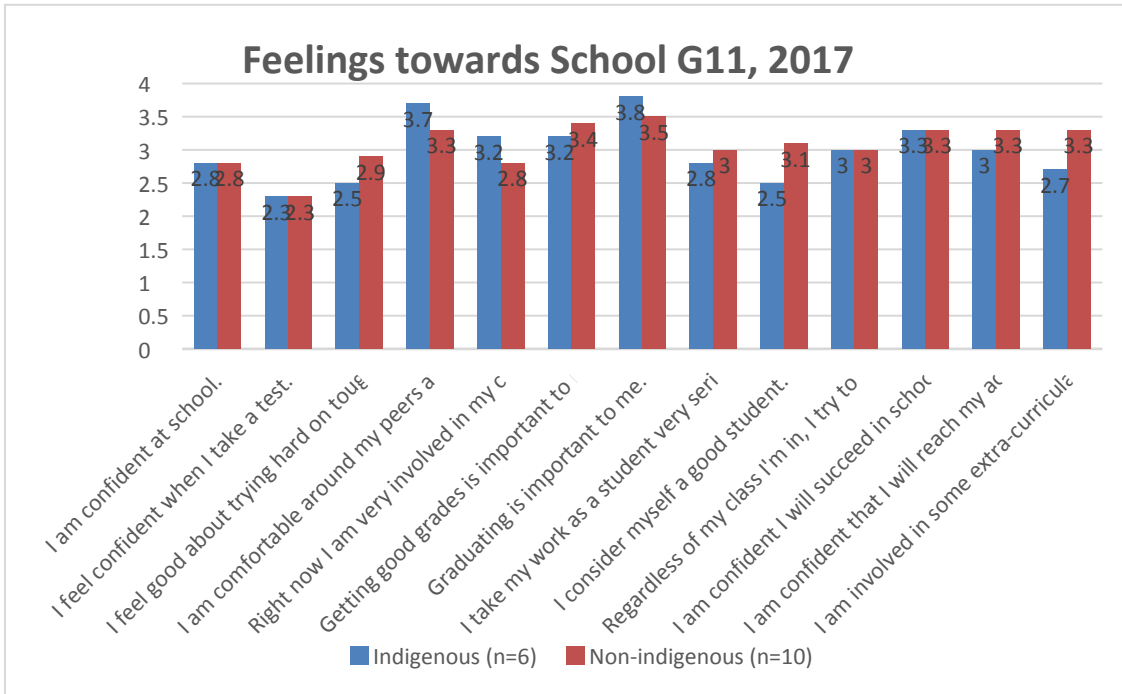
Figure 46 shows the mean score for each grade level on the feelings towards school survey. It shows on average Indigenous students had lower levels of agreement with the survey items than non-Indigenous students; however, Indigenous students in grade 7, grade 9, and grade 11 averaged 3 or above. No data were available for grade 8 non-Indigenous students.

Figure 46. Feelings towards School across the Grade Levels, 2017.
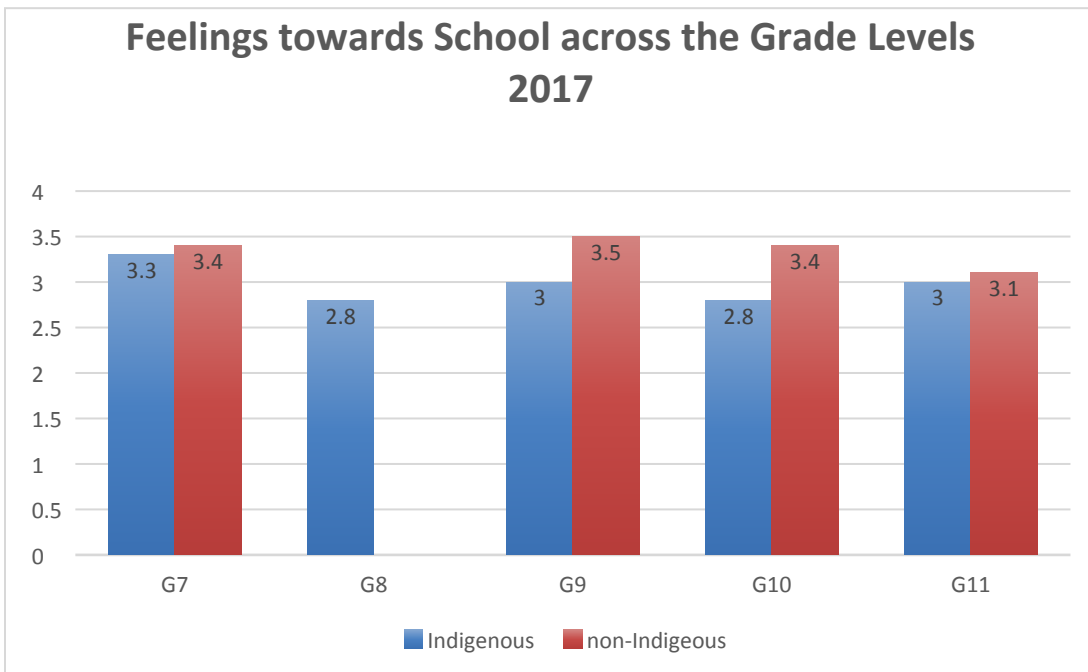
The data indicate that grade 7 students agreed with some items on the feelings towards school scale and disagreed with others. Both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students disagreed that: they felt confident at school (2.3 and 2.7), felt confident about taking tests (2.7 and 2.7), felt confident around their peers (2.9 and 2.7), and considered themselves to be a good student (2.6 and 2.7). These findings may not be surprising, given that they had all recently started high school. Graduating (3.6 and 4), getting good grades (3.5 and 4), taking their work seriously (3.4 and 3.7), and being involved in classwork (3.1 and 3.7) was important to both groups. The grade 7 average for this category was 3.0 for Indigenous students and 3.2 for non-Indigenous students.

Figure 47. Feelings towards School G7, 2018.
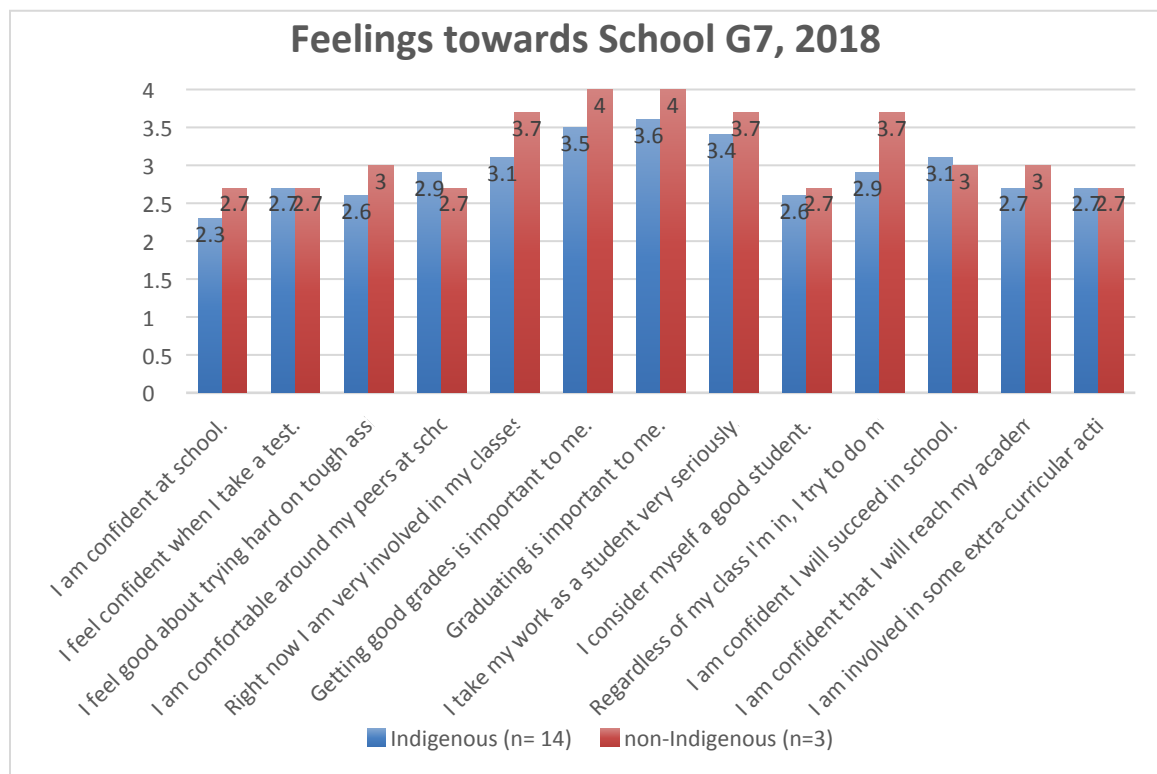
The grade 8 responses to the 2018 survey were similar to those of grade 7. The items with which students agreed most were on *graduation* and *getting good grades*. The average scores for Indigenous students were 3.1, and non-Indigenous students 3.3. Both groups disagreed with the statements *I feel confident taking tests* (2.7 and 2.8), and *I feel good about trying hard on tough problems* (2.8 and 2.8). Indigenous students scored the statement I feel confident at school lower than non-Indigenous students (2.7 and 3.2).

Figure 48. Feelings towards School, G8, 2018.
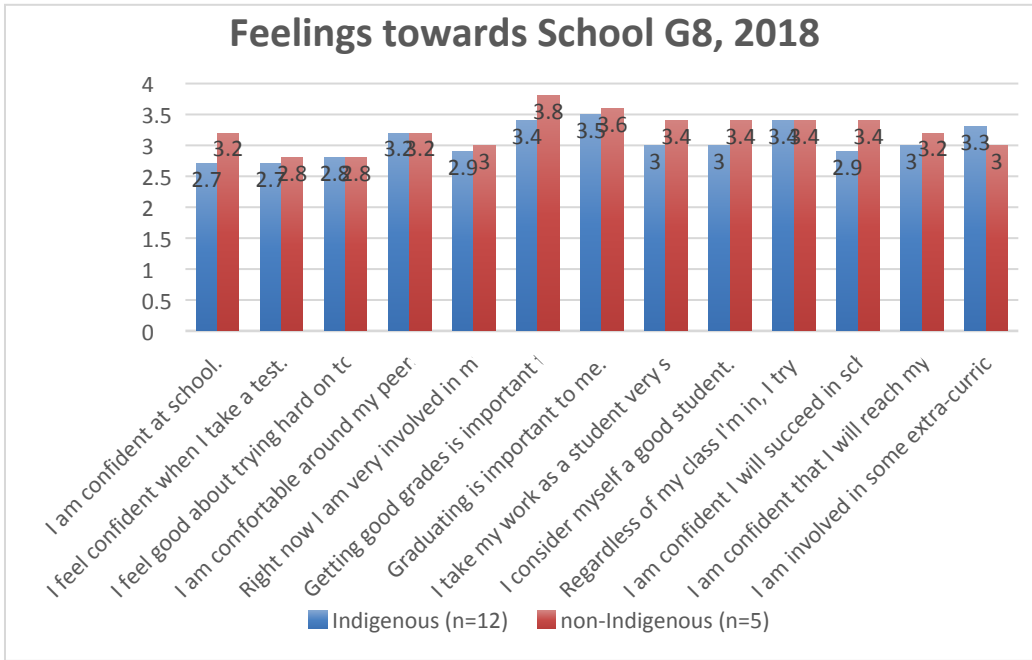
The average score of the feelings towards school was 2.9 for grade 9 Indigenous students and 3.4 for non-Indigenous students. The highest scoring items were around graduating and getting good grades. Similar to grade 8, grade 9 Indigenous students disagreed with the statements regarding confidence at school (2.7) and confidence taking tests (2.4), as well as the statements, I feel good at trying on tough problems (2.9), I am comfortable around my peers (2.5) and I am involved in my classes (2.5). Indigenous students also disagreed with the statement I am involved in extracurricular activities.

Figure 49. Feelings towards School, G9, 2018.
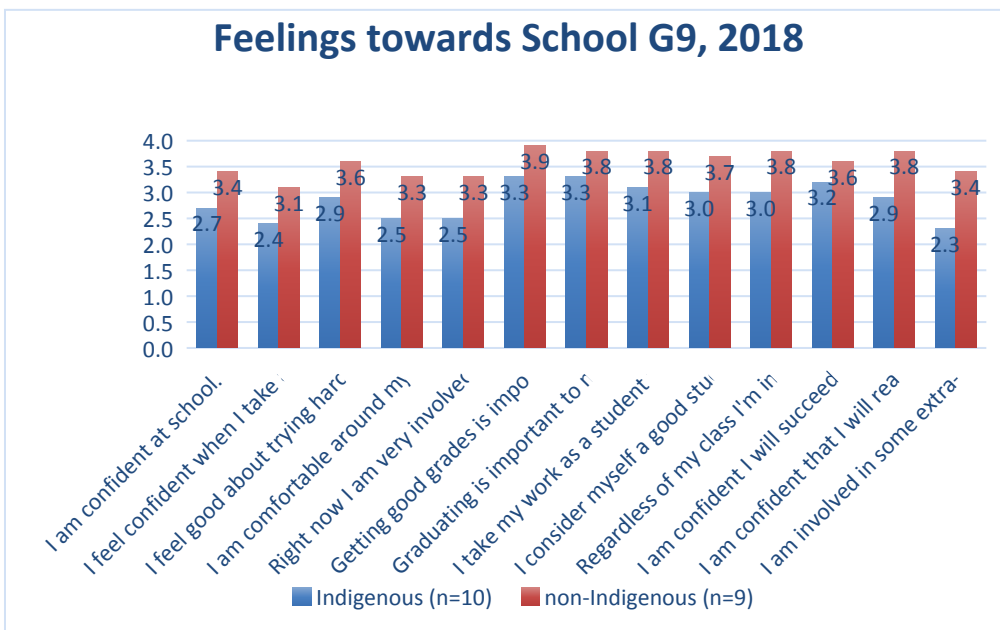
The average score for the feelings towards school section was 3.1 for grade10 Indigenous students and 3.5 for non-Indigenous students (see Figure 38). Grade 10 Indigenous students agreed with the statement *I feel confident at school* (3.0) but disagreed with the statement *I feel confident taking tests* (2.7). Graduating and getting good grades were the highest scoring items for Indigenous students.

Figure 50. Feelings towards School, G10, 2018.
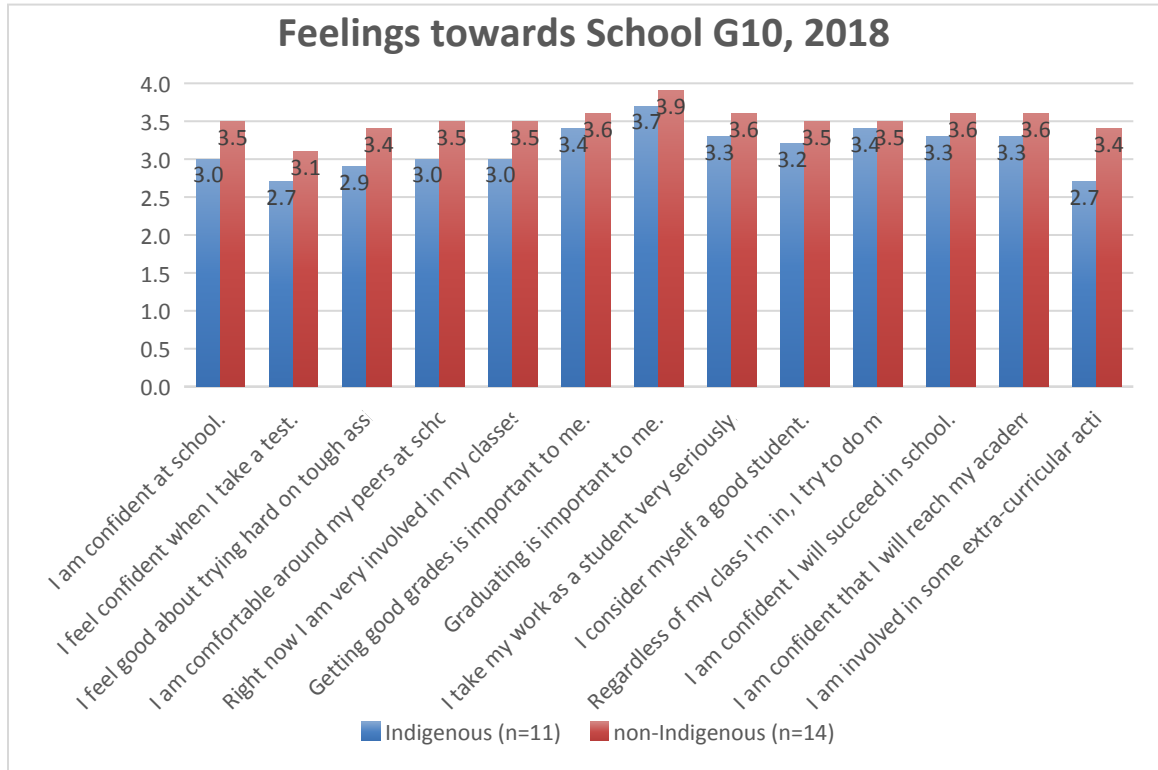
Only two Indigenous students in grade 11 and three Indigenous students in grade 12 completed the survey, and so results should be interpreted with care (see Figures 39 and 40). The average scores were 2.7 for Indigenous students and 3.3 for non-Indigenous students (grade 11) and 2.8 and 3.3 for grade 12.

Figure 51. Feelings towards School, G11, 2018.

Feelings towards School G11, 2018
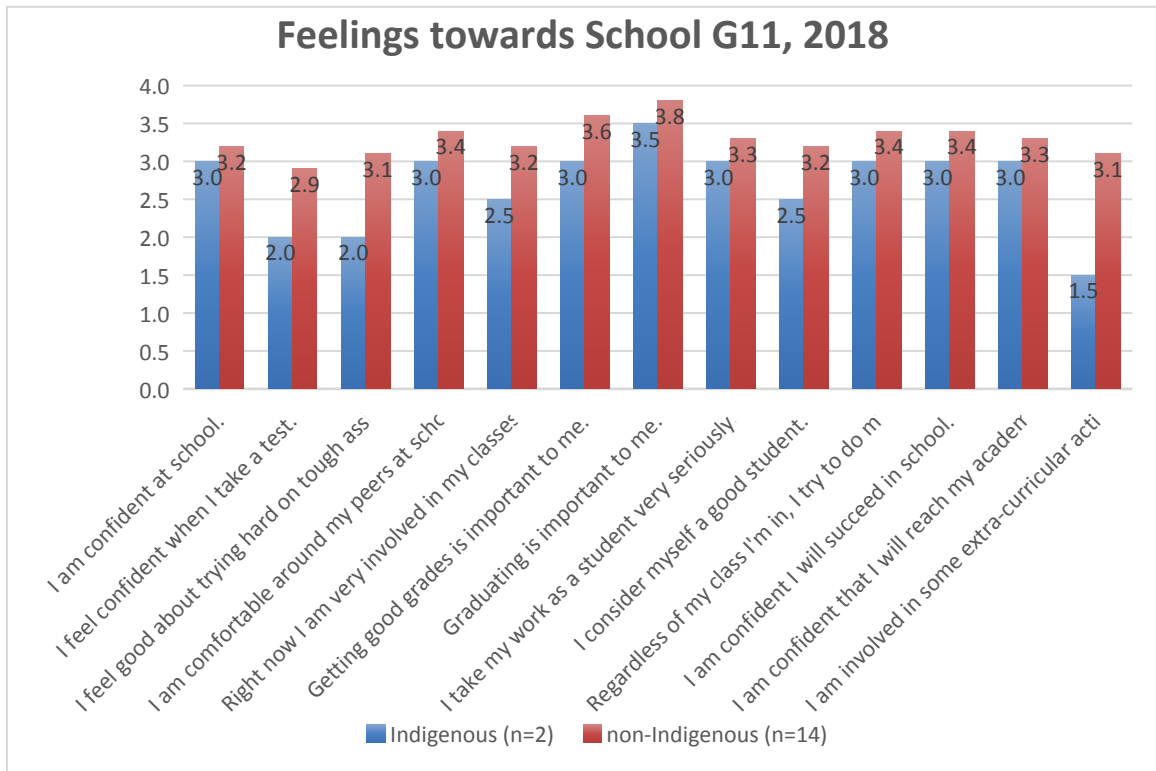
Figure 52. Feelings towards School, G12, 2018.

Feelings towards School G12, 2018
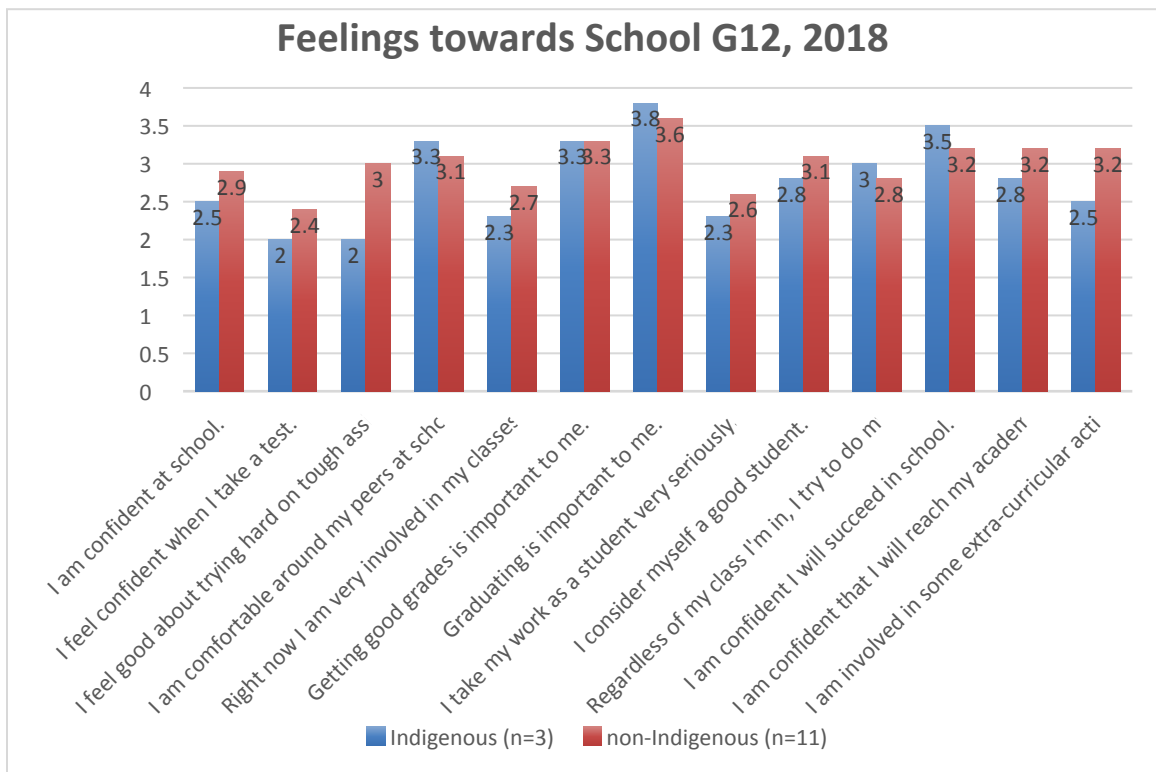
Figure 53 shows the overall average for the survey items feelings towards school/grade level.

The average for Indigenous students in grades 7, 8, and 10 is 3 or above, indicating overall agreement with the items. However, for grades 9, 11, and 12, the Indigenous average is below 3. As noted previously, however, Indigenous participation in the grade 11 and grade 12 2018 surveys was low.

Figure 53. Feelings towards School across the Grade Levels, 2018.
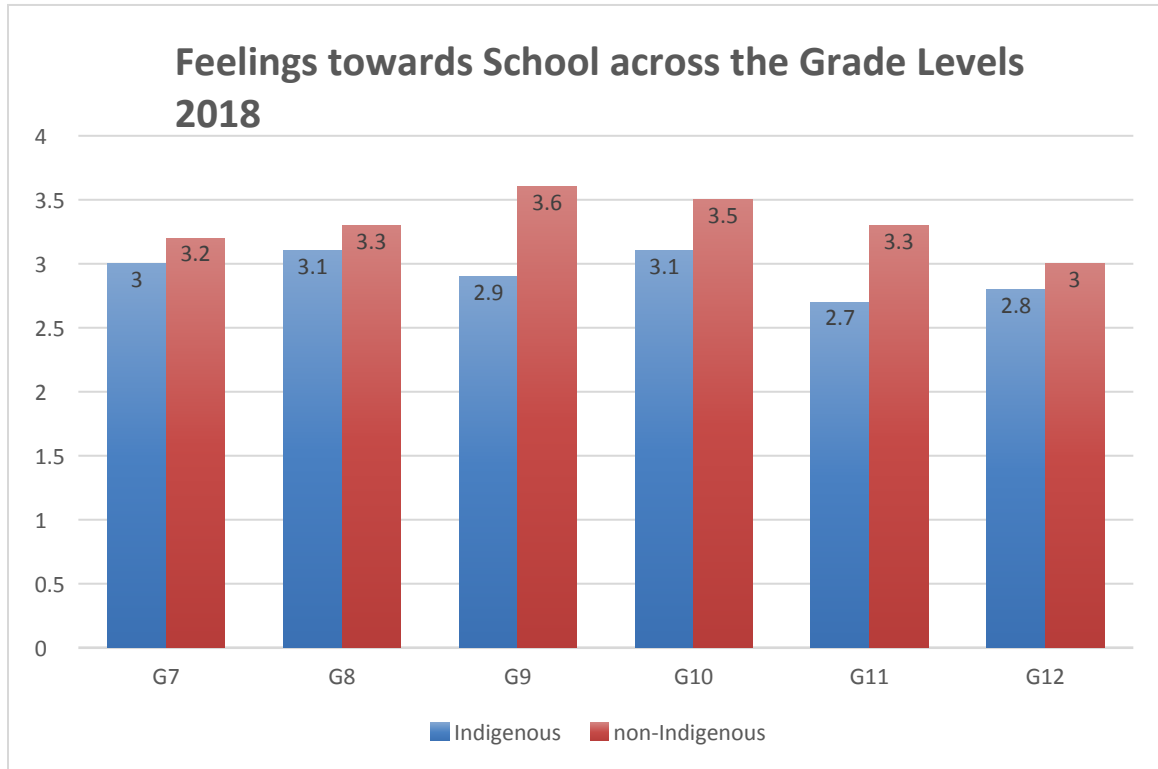
Figures 54 (Indigenous students) and 55 (non-Indigenous students) compare scores from the 2017 survey with the 2018 survey (i.e., students in grade 7 in 2017 and compared to students in grade 8 in 2018and so on). No specific trend emerges; that is, there is slight fluctuation upwards and downwards, but no significant changes are evident. What is evident is that when the entire responses across all grades are compared, non-Indigenous students score significantly higher (p<.05) in this category than Indigenous students.

Figure 54. Feelings towards School, G12: Indigenous Students, 2017-2018.

Feelings towards School: Indigenous Students G12 Comparing 2017 -2018

	G7 to G8	G8 to G9	G9 to G10	G10 to G11	G11 to G12
2017	3.3	2.8	3	2.8	3
2018	3.1	2.9	3.1	2.7	2.8
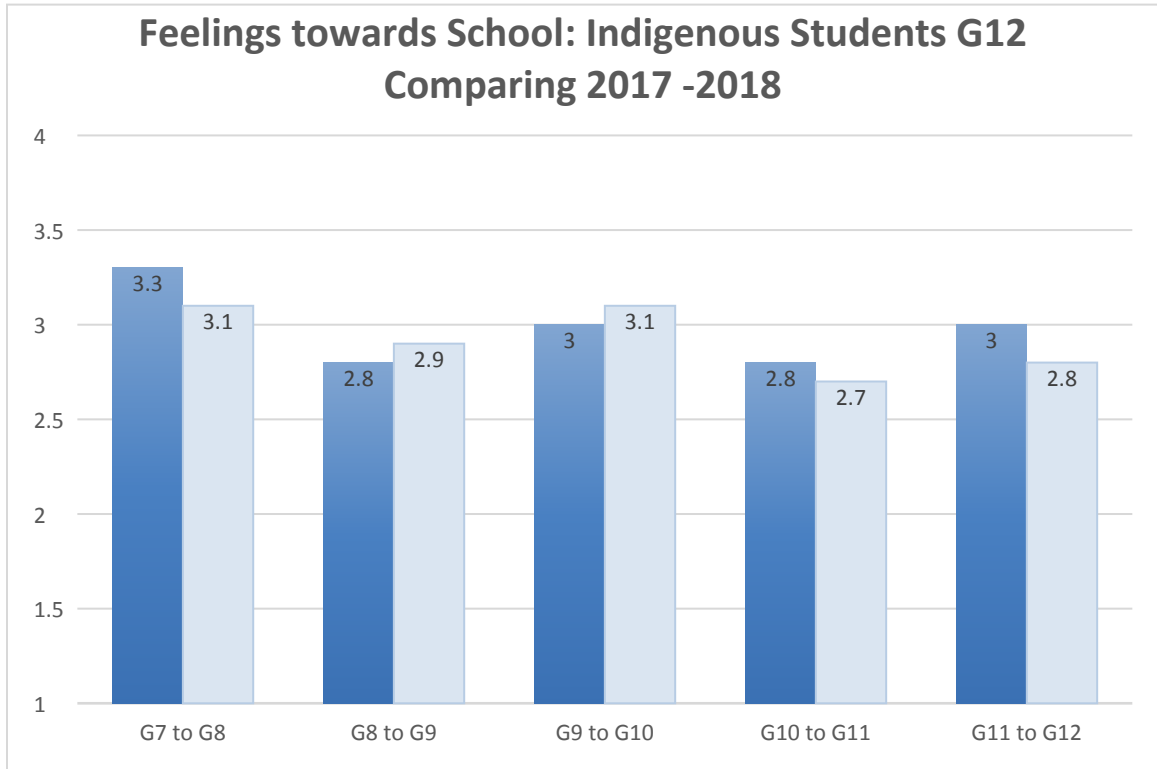
Figure 55. Feelings towards School: Non-Indigenous Students, 2017-2018.

Feelings towards School: Non-Indigenous Students Comparing 2017 - 2018

	G7 to G8	G8 to G9	G9 to G10	G10 to G11	G11 to G12
2017	3.4	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.1
2018	3.3		3.5	3.3	3
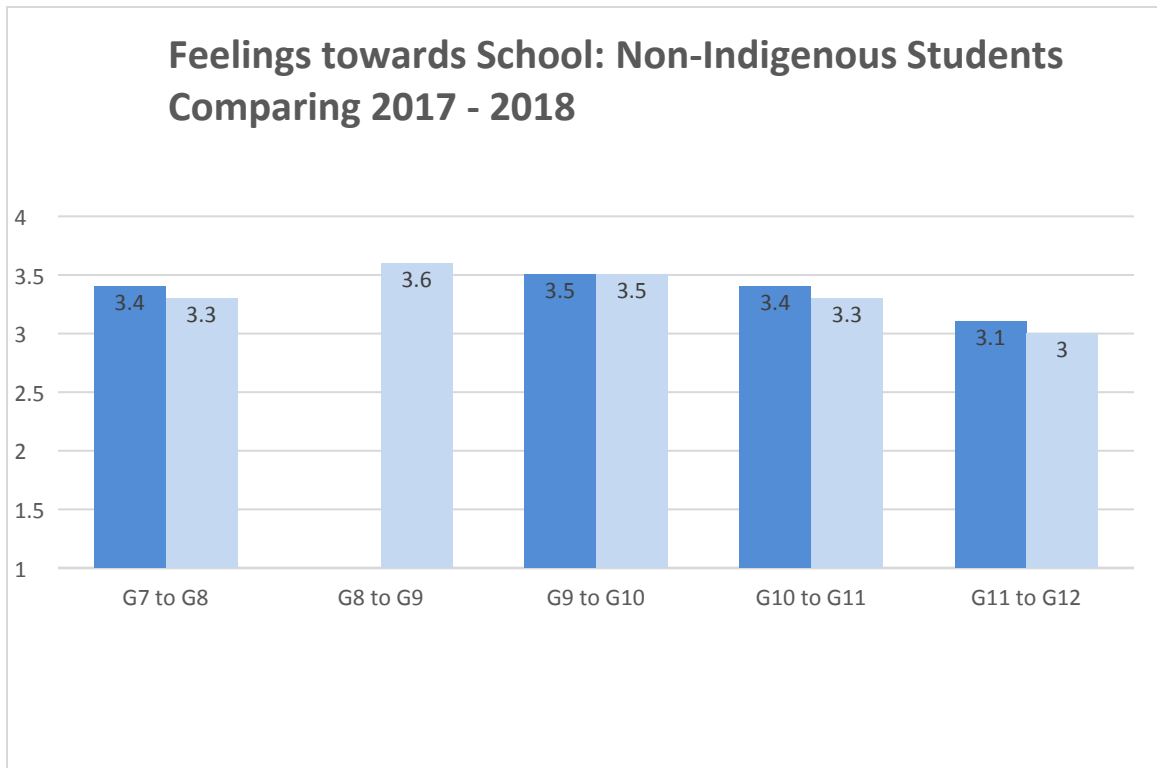
Points to note:

- There is a significant difference ($p<.05$) in the average scores on the feelings towards school survey in 2017 and in 2018 of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Indigenous students score at a lower level of agreement on the aggregated items.

- Indigenous students in all grades feel less confident at school than their non-Indigenous peers.

- While both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students enter ECI with lower confidence at school, non-Indigenous students feel more confident in grade 8 onwards, whereas it takes until grade 10 before Indigenous students indicate agreement with that statement.

- Indigenous students in all grades 7-12 indicate disagreement with the statement *I feel confident taking tests*.

- The items with the highest level of agreement for Indigenous students across the grade levels were the importance of graduating and getting good grades.

Part 6: Findings

Findings

The purpose of the program evaluation was to assess the extent to which the Erikson Schools had achieved their goal of co-developing, with Rolling River First Nation, an educational environment based on the cultural framework of Mino-Pimaatisiwin (Good Life) and the Ojibwe Good Life Principles.

This section includes the program evaluators' interpretation of the findings from the data analysis. As a summative evaluation, the information provided by the teachers, principals, and students in the Erickson schools was primarily used.

The program evaluation findings that follow explore the extent to which an educational environment based on the cultural framework of Mino-Pimaatisiwin (Good Life) and the Ojibwe Good Life Principles improved learning and wellness outcomes for Indigenous students. Teacher understanding about the kinds of supports available for students to achieve learning and wellness outcomes were explored in school context interviews as well as in-depth interviews that explored the main research questions.

According to the original proposal, areas this project intended to address included: youth self-regulation, self-concept (to reduce suicidal ideation and self-harm), critical thinking and independence, feelings of exclusion amongst friends (females were identified as most at risk), positive youth engagement toward school and their learning, and positive social interactions among peers (reducing intimidation and altercations). The question about whether Indigenous students achieved these outcomes is partially answered by looking at data analyses from the student surveys.

Finally, we turn to the teacher and administrative staff interviews to explore the following:

1. The extent to which teachers and administration developed in the areas of cultural proficiency and how that understanding facilitated Indigenization of curricula and experiential learning across grade levels.

2. The extent to which intended community exchanges increased Indigenous family involvement in the school.

3. The extent to which the involvement of Elders contributed to the Indigenization process at the schools in terms of cultural proficiency.

4. Finally, we provide a section that addresses general teaching competencies that were described during the interviews.

Indigenization of Curriculum

The context interviews and Mino-Pimaatisiwin teacher interviews generated a number of themes that are indicative of successful integration of cultural proficiency and the Indigenization of curriculum. As is the case in any major institutional change, there are also areas identified for further future development. We intend these examples to be received as a recognition of the capacity of these exceptional teachers and administrators to continue leading the way, philosophically and pedagogically, toward reconciliation and/or decolonization in mainstream education.

The logs and tracking of the activities (see Appendix 1) in the classroom showed that teachers in EES made a concerted effort to create a visual Indigenous presence in the school, to integrate Indigenous perspectives into science, art, health, social sciences and to welcome the community onto the school through family nights, Elders in the classroom, and activities such as feast, skirt-making, drummers and dancers. Detailed logs of activities were not available for the ECI high school.

Indigenous Teachers' Perspectives of Indigenization in Erickson Schools

Equity and its Effects on Future Success

An Indigenous teacher talked about the value of attending professional development (PD) sessions hosted by Indigenous presenters and connected it to their experiences of having Indigenous teachers as a young student:

> *Nigaan Sinclair and other Indigenous professional development speakers talked about being students in a public school system and seeing one Indigenous teacher in their lives. I related to their description about the impact it made on their lives and how they then went on to be professionals and university educated Ph.D.'s. I attended school on a reserve; so I did see a couple of teachers on the reserve that were Indigenous and it impacted me to know that there is more that I could do, more than what I thought I could. Listening to those speakers inspired me to reflect on my own life. To know that just being present and being seen, at a minimum, is making an impact. Maybe not just on Indigenous students, but both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.*

Indigenous Cultural Competencies and Pedagogies

During the interview, Indigenous teachers offered the following reflections regarding culture competency, protocols, and pedagogies:

Tomorrow morning, after this interview, I will go offer tobacco and pray that this information is used in a good way.

I teach what I know, what I remember, and what I was taught. Respect is the most important thing. I taught my grandchildren about prayers. I took them to the bush and told them: if you are down and out or someone you know is sick, ask mom or dad for a cigarette and pray to the Creator. Offer tobacco to a tree because it always stands straight up to the Creator, and ask for help… Tobacco goes on the east side of the tree because everything starts from the east… I go to their houses and smudge the house and smudge them sometimes. I taught them about sage and to respect tobacco.

I do Sundance for three days in June for the school. I was told by an Elder to do this because Sundance makes you stronger as a teacher, and you don't question it because it's not respectful.

I will give you an example of a teaching. I go picking traditional medicine during July and August. I've been learning from my brother and sister-in-law. When I was young, I had whooping cough, and I drank this medicine. Later I asked them what it was—skunk grease (laughing). I tell the kids it saved me from going to heaven, but they still think it's disgusting. I want them to know how Native People knew what kind of medicine to take: They would dream it or go on a vision quest. Then, for example, the bear gives it to you. After using medicine, you have to offer tobacco and pray.

When I was a kid, we went out and picked berries all the time. My mom dried them or put them into jars and canned them, which is a teaching. In fall, we'd pick cranberries and make bannock. When it was hot out, mom would use coals from the fire and make bannock on a cast iron pan outside.

I'm Anishnaabe and fortunate to have experience with Indigenous knowledge, in the form of spirituality, culture, language, dance, art. I have a good background to draw on. That's not to say that every Indigenous person does. Realizing that there aren't many Indigenous teachers in the public school system, this is not a self-promotion, but I can give students a different perspective. It's not prescribed; it's a part of who I am.

Indigenous teachers drew not only on their own cultural knowledge but also upon scholarly knowledge in their teaching about controversial topics:

One of my majors is Native Studies, which helps when I'm researching controversial topics like appropriation and authentic works from Indigenous people and understanding their perspectives.

One of the Anishaanabe language teachers described how stories provide motivation for young students to be patient and foster a sense of cultural pride:

The Teachings I give to the kids, they are interested, they sit down and wait for me to teach them. We need everyone to be proud of their culture.

She went on to describe how stories are to be told in their proper context:

Right now, I'm reading Nanabush stories. We only read them in the winter. There are different Teachings in the stories, and it takes us a few days to finish one book because we do a lot of talking about it. I ask the students: have you heard this story before from your grandparents?... I learned these stories when I was growing up before the books.

Sharing Knowledge of Protocols and Indigenous Cultural Competencies

Recognizing the importance of following protocols and other nuances related to Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy, Indigenous teachers offered to share their knowledge with non-Indigenous teachers. An Indigenous teacher shared that not everyone has been open to receiving guidance:

I have reached out to offer my resources because I have a lot of resources, and then there are people that don't take me up on the offer.

A non-Indigenous teacher shared that sometimes they are unsure of protocols and even although they have best intentions, sometimes Indigenous activities do not go as planned and can cause dissension:

I think there needs to be some kind of committee with a liaison and Elders of the community. That way, when teachers have an idea, instead of going ahead and doing it and getting a bad rap for it if it doesn't work out, being able to bounce ideas off that identified source. Just to be safe.

Indigenous Cultural Competencies at Erickson Schools

Both Indigenous and settler staff at both schools talked about systemic changes in their school cultures that would indicate Indigenous cultural competencies and Indigenous leadership. This is evidenced by examples of the Indigenization of curriculum and the influence of Mino-Pimaatisiwin and Good Life Principles on school culture.

Indigenous scholars and researchers (Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000; Smith, 2012) have written about the importance of centering Indigenous people, cultures, knowledge systems, and experiences in education. Examples of these competencies appeared in several forms.

Some teachers reported more regular staff consultation with Indigenous staff to advance efforts in Indigenization.

> *Our Indigenous staff is certainly called on more to help, to offer their expertise and knowledge and share their culture.*

In addition, some of the interviewees talked about the leadership that their Indigenous colleagues have demonstrated:

> *There are Indigenous staff members, not just teachers but other staff too, who have played an important leadership role and whom I consider teachers to me.*

A teacher, with reference to an Indigenous staff member, articulated an understanding of the importance of family lineage with regards to Indigenous knowledge:

> *She shares her stories and the traditional Teachings from her mom, grandma, or father with her Ojibwe language students and other teachers. Teachers are asking her for help with Teachings by inviting her into the classroom, and she is more open to coming in now.*

Non-Indigenous teachers recognized their Indigenous colleagues' cultural competencies regarding family structures and kinship (Cajete, 1994) in Rolling River First Nation. They valued how they helped make stronger connections between the school and families.

> *She will help if the school wants to invite Elders, and then she helps with the process of offering tobacco and other protocols. So her presence has been very positive. Basically, she's been identified as someone who can help all of us.*

> *The philosophy at the school is that "we are all educators," and we have awesome EA's who work collaboratively with the rest of the staff. This collaborative staff model is very supportive of both our staff and students.*

> *The Indigenous staff has knowledge of families and family structure. This is very helpful when you are needing to connect with the families of our students.*

The Influence of Mino-Pimaatisiwin and the "Good Life" on Erickson Schools

While the Erickson schools and Rolling River School Division are committed to improving learning outcomes for Indigenous students, the intention will likely be a more indirect, long-term, and systemic effort with a cumulative outcome. The changes and improvements to teaching practice can lead to improvements in learning for *all* students. Teachers and administrators talked about change processes that occurred on both personal and professional levels. Several teachers related to the influence of Mino-Pimaatisiwin and the Seven Teachings.

Mino-Pimaatisiwin and School Culture

Teachers shared the importance of creating safety at school for children without stable home environments. The school culture is to demonstrate respect for children, to intervene in bullying, and make school a "positive place." Teachers described Mino-Pimaatisiwin as a felt sense that permeates the school:

> *In terms of the change in the culture of the building, you can feel that. I mean, you can see it, but those are things on the wall. It's when people feel safe, you can feel something nice in your building. I have been to different schools and know that wouldn't be a building that I would want to be working in. Whereas I feel it when I go into Erickson Elementary, the kids feel safe and looked after, and when they feel that way, we have a better chance of educating them.*

Staff at both schools acknowledged that more scrutiny of the reserve system and settler colonialism as it impacts the lives of these families is needed. References to disruptions to families' lives that include foster care and child and family services should also include critical discussions related to the disproportionate number of Indigenous children in care in Manitoba. Staff acknowledges the challenging social circumstances that impact several students and the importance of a school as a positive space.

> *Some of these kids are dealt a shitty hand basically, some of them don't have the greatest home life and so if we can be a positive place for them to come and forget about what's going on at home, or the fact that they have been moving in and out of foster care. That's one of the reasons we work hard not to have any bullying or abuse at school. We deal with it right away; it starts with the kindergarten teachers.*

At ECI, teachers observed the following in terms of the visibility of Indigenous culture and the teaching of Indigenous languages:

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When I started, it seemed like the Ojibwe language class was hidden in the 'Saulteaux room.' It was like, "this is where you go for that part of the day and that's it." That has certainly changed.

Additionally, the school structure had become more flexible and open:

Many student connections are founded upon a mutual love of music. On any given day, you'll find students spending time playing their guitars in the 'Cedar Room.'

Having an open place helped students feel they belonged and had a place that was theirs. Cajete (1994) highlighted the importance of recognizing that each student learns in their own way at their own pace, that they have autonomy regarding the way they learn and the extent of learning they are willing to engage:

If they are having a hard day, these kids have a place to go and unwind. They are in the Cedar Room doing their thing with their guitars or whatever. Not only are they staying at school, they are contributing to the calm atmosphere at the school.

As well as systemic change, teachers noted over the past three years, a cultural change in terms of attitude towards integration Indigenous Teachings of Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. The focus toward Indigenizing the curriculum and the school environment was initially met with suspicion and resistance across student groups:

Before it might have felt like we were cramming this down students' throats, in our earlier Tell Them From Me surveys, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students commented, "Why are we focussing so much on Indigenous, why is there so much Indian stuff?" That came up quite a bit on our surveys. The Indigenous students were asking, "Why are we being targeted, why are we being labeled now?" That was not that long ago, that was three years ago. Since then, our survey respondents haven't even questioned it. It's just here now, it's part of the school culture.

Mino-Pimaatisiwin as Praxis

In keeping with research on the importance of hidden curriculum for the transmission of school values (Sari & Doganay, 2009) a teacher talked about living the Teachings:

I don't teach the Seven Teachings explicitly in class but rather try to live them in the way I teach.

Teachers described Mino-Pimaatisiwin as a pedagogy that addresses teachable moments:

If there is a problem that needs to be talked about, I can say: "Are you showing honesty right now?" Are you following the Teachings? Is that an example of honesty or trust?

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The Erickson Schools' successes have been recognized as exemplary, as a teacher noted:

We did a PD this past fall on reconciliation. Our school was singled out as an example for the work that we have been doing on reconciliation. There were schools from the whole division, and our school is trailblazing, not only in the division but perhaps in the province. That relates to Mino-Pimaatisiwin, to live in a good way by leading by example, by not just talking, by walking the walk.

Mino-Pimaatisiwin and Relationships

Several teachers and staff members observed an ethic of care and valuing of school-based relationships which they attributed to the influence of Mino-Pimaatisiwin. Students have much more input into what their school looks like.

You hear from the kids a lot more than you used to; they have more input into what their school is looking like, with students working in the hallways, for example. [Mino-Pimaatisiwin] starts in the morning, and staff are visible in the hallways interacting with the kids. The school makes a point of speaking with the kids, all of them. We establish a personal connection with students and value getting to know them.

Several factors impact school attendance. Staff noted the culture of healthy teacher/student relationships resulted in less absenteeism:

Staff is really good here in terms of building relationships with kids, so the kids feel safe, they feel trusted. For a small portion of our kids, attendance is an issue, but for the majority of them, they are on the bus every morning, and they come in.

Support staff often build strong supportive relationships with the students they help one-on-one.

Usually, students connect well with one EA or teacher who then becomes the primary support for that student. Students won't ask for help unless they have a relationship.

While student-teacher-EA relationships play a large role in promoting attendance, teachers also acknowledged the importance of community-based friendships among Indigenous students:

His attendance dropped off when his friend left to another community, and then when he found out his friend was back, he began attending daily again.

Also important in creating a positive school space is the relationship development between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Staff noted a greeted openness and acceptance of each other among students.

> *I'm seeing less of a separation, less of an "us" and "them." For example, when an Indigenous student teacher got together and did ribbon skirt making with the girls and ribbon vest making with the boys, there were kids who were not Indigenous who chose to participate in those activities. There is no stigma about participating in something like that, and I think that openness comes from what we are doing as a school.*

Teachers talked about Mino-Pimaatisiwin as normative behavior:

> *You can see it in the smiles, hear it in the laughter. So when you hear someone upset or arguing, you know that something is wrong because that's not a daily occurrence.*

> *I can't remember the last time I heard a raised voice in our building.*

Not only were the schools more open to student voice, but also there was more open dialogue among staff at the school:

> *Other ladies are speaking up here a lot more, sharing their thoughts about being Indigenous, things they probably wouldn't have said earlier when I first started here. Now it's like everyone is speaking pretty openly about their concerns and thoughts.*

The impact of Mino- Pimaatisiwin was not only on students. A non-Indigenous teacher spoke candidly about the transformative effects of "the Good Life" on their relationship to life more generally:

> *My understanding of the "Good Life" has changed since I have been here. Ten or twenty years ago, the Good Life would have been more materialistic. Through some of my experiences here over the past decade, living and working here with this student population, my meaning of the Good Life has changed toward things that don't have as much to do with material or monetary things. I am more spiritual and reflective, with a greater appreciation for people and the natural world. Working here has been a life-changing experience for me.*

The Effects of the Hidden Curriculum on Mino- Pimaatisiwin

Janks (2000) discusses issues related to the domination of particular kinds of knowledge and culture that are granted more legitimacy over other forms of knowledge and culture, such as ways of speaking, knowing, and problem-solving. Some studies indicate students with learning disabilities achieve better academic, behavioral, and attendance outcomes

in inclusive classrooms than students in pullout programs (Muijs & Reynolds, 2017; Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002).

Interviews with teachers indicated that Indigenization was more challenging for teachers whose roles were more prescribed by provincial policies and 'best-practices' rooted in a Euro-western cultural tradition. Teachers discussed the incongruence between some resource room interventions and the philosophy of Mino-Pimaatisiwin. Looking for a different way is supported by the critical literacy work Janks (2000) and others, who proposes that *access* to dominant forms of language and literacy can be made accessible to students without perpetuating unequal power relations in society:

> *We talk a lot about how it is not our goal to 'fix' the child but rather to nurture their strengths and talents. I wonder about the ways that fit better with the direction the school is going.*

Teachers acknowledged the importance of *learning communities* (Cajete, 1994; Bell, 2016) and talked about how a focus on outcomes and student comparison is disruptive to key relationships at the school.

> *The first step to success with our kids is getting them excited about what they are doing and building a relationship with them, and I do build good relationships with the kids, but then it all becomes about business and outcomes, where they are at with the curriculum and how they compare to other kids. It's disruptive to the relationship. It's also disruptive to them when you are pulling them out of their classroom community.*

Race is a significant factor in inequity at schools (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). A teacher reflected on teacher education, Indigenization and professional development:

> *Sometimes school is weighted against Indigenous students. The course materials and curriculum are designed for European students, and that might go all the way back to the training that teachers received.*

A teacher discussed the polarization of academics and Indigenization:

> *While what we do is obviously an important thing; what goes on here is not more important than what the rest of our school is trying to do with Indigenization. It still seems like academics are prioritized as most important, so students go to a special place. Then they are not participating in everything else. That's not right.*

The comment 'everybody you grew up with says it like that, who am I to say that is wrong' alludes to the hidden curriculum as it targets students who speak languages other than Standard American English (Vang, 2006).

You're supposed to teach the kids how to speak correctly first if you are going to go hierarchically to do things. Even just the comment that we don't say that structurally, we say it like this and then. It just, ya but everybody you grew up with does say it like that, who am I to say that is wrong. I still know what you are saying, we just don't see that structure in books, like for example here I don't know if you've heard any adults say, but I hear, "you seen" is like comes out of everybody's mouth, "I seen that" and for me, it's like "no" (laughter) and you don't read that in a book, you don't read "I seen" and so many kids will read that because it's the structure they are used to hearing and whatever.

Settler Teachers' Perspectives of Indigenization, Reconciliation and Decolonization in Erickson Schools

Some settler teacher comments provide examples of culturally proficient and critical thinking about education and how to facilitate reconciliation in the classroom. Notable differences became apparent regarding competencies related to white privilege, racism, and decolonization. This is not surprising given these areas did not appear to be an explicit component of teachers' professional development.

Settler Teachers as Allies

Teachers articulated the role and responsibility of schools in terms of reconciliation, the importance of understanding settler privilege, the responsibility that settler teachers have that align with reconciliation, and the importance of equity in education (Lowman & Barker, 2015; Regan, 2010).

Using public education as a way to move toward reconciliation [is appropriate] because the education system got this country into the mess we are in now, and we have to start honoring the treaties and doing what we said we were going to do from the outset.

When people are born into a position of privilege, they take it for granted. So Indigenizing means, helping future generations understand clearly where we came from, why we are where we are, and where we should be moving in order to live peacefully together and share the land and the resources. There are a lot of misconceptions about what treaties are and what we as Europeans agreed to do and how we haven't been following through. There is a lot of prejudice due to misunderstanding, and it is my job as an educator to move us closer to even footing.

We aren't to blame as individuals, there's no shame in being born into the position we are in, but that does carry a responsibility to turn the situation around.

I see it as an issue of fairness. If your school population is 50% Indigenous, 50% of your teachers should be Indigenous teachers who respect and employ that knowledge in their classrooms. Also, your curriculum should be 50/50, and that's what I've been trying to do.

Examples of Culturally Proficient Teaching

Culturally proficient instruction requires a critical exploration of your own values and beliefs, the context in which you teach, the external context, and the congruence with the policies and practices of the workplace. (Nuri-Robins, Lindsey, Lindsey, & Terrell, 2011). With respect to Indigenization, teachers commented:

Indigenizing curriculum is about incorporating current Indigenous cultural issues into the classroom and our conversations.

One of the interviewees articulated a view of Indigenization as a form of inclusion:

Indigenization doesn't mean that you're taking out something from the curriculum that was already there, you are adding and complimenting. When some people hear about the Indigenization of the curriculum, it can spark fear, and people start questioning, "Is that the only thing that we are going to be teaching?" and that's not the case at all.

I always incorporate current news events relevant to reconciliation into classroom discussions. For example, not too long ago, I talked with students about issues related to government-issued birth certificates and how Indigenous parents don't have full naming rights of their children. Because only English symbols are allowed to represent sounds, parents are being told, "you are not allowed to name your child that." I ask the students, "How does that limit what you can do and how you celebrate your culture and language when your government is telling you how to name your own children?" Some kids don't get it and don't care, while others are sitting on the edge of their seats.

We watch media clips by influential Indigenous figures to develop empathy among non-Indigenous students related to the ongoing struggles experienced by Indigenous People in this country. One of the videos addresses the statement, "Why can't you just get over it" (i.e., history of the residential school).

We discuss the intersections between Indigenous worldviews and current debates about ecological protections.

When we used to talk about tobacco, we would link it to addictions, but tobacco is something very sacred to the Indigenous culture. From the health standpoint we would say, "Stay away from tobacco. It's bad, it's addictive, it can wear out your lungs, it's whatever else...," but now we are also looking at it from the side that this is a scared commitment. We had a presenter that told us about why tobacco is sacred and how much care it takes to raise a tobacco plant.

When we go on ski trips, I tell the kids, "Rolling River First Nation offers funding to its registered band members, unfortunately, the rest of us don't have that funding." I teach them that it is the result of treaties and differences in forms of governance. For example, our government does not set aside money for things like this, but theirs does. Understanding that difference makes it less a bone of contention.

We approach music as a spiritual practice as well, for example, by looking at what John Coltrane did with jazz. Like Indigenous music, it wasn't just for background usage; he turned it into a ceremonial and spiritual practice. Some of the students are in drum groups, and some do powwow dancing, so they understand music as a spiritual ritual.

Other ways that some settler teachers facilitated Indigenization were discussed. For example, reading materials were purposeful, but their incorporation into the curriculum was strategic.

I choose books with Indigenous characters and Indigenous content and incorporate those characters into lesson plans without making it explicit. That way I normalize the presence of Indigenous content without non-Indigenous students questioning why we are doing this.

Other resources were chosen and applied more explicitly. Another teacher talked about reading and analyzing books through a critical post-colonial perspective:

We are reading classic literature and asking: Who are the main characters? Do we see Minority characters here? What are the colonial relationships?

Another teacher utilized professional development materials:

I use materials from the Treaty Relations Commission to teach how we are all treaty people.

Some of the resources were described as part of the décor:

We have posters and carpets with the Seven Teachings.

Another teacher pointed out the creative influence of Indigenization on the students, as it appears on the walls around the school:

It can be seen in the poetry and artwork from students throughout the school.

A teacher talked about including Ojibwe language in her lesson plans:

When I was a classroom teacher, we would count in English, French, and Ojibwe. Whatever words the kids could teach me, we would use them in the classroom.

Settler teachers talked about their own consciousness-raising that occurred after engaging with the Indigenization process:

I have been driving to Clear Lake since I was a kid, and before I worked here I never knew Rolling River First Nation really existed, and it's right off the highway. With the way Canadian history was presented to me, I didn't realize what a different world and experience the First Nations people have been going through.

Another teacher shared an insightful comment about how much Mino-Pimaatisiwin might be influencing changes they are not aware of due to their racial and cultural location (Bonds & Inwood, 2016):

It's affecting people more than I'll probably ever realize.

A teacher identified the effects of popular culture, cultural appropriation, and consumerism on Indigenous youth culture and engaged in critique with students to explore the exploitation of Hip Hop culture:

For Indigenous students, there has been an adoption of Hip Hop style, whether it's the music itself, the attitude, the style, the dress, a lot of it is related to the same social problems that Hip Hop tried to address originally: Inequity and politics, disfranchisement. Unfortunately, with the shift in it toward consumerism, I think there is a shift in worldview as well if you look at the fake gold chains that you see in the hallway, but we try to talk about looking for authenticity in music.

Finally, a teacher suggested that Indigenous teachers' lived experiences of hardship and intergenerational trauma would better position them to teach the history of colonization and decolonization:

As opposed to someone who has read about it or gone to PD, like myself. I haven't lived that same life to be able to bring that to the classroom, to bring that to the kids. And you can't replace that, right? As good a teacher as I might be and as well-intentioned as I might be, when you are bringing your own cultural and lived

experience to that classroom and to those lessons, it makes a world of difference. To me, that's the major difference when talking about the Indigenization of the curriculum: our Indigenous teachers have first-hand knowledge. They have lived the prejudice; they have someone in their family that has grown up in Residential Schools. They have direct knowledge, they have direct impact… when they can speak from the heart, and they can speak from experience. It makes a world of difference

Whiteness, Cultural Difference, and Challenges to Indigenization

Indigenous education infers teaching and learning that encompasses experiential learning with Elders, community members, and the land (Tunison, 2007). Non-Indigenous teachers discussed whiteness and settler cultural location as challenges to achieving Indigenous cultural competency. Keep in mind, the vulnerability required to explore these challenging topics is itself an indicator of cultural competency.

One teacher talked about the lack of Indigenous education competencies in their own mainstream school experience in the past decade:

I am not that old; I have only been out of high school for 11 or 12 years now. I learned next to nothing about Indigenous history or culture—next to nothing. I went to a school where there was no reserve nearby or anything.

Another teacher talked about their ambivalence regarding settler teacher roles and whiteness in the Indigenization process. Yet the effects of settler colonialism on Indigenous culture were not overtly analyzed:

There are lots of kids who don't practice any traditional Indigenous ways, and it is always uncomfortable to be forcing it on people, especially because we are white, to put it bluntly.

A teacher expressed their concern about cultural competency, which is itself indicative of cultural competency as it relates to respecting Indigenous teaching protocols:

When I was in the classroom, I felt uncomfortable, not that I didn't want to do it, I just didn't know how to incorporate Indigenization respectfully.

A teacher voiced concerns about authenticity:

It feels inauthentic if you try to Indigenize everything.

A teacher voiced concerns about the risk of unintegrated pedagogy and referenced store-bought items and catchphrases as possible cultural appropriation. The teacher called it:

Taking a beads and feathers approach.

Reported Indigenous Critiques of Settler Involvement in Indigenization

Decolonization is a process. Ermine (2007) explains that reconciling Indigenous and Western worldviews is "the fundamental problem of cultural encounters. Shifting our perspectives to recognize that the Indigenous-West encounter is about thought worlds may also remind us that frameworks or paradigms are required to reconcile these solitudes" (p. 201). While there may be acknowledgment of differences, that acknowledgment may be superficial. It takes time, dialogue, and openness to reach beyond the assumptions and experiences that influence relationships (Ermine). Some non-Indigenous interviewees talked about the feedback they had received from some parents in Rolling River First Nation, stating that it is not the school's role to be teaching Indigenous knowledge. The interviewees' comments reinforce the need to recognize the barriers imposed by our cultural constraints.

I feel like the government has forced you as a white teacher to teach our ways.

And the teacher's response:

(a) I don't feel forced and, (b) I am not teaching your ways; that's your job.

Another educator shared an interaction they had with Indigenous educators and leaders who said:

It's not your job as a teacher to teach our Teachings. It's our job to do that.

A settler teacher spoke candidly about experiential education as an area requiring further professional development. This comment is well supported by Indigenous research and scholarship. For example, Cajete (1994) talks about the complexity of Indigenous experiential education, and Calderon (2014) writes about land-based pedagogy in reconciliatory terms, inviting educators to re-think their relation to land as an ecological and cultural project of recovery from colonization.

I did an experiential activity and was not as well as informed as I could be. Some [Indigenous] kids that have a better understanding received it like "you're not right" or "you are not giving us enough," which is something that I need to address professionally, for myself.

Western notions of Indigenous culture and discourses of multiculturalism not only tend to oversimplify the ontological complexity and diversity of Indigenous worldviews, but they also fail to make the influences of settler colonialism explicit (Barker & Lowman, 2015; Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000; Coulthard, 2014).

One of the teachers summarized a gap in professional development related to defining culture:

> *Understanding culture is something that I think we need to improve on. Everybody has ideas about what culture is and means is different.*

She shared her reflection, recognizing the importance of Elder and community involvement in education (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 2003; Pratt & Danyluk, 2017).

> *I see our role as a facilitator. How can we bring those Elders to our students or our students to the Elders, so we can start to bridge that gap and it becomes a more natural way of teaching for our kids to sit and listen to the Elders?*

In another example, culture was described in terms of personal identity and did not reference settler colonialism as a contributing factor for students who are not connected to Indigenous traditions:

> *We always talk about culture as being what normal life is for our kids, so we talk about trying to bring that in, in whatever capacity that might be. We obviously have a high Aboriginal population, but there are lots of kids who don't practice any traditional Indigenous ways.*

A teacher provided a complex example of relational problems that arise when conflating the intersections of culture, personal identity, colonial dynamics of the child welfare system, and acculturation to popular culture/entertainment.

> *I understand culture as reflective of who the kids are, in whatever capacity that may be. That gets super tricky when we talk about what you did on the weekend and try to incorporate it into teaching for two reasons. First, it's like, "I'm not going to tell you because I've been told by my family not to talk about family at school" because of the fear of CFS. Or second it's things like, "I played Grand Theft Auto all weekend," and as a parent, I just can't embrace that into my teaching, but you don't want to put that down in front of a child because then they won't tell you anything.*

In another example, a non-Indigenous teacher shared their thoughts about Indigenization, which loses an important connection to reconciliation and a more nuanced Indigenous cultural competency.

I wonder if we need to use the term of "Indigenizing" the curriculum, but more "culturalizing" the curriculum, acceptance of all, seeing each other as human beings.

Another teacher argued for a more simplistic humanistic approach to addressing disparities:

I feel like we, as a country, as a system, we just made everything so complicated when it really isn't. It's as simple as watching Kindergarten students sit together on the floor playing together, of all different colors, of all different backgrounds, affluent, poverty, and learning something from that.

A teacher processed their struggle to Indigenize the curriculum. They utilize the pronouns "we" and "I" to identify settler identity and the euphemism "lost" to connote colonization).

With some kids, I wonder how close they are to those traditional ways of learning. It feels horrible to say this, but I think that some of this is lost for our kids. How do we, it feels hard, awkward to say this, do I give it back?

Responding to Accusations of Racism

Gillborn (2005) cautions against minimizing problems related to a legacy of racism and the ongoing historic, economic, and cultural implications. Critical race theorists encourage a thorough systemic analysis to accompany efforts to ally with racialized people (Bonds & Inwood, 2016; Brayboy, 2005; Cruz, 2005; Moreton-Robinson, 2004). Settler teachers talked about the difficulty of facing yet not personalizing the few attributions of racism they experienced. One staff member commented, "*When you are accused of being racist, that's very, very difficult to face.*" Another teacher noted that occasionally "race-card discourse" would occur in discourse with students and parents on actions and consequences of choices.

There are things that you can't take personal[ly]. You know when people don't agree with me, or are upset with me and the race card gets pulled out when it has nothing to do with that. I am disciplining your son or daughter because of their behavior, not because of their race.

Another teacher shared a productive relational response to a similar attribution. While relationship building, which appears to be an advanced strength of this teacher, is highlighted as the key to overcoming racial tension, it also appears dismissive of the importance of ongoing analysis of tensions between settler teachers, schools, First Nations, and Indigenous families.

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Sometimes a parent will say: "You are looking at my child based on the color of their skin versus who they are." They don't know me, so now I need to go and get to know them because it's obvious they don't know me. All I can do is extend that and hope for the best. I think if other schools are going to see what we've done, which isn't something special but what every school should be doing, they are going to face that. And they need to know that's OK because no one said to me it was going to be OK. I have had moments when I thought, "I am done," like who treats people like this? It is certainly better now, and that comes from relationships with people, which take a long time to develop.

The Racialization of Indigenous teachers

The racialization of Indigenous people, also called race essentialism, was identified in the interviews. An Indigenous teacher articulated the complexity of negotiating racial essentialism in the service of Indigenization.

I don't represent every Indigenous person in Canada, I don't know everything about every Indigenous person in Canada, and so there is a fine line between being positioned as the 'know-all Indian' and people not wanting to approach me for resources. Some will ask me question after question after question like I know everything about Indigenous people. Which is fine, I am glad they are asking me. And if I don't know the answer, I will try to find it.

Cultural Safety and Professional Development

Teachers have identified anti-racist education as a gap in professional development (Madden & Glanfield, 2017). Rolling River School Division has committed much time and resources to provide professional development to all its staff around working with Indigenous students and communities. Comments from teachers and staff differed on the way they experience these PD opportunities. One non-Indigenous teacher interviewee commented on the lack of Indigenous knowledge that still exists in the education system despite the on-going PD.

We had Nigaan Sinclair speak with our school division, and I didn't realize how far ahead our school was until I got put into groups with other people who had no clue and who were so out and out rude and racist. I felt the urge to apologize on behalf of my school division personnel. It's kind of scary that there are a lot of people wandering around out there with a lot of bad ideas.

Other non-Indigenous teachers talked about the negative comments at the division-wide PD session and how it raised their awareness of the presence of anti-Indigenous racism in the school division:

The only Indigenous employees at the in-service were from our school, and they felt totally outnumbered by a lot of people who don't buy into this. …There were lots of eye rolls, grumbling and complaining about "why do we have to be here" and "this is ridiculous and get over it." For our school, it was probably a setback. Later we had a meeting about it, and the Indigenous staff spoke about how it made them feel, and I never thought of it like that, even how they were so outnumbered at this huge in-service.

It was awful for our staff to hear the comments people were making. I think it was too much and too soon for some people. It needed to be done in smaller pods because it was really hard on our staff. I don't think it was right to lump everyone together, like the bus drivers and other staff with everyone else; there were too many varying levels of understanding.

One of the people at our table from another school looked at one of our Indigenous EA's and said, "What is a Pow Wow?" and started asking a bunch of other questions. Later the EA said, "Just because I'm Indigenous doesn't mean I have all the answers," and she felt disrespected by their tone and in the way they were asking the questions.

A settler teacher and ally summed up her thoughts about why racism persists and the commitment required to stop it:

We are Canadians, we are polite and we don't want to call it like it is. We need to own that and stand up against it.

Experiential Education

Experiential education has been identified as an important aspect of Indigenization (Kanu, 2011). This was echoed in the interviews. *"I found experiential learning is number one with the Saulteaux, Anishinaabe students."* Indigenous staff talked about incorporating traditional food and ceremonies into the classrooms.

I teach them about using grease to make pemmican. To do this, you add berries and dry meat from an animal, like a moose or elk, to make a ball of grease. I remember eating it all the time. I give teachers the recipe and have done presentations in the classrooms at school. Last time, most kids ate it, and there were eight non-Aboriginal students.

We make traditional foods, like rabbit soup.

A teacher talked about the importance of continuity in experiential education:

> *It's easier to integrate small things on more of a daily or weekly basis. And what you hear from classroom teachers is the same. In the food class, they don't just cook bannock once, and that's it. They try to incorporate more things on a regular basis, and it flows a bit more naturally, and it becomes normal.*

Traditional Indigenous Objects and Teaching

Traditional Indigenous objects are considered sacred and are protected by protocols and laws against appropriation (Battiste & Youngblood Henderson, 2000). Indigenous teachers talked about using protocols related to traditional Indigenous objects and the role of this teaching in decolonization.

> *I teach using the cradleboard, baskets, beadwork, and songs. Many of these things would not be appropriate for the school to purchase. I am supported to do this work by Elders and family members.*

> *I teach children how to respect these things. First, you have to ask before you touch something. This actually helps children to become good citizens. In the past, kids weren't treating resources or each other well.*

> *It's about a spiritual connection, rather than just reading words. Connecting to your traditions and the things that your people used historically, is largely ignored in a number of schools right now. Giving both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students the chance to interact with materials that are yours gives a little bit of power back.*

> *We are building an outdoor classroom. We also raised a tipi with students who were taught how to set it up and take it down.*

> *We spend time in the sacred medicine garden behind the school.*

Both settler and Indigenous teachers commented on the loss of smudging. One teacher said:

> *I'm disappointed that we can no longer smudge at schools. It felt like we were let down like they were backing down from some of the commitments we made together.*

> *We lost a little bit when we lost sage burning. We are working on building an outdoor classroom for that purpose. It's like, well, if we can't have it in the building we'll make our own building*

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A teacher talked about Indigenous Storytelling and Art as pedagogy:

My brother tells the stories and draws them as he reads.

Another teacher talked about a similar Indigenous Arts-based method for teaching local knowledge that stood out as significant.

When I taught on reserve, a lot of Elders came to speak with the students. At that time, we had a lot of trouble finding relevant books related to the band, so the Tribal Council hired an author to meet with the teachers and a few Elders from the community. We discussed what we wanted to teach the kids because it might be different from the reserve next to them, they wanted it to be very specific. We met frequently with the author, and she wrote a ton of books for the classrooms.

The teacher continued to talk about a do-it-yourself ethic that involved the class in producing their own learning materials:

We had to print them off, and kids colored the pages, and then we bound them together ourselves.

Adapting the Physical Education Curriculum

Teachers talked about the context for adapting the physical education curriculum and incorporating traditional local Indigenous activities:

The main goal in grades eleven and twelve is to develop habits for the future. For example, a kid can go and buy a pair of snowshoes for sixty bucks. Kids from Rolling River aren't as likely to play sports that require facilities that aren't accessible.

We are still covering all of the Phys Ed curriculum, but changing our activities to include some wilderness stuff and some traditional physical activities like snowshoeing, also some other stuff like cross-country skiing, mountain biking, and hiking. We'll do camping, and canoeing too. I hope to get an Elder to tell stories around the campfire.

Leadership and Commitment to Indigenization

Leadership played a significant role in establishing a school culture that promotes the teaching of Indigenous knowledge and integration of Indigenous philosophies such as Mino-Pimaatisiwin and the Seven Teachings. Teachers talked about the progression of institutional change and the need for strong leadership:

We were really a hundred percent school in crisis before our current principal came and…, I don't want to use the word "force" because that's not how they lead, but they basically said: "We are collaborating and that's it. This is why it is happening, and what do you think about it?" It took a while to open up because in the past meetings we used to just sit and listen and go back to our isolated classrooms.

It started slow. The collaboration piece started right away, and then the Indigenization piece was introduced slowly.

It was several years ago. I was so excited; I came back from a day-long Indigenous in-service on things you could do in science and math and I brought back all these ideas, I tried to share the kit, and nobody was interested. The difference is everybody is on board now. The leadership and the administration are teaching us how to be good leaders in the classroom.

New leadership was the turning point. They have brought so much Indigenization to our school and have done it in a way that has helped us as teachers to learn how to teach it to our students.
It's a very supportive work environment in regards to Indigenizing curriculum. That's a breath of fresh air for me. Any ideas that I have about infusing Indigenous perspectives into my classroom is encouraged and supported.

Our leader's sense of social justice is phenomenal and how it has changed the culture of this building. When I first started working here, there was a visible divide, even with staff. The challenge is re-educating a generation of people who went through our school system, believing what we were told was true. It's hard to undo that.

I think you need a strong administration to say, "This is happening so you're getting used to it." Some administrators might shy away from that.

A leader articulated the importance of commitment and talked about how change developed over time and provided some indicators that they recognized along the way:

In the leadership role, there are times when things need to be grassroots and move from the bottom. When you are talking about implementation of change, unless your principal believes in it and is committed to it, you are not going to have what is required for people to change. When I first came on board, I immersed myself and made First Nations education the focus of my own professional development. I had to challenge my own belief system, and I had to really take a look and get clear in my own mind about the direction that I wanted to go. Then it starts with one or two staff and together we started to implement change. They started to attend in-services with

me. This then leads to a systemic change as opposed to a principal-directed change. In terms of my professional practice, I had to do a lot of work upfront before I could even ask my staff to do the same.

It started with the staff in terms of attitudes towards kids and attitudes towards First Nations. Once some of those changes were made, I could go to the next phase and look at equity. Then it's easier to move your organization in that direction. So the whole culture of the school had changed in a very positive way, and so then, when that happens, and you have stability, you can start making some of the necessary changes.

Interviewees also talked about some of the challenges when working with teachers who are not open to Indigenization and the importance of leaders to keep moving forward. One teacher said:

If they [staff members] don't understand, on their own personal level as to why this needs to be done not just in our school, but in all schools, it's like a big anchor. They are like an anchor; it threatens to drag things down. That's been part of the challenge. Some people have been transferred, and some people have left. So then, the people that still aren't totally on board, they are like an island here. I don't know how enjoyable their time here is then. Because what happens when you become an island, you have very minimal professional dialog and feedback with your staff, right? And so then you are teaching in isolation, and that's no fun working in isolation. You are always going to have people in your organization that are like that, and so you just keep moving ahead. Eventually some people may be asked to leave the organization, or some people may just go on their own because they don't match philosophically. And that's fine.

Upper levels of administration were also mentioned as important supports to the process:

The present superintendent is a huge supporter of what we are trying to do; it's nice to know I have that support.

Community Exchanges and Family Involvement

There were acknowledgments about the historical trauma that educational institutions embodied when people or their loved ones were abused as students:

For many Elders and teachers, it's a very traumatic experience to step foot back into a system that did them wrong.

Teachers talked about concerns regarding Indigenous family involvement at the school:

> *We are still working on increasing attendance at parent-teacher meetings with Indigenous families.*

Challenges with Family Involvement

Teachers speculated about reasons for lower family involvement from families in Rolling River. One teacher cited poverty as a barrier:

> *If your car isn't working and you can't afford a cab, it is hard to get from there to here.*

Another teacher cited historical trauma:

> *Unfortunately, there is probably still a lot of stigmas attached to school, based on residential school history and how badly Aboriginal students have been treated.*

The attitude of parents toward school was discussed:

> *When parents did not graduate, they are not as likely to share positive values for school.*

This teacher talked about the stigma about not getting children to school:

> *Some families might be embarrassed that they cannot get their kids to school. I've had parents tell me, "I just can't get them out of bed." I bet a lot of this has to do with "school refusal," which is related to anxiety or another mental health issue. I try and explain to them how that is different from truancy.*

Fear of stigma and Child and Family Services involvement is a barrier:

> *Parents might be worried about CFS being called, especially if there are addiction or mental health issues.*

Some teachers talked about the effects of academic discourse on their relationship with families:

> *When I connect with parents, it is usually all based around academics, and usually problem-focused.*

A teacher described the value of music education on community connectedness:

> *Now these kids can join in the tradition of music-making with their relatives.*

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Cajete (1994) wrote that kinship extends beyond family and that the role of parenting is undertaken by all adult members of a child's community. A teacher talked about policy issues related to resource allocation:

> *It can be hard to get legal guardian signatures sometimes. This is a problem when we can't get resources for kids when they need them. Often these kids are living with extended family, but because they aren't the legal guardians, they can't sign for things.*

School Responses to Improve Connections with Families

Teachers talked about improvements they have noticed since Indigenizing the curriculum. Teachers compared current family and community involvement to participation prior to Indigenizing the curriculum:

> *There are a lot more families from Rolling River coming into the school; it never used to be like that. We would talk about it, and the attitude was like "if they are not interested in coming, we can't do anything about it."*

> *Attendance is quite high at parent/teacher; there was about 50% attendance.*

> *I think moms are starting to feel more comfortable. I taught a lot of the moms when they were in junior high, so they know me and are more comfortable to talk to me because they know all about me and my family.*

> *It seems like parents are more comfortable coming in, even just coming in to talk with staff in the hallway.*

The schools held several special events as a way of re-building relationships between school and Indigenous families:

> *We put on a Mom's Night Out, Parent Nights, and we got the dad's out when they were making button vests.*

> *We have a day in the spring, we call it Family Fun Day, and there are stations set up around the school. The past few years, we've had Elders come in. One day they sat around the campfire and told stories, and the kids made bannock over the fire.*

> *We ended the residential school unit with an open house. We invited parents, community members, and everybody in the school. Our colleagues were able to listen to a guest speaker and see the work that we have done as a class. I got a lot of good comments about that and from all levels: community members, professionals, and the students.*

Several teachers mentioned how much they valued the collaboration of individuals and grandparents from Rolling River First Nation in several initiatives to get students involved in traditional Indigenous activities.

He knows what he is talking about and is involved. He did some work with our kids when we went fishing. We talked about the basic stuff, the techniques and that sort of thing, but then he taught the history of Indigenous fishing and the different things fish are used for.

The grandparents who are fluent in Anishinaabe are very involved in their grandchildren's language development.

This involvement is very positive, and although Anishinaabe language is taught in both schools, teachers also talked about being challenged by some fluent speakers from Rolling River:

Teaching language is a confusing area because a lot of work needs to be done for language, and yet there is a lot of criticism about language right now. It is discouraging, but fortunately, I am resilient, I have family and an Elder supporting me, and I am able to think about it and learn from it.

A teacher with experience at both schools shared their perception of the cultural differences between the Erickson schools:

If they come into the high school, they just go to the office to leave a message, lunch, or money for their child. Or to pick them up and that's it, they're gone. They don't see the teachers generally, whereas here with the elementary setting, they come right to the classroom, and we'll visit for a minute while their child is getting ready. Parents feel different about interrupting a high school class.

Another teacher shared their concerns about the divergence between First Nations regarding Indigenization:

There is a pendulum swinging, and Indigenous communities are not unified in the direction they want to go. This process is not only about finding commonalities with the Europeans and non-Indigenous people; there have to be some common agreements between Indigenous groups as well.

Some comments related to a perceived division between the town of Erickson and Rolling River First Nation:

> *Despite the fact that Rolling River backs onto Erickson, the town, it's surprising how little the two communities do together. I don't know how you go about changing that. We have held some events to bring the different communities together. Unless the schools are doing it, I don't see it happening.*

Teachers talked about resistance to Indigenization from the non-Indigenous community as well as the value of non-Indigenous communities learning about their own histories and cultures.

> *One of the things that can come along with our focus on reconciliation is a resentment from some non-Indigenous students and parents. I think that a lot of people—I won't even limit it to educators—are not equipped with solutions to deal with that. The teachers that have to deal with the students and their resentment towards the Indigenous students might need additional resources to focus on this issue. Then there are community members who are resentful, and I think community education is part of it. There are opportunities for staff to educate through their relationships with the parents, but a lot of community members aren't connected. So ongoing information meetings at the school might help.*

> *We can adapt the curriculum and teach in an inclusive way, but none of that in any quick way will fix the systemic racism that exists in the community. The root cause of all of it is just a lack of understanding and I try to give them another story to consider. I cannot be responsible for them adopting it, but I can give them something to consider.*

One teacher gave an example of cultural competency by recognizing that white people are rarely asked to explain how 'white' culture works (Estable, Meyer, & Pon, 1997). It also aligns with Moreton-Robinson's (2004) hypothesis that ethnicity is often the category used to describe European descendants (Moreton-Robinson, 2004):

> *I challenge our kids and our staff to explore that if you are from a Ukrainian background, for example, how much do you really understand about your own Ukrainian history? It's just not First Nations culture, traditions, and history we need to focus on. There is a lack of, and this is my perspective, a lack of teaching from home about many cultures. The assumption that First Nations people are not teaching their kids about their tradition and their language, I would venture to say that neither*

are you "white" people, the Europeans. They are not talking about ethnicity, culture, and traditions. There is a lot of work to do there.

Elder Involvement

Interviewees' comments were very appreciative of the time Elders from Rolling River First Nation spent in the schools and the connections they made with non-Indigenous teachers.

A long-time teacher said:

> *I've noticed that there is more willingness from Indigenous Elders to come into our school and share knowledge with our kids.*

> *I have made connections with about four Elders from Rolling River, who I now consider people I can go to if I was needing advice or help with something. Some of the ceremonies I've had the privilege of being involved in are very personal, and it's taught me a lot.*

An Indigenous teacher talked about encouraging young people to connect with their cultural teachers:

> *I ask the kids in class: has anybody smudged lately, last time about six said they had—that was good—I encourage students to connect with the other Elders and also with other members of the community.*

Concerns about mortality and knowledge transmission were discussed:

> *We are losing our Elders who use to do their Teachings to their families. It would be nice to get a hold of people who know these Teachings.*

A teacher talked about one of her Indigenous teacher colleagues at the school:

> *One of our teachers would be considered an Elder and talks every day about respect and listening and being respectful to Elders. So she really reinforces that aspect of cultural respect.*

A teacher commented on systemic issues that might be a barrier to more integrated Elder participation:

> *There will always be programs that don't fit into the system we have set up. For example, the Elders' Program doesn't fit into the system they have, but it could work in the system if we let it, and we might lose some teaching hours here and there from*

students that are absent, but students are absent for a number of reasons already, so why not use it to more academic benefit?

A teacher talked about their desire to work more closely with Indigenous Elders, as well as with other Elder members of communities around the Erickson schools:

It requires a lot of work and volunteers, but the way I envisioned it was you had some Elder program that incorporates not only Indigenous Elders but also Elders from the community come in on Fridays, kids go out for the whole day, the guys, the ladies, teach them something and it could be, you know, something from a book, it could be an experience, it could be fixing a bike, or working on a car, or teaching sage-burning ceremonies, or skinning animals, we've had a little bit of that, but not as fully as I might have liked to see yet in an elder program.

A teacher stated:

With fire building, for example, it's not something that I can Google and have the right answer for, right? That's something that I need to learn from interactions with people. What I would like to do is have Elders come to give us presentations. That way, it is not my understanding of someone else's view; this is their view of their culture.

General School Competencies

The following section addresses general school competencies that, when combined with Mino-Pimaatisiwin, may contribute to student retention and academic success.

Some teachers choose to work over lunch to support students:

We have a homework club at lunch.

I'm available if students want to play board games or role-playing games over lunch.

One teacher described the importance of music to students who struggle with literacy:

The music program is good for students with lower reading levels, who dedicate themselves to playing and practicing their instrument.

Another teacher talked about flexibility in terms of work completion:

We allow for incompletes on a case by case basis, with an agreed-upon time frame. The principal wants to know when students aren't completing work and also wants

the parents to know. Then we can work with them to complete the work rather than throwing the whole semester away.

A teacher described the value of a flexible school philosophy for creative curriculum development in their class.

I am working on a game-based curriculum, so next semester, there won't be any tests.

Another teacher reflected on monitoring and checking-in about incomplete work:

You didn't give me this assignment, so give me what you have because I know you have stuff. Sometimes the student will have the beginnings of a bunch of stuff in their binder, so you see what they have, you see how close they are.

Teachers spoke about the importance of pressing Indigenous students for achievement on the importance of determining what constitutes success, asking students:

What do you really want to get out of this?

He then described exploring progress in relation to each student's context:

Where did you start at the beginning of the semester? Where are you now? How did you get there? Look, you don't get to scrape by just on the fact that you are really good. You didn't get any better.

Several teachers shared comments on what motivates students towards engagement with school. Their comments included relationships, positive reinforcement, helping students break work down into manageable pieces, providing choice, project-based assessment, and maintaining an interdisciplinary and experiential focus.

These students will make efforts when the relationship with the teacher is positive.

Once he knew we were onside with him, he was onside with us.

Praise and valuing any contributions that a student makes are important motivators.

Helping students break work into workable chunks.

Keeping lessons and use of resources short, also offering experiential opportunities rather than only theoretical.

Providing choice and being flexible as a teacher.

Summative project learning versus test-based assessment.

Bringing new books in.
Giving kids access to art materials and maintaining an interdisciplinary focus as much as possible.
Incorporating more kinesthetic and performance aspects into learning.

Newer teachers talked about the changes in pre-service teacher education and graduate programs towards a more Indigenous focus.

The theme of my Master's degree has been Indigenous education. We have four teachers on the path of taking their Master's, for a school to have this kind of depth is pretty cool.

Part 7: Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The overarching question for this program evaluation was:

To what extent have the Erickson Schools achieved their goal of co-developing, with Rolling River First Nation, an educational environment based on the cultural framework of Mino-Pimaatisiwin (Good Life) and the Ojibwe Good Life Principles to improve learning outcomes for Indigenous students?

The cultural framework of Mino-Pimaatisiwin (Good Life) and the Ojibwe Good Life Principles have had positive effects on the school culture for both teachers and students, particularly as they relate to increased levels of Indigenous cultural competency and inclusion at the schools. This finding should be considered an indicator of 'enabling conditions' (Oakes, 1989) that may continue to facilitate progress toward the goal of improving learning outcomes for Indigenous students in the future.

A strong staff commitment to integrating Indigenous knowledge into the school culture and curriculum was evident. Interviewees reported that this commitment was well supported by the school division as well. Teachers and administrators appeared to be working collaboratively with students in promoting an ethic of Mino-Pimaatisiwin in their school-based interactions. While both schools displayed a commitment to Indigenization of curriculum, an overt philosophy of Mino-Pimaatisiwin and the Seven Teachings appeared to be more clearly articulated and integrated at Erickson Elementary than at Erickson Collegiate Institute.

The survey results show that Indigenous students' feelings toward school were less positive, and their resiliency ratings were lower than those of non-Indigenous students. Because these indicators have strong correlations to academic and school success, these data corroborate other data indicating that gaps in achievement appear by income, race, and ethnicity (Johnson, 2002).

While both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students had a high agreement about the importance of getting good grades, graduating and taking schoolwork seriously, Indigenous students had higher levels of disagreement on the statement: "I feel good about trying hard on tough assignments," and they indicated lower levels of confidence when taking tests. Surveys that measured for resiliency showed that Indigenous students in grades 7,8,11 and 12 had more disagreement with the question: "I am able to depend on myself, and I can be on my own." This may indicate that there is work to be done on the holistic development of these children to address the spiritual, physical, emotional, and mental capacities. Again, we highlight the importance of Indigenous knowledge—Anishinaabe pedagogy in particular—which utilizes ceremony, teachings, and stories to nurture spiritual growth; land-based practices to teach the physical; oral teachings about how to maintain a balance between the "heart and the head (emotional)";

and ancestral languages and integrative learning to develop mental capacities (Bell, 2004).

The sub-questions of the evaluation included:

1. To what extent has teacher and administration professional development in the areas of cultural proficiency increased their understanding of Indigenization of curricula and experiential learning across grade levels?

Commitment to Indigenization of curriculum and school culture was the greatest achievement demonstrated by the schools. Each person interviewed expressed their personal commitment and gave examples of the efforts that they themselves, or other staff they observed, had made to increase their understanding and implementation of Indigenization of curricula. The efforts toward engaging students in experiential learning were less diffuse and tended to be less common for non-Indigenous teachers,ndigenization of while it was a common pedagogical element for Indigenous teachers.

2. To what extent have the intended community exchanges increased Indigenous family involvement in the school?

Community events that were held at the schools or at Rolling River First Nation were highlighted in many of the staff interviews. Staff at Erickson Elementary stated that they had seen an increase in parent participation and equated that to culturally relevant events held at the school (such as button dress workshops for the mothers, grandmothers and aunties, and button vest workshops for the fathers, grandfathers, uncles, etc.). They also mentioned that a Mom's Night held at the school led to more regular appearances of moms at the school, who had not been present prior.

Parental and Elder participation at special events at the school (i.e., Thanksgiving and Christmas) were highlighted as significant moments for interviewees. Some teachers stated that there appeared to be more parental involvement at Erickson Elementary than at ECI and that parents who did attend ECI often did so to drop an item off to a student and were less inclined to stay.

3. To what extent has the involvement of Elders contributed to the Indigenization process at the schools in terms of cultural proficiency?

This sub-question presents the most pressing and serious challenge for Erickson schools as they continue to develop in the area of cultural proficiency and Indigenization. There is a sense of urgency informed by statements made by Indigenous language teachers about the importance of fluent language speakers for the transmission of knowledge and culture. This was further intensified by statements about the ages of Elders, mortality, and the fear that with their passing important knowledge will be lost. With limited time to develop meaningful partnerships between these Elders and the schools, it is hoped that Elders could recommend how to move education forward from their grandchildren and

other Indigenous students. Ongoing listening to these voices and making creative and patient efforts to collaborate are needed.

Recommendations

The overarching recommendation is for *Erickson Schools to continue their efforts to provide culturally competent Indigenous education to their students.*

The following recommendations follow from that overarching recommendation.

Recommendation 1: *Elders and Knowledge Keepers*

- Erickson Schools to prioritize Elder and Knowledge Keeper involvement.

- To encourage Elder involvement, explore alternatives that will facilitate the desired outcome of connecting Indigenous students with those important teachers.

- Facilitate opportunities for students to connect with Elders and Knowledge Keepers on the land, or in their home communities.

Recommendation 2: *Family-School Collaborations*

- Continue to nurture the relationship and to develop strategies to increase collaboration with Rolling River First Nation families of Erickson school students.

- Make efforts to attend events on reserve and explore opportunities to collaborate with the community and families away from the school

- Given the success of special events drawing parents to the school, explore avenues to increase the frequency and ways to collaborate with families during the organization and implementation of such events.

- Increase understanding of school-based curriculum and purpose to families. Contact families to provide initial introductions and to share successes, so families do not experience that the school primarily reaches out about truancy or poor achievement.

Recommendation 3: *Indigenous Teacher Leadership*

- Continue to recognize the importance of equity and Indigenous leadership at the school.

- Develop a transition plan to incorporate a recognized Indigenous cultural competency liaison or board (someone with expertise and education in Indigenous pedagogy—this person may or may not be university educated but recognized as an Elder, or recognized by Elders as a Knowledge Keeper), which will relieve

Indigenous teachers at the school who have been acting in this role unofficially, which may be beyond the scope of their job titles.

- Continue to invite Indigenous leaders into the school, advocate for the hiring of more Indigenous teachers, and recognition of the importance of visible Indigenous leaders

Recommendation 4: *Role Clarification*

- Clarify roles and responsibilities of Indigenous and settler teachers in terms of culturally competent curriculum delivery; provide opportunities to discuss and debrief among all staff members to continue to promote cohesion, resources awareness, and opportunities to explore "how it's all going" (process-based professional learning communities).

- Clarify duties related to the teaching of sacred knowledges with an ongoing awareness of cultural appropriation. Incorporate discussion of role clarification into regular staff meetings.

- Clarify duties related to teaching history and current events related to settler colonialism, non-Indigenous identity awareness, and critical race analysis.

Recommendation 5: *Ongoing School and Community Professional Development*

- Sustain ongoing professional development in cultural proficiency.

- Focus on the ongoing development of Indigenous cultural competencies, decolonization strategies, anti-racist interventions, and conflict resolution skills.

- Increase and promote professional development opportunities related to specific curricular areas such as literacy and numeracy interventions in culturally responsive ways.

- Provide opportunities to educate the non-Indigenous community in Erickson about the history of colonization and the rationale for developing better nation to nation relations between First Nations and Canadians.

Final Remarks

The journey through the remnants of history is still a long way from over. As educators, we still need to continue to analyze and improve our methods of instruction for all students. For our Indigenous students, we need to remain focussed on addressing all aspects of their well-being, ensuring that we are presenting materials in a way that is respectful of not just their intellectual being but also the emotional, physical, and spiritual components of who they are. Rolling River School Division, Rolling River First Nation, and Erickson schools are working together for the betterment of all students. Their journey continues as they collaborate on challenges of pedagogy and instruction that are necessary to continue to whittle away at the educational gap that exists. The framework

of Mino-Pimaatisiwin has value for all students, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, as they work towards providing an education that supports all students in reaching their greatest potential.

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Appendix 1: Mino-Pimaatisiwin Activities Erickson Elementary School

Activity Log Infusing Indigenous, Métis and First Nation Perspectives PES
All staff 2017-2018

Date	Activity	Subjects Covered
September 2017	Mino Pimaatiswin Assembly -Full afternoon of community groups -Done again in 2018	-Reviewed what the "Good Life" is -Seven Teachings -The schools' 3 beliefs
September 2017	Orange shirt day - secret path - legacy of Residential Schools	Older students taught younger students -Elder Ms. M. talked to students as well
November 2017-	Remembrance Day service/Aboriginal Veterans Day	Infused the Elders and drummers of the Indigenous community in service
December 2017	Woman's Night at PES with mothers and women Elders from the community	-Made supper, dreamcatcher, and feast together - introduced what the program was about
December 2017	Christmas lunch at high school, both schools came together	Invited the drummers and dancers from the Indigenous community
January 2018	Welcome back assembly, which was a half-day	Reviewed Mino Pimaatisiwin & the Seven Teachings, and 3 school beliefs -What kind of school?
Throughout the year	Seven Teachings in each classroom	Posted visuals all over the school -Treaty teachings
Throughout the year	Staff meetings & PDs	Infusion Indigenous perspectives/ PLC's - self-esteem/advocacy IP
February 1 2018	In-school in-service -PLC groups, developed surveys for cultural connectedness and self-esteem	All teachers
February 22 2018	Special person's day -Indigenous athletes	Family event
March 22	Winter Fun Day -Seven Teachings song with the choir -Different activities outdoors and indoors	Family event
April 19 2018	Celebrate our awesomeness books -Show unique strengths and how amazing we are as individuals and as a community	Community groups

May 2018	Completed pre/post initial surveys of cultural and self-esteem -Whole school powwow	All children at PES -All school staff, kids, and community members participated in powwow
May-June 2018	Whole school pottery project	All staff and students created bowls for the feast. Whole school feast to end school year
September 2018	Participated in division-wide PD with Nigaan Sinclair	All staff -Follow up staff meeting with all staff to discuss vision and staff agreements, which included talking circle
October 2017-18	Whole school gratitude day and Thanksgiving dinner/feast	All students and staff participate in sit down meal together
December 2018	Whole school Christmas morning event	
December 2018	Christmas concert theme is sharing our gifts and where we come from. Celebrating diversity	All school staff and community

Grade: Kindergarten

Date	Activity	Subjects Covered
November 14, 2017	-Respect/courage story "Franklin is Bossy" -Role model showing respect & courage	ELA/SS/ Science
November 15, 2017	-Celebrating our differences - Story "I Like Me" -Saying "Meegwetch" when handed a paper	ELA/SS/Health Language/SS/ELA
November 16, 2017	Playtime - a group of students playing discussed the different names they use for grandma - koko, granny, grandma & awilla	SS/ELA
November 17, 2017	All students & classroom teacher attend Saulteaux language class	ELA/Language/SS Math(counting)/ Health (body parts)
November 21, 2017	Library - story about Inuksuk -Importance of the caribou to the Inuit people	ELA/Art
November 22, 2017	Courage – story "Franklin in the Dark" -Appreciate differences (What are you afraid of)	ELA/SS/ Health/ Science
November 28, 2017	All students & teachers attend Saulteaux class -Oral storytelling	ELA/Language/SS Math (counting in

| | -Words 1-10 & body parts | Saulteaux) |
| | -Mom/dad/grandma/grandpa | |

Daily morning sharing circle—oral storytelling & respect—importance to listen to others share

Daily end of day sharing circle—show respect by listening

Grade: 1/2 Teacher 1

Date	Activity	Subjects Covered
December 5, 2017	-Started the Seven Teachings -Respect - lesson on what respect is - story-brainstorming-video-role playing	ELA
December 6, 2017	-Respect lesson -Draw 4 ways you show respect -Bison art -Exit slip-how I showed respect today	ELA Art
December 7, 2017	Respect reinforcement lesson -Respect writing project -Respect exit slip	ELA
December 8, 2017	-Respect exit slip	ELA
December 11-15, 2017	Teaching of the week: LOVE -Read "The Story of Love" -Brainstormed what showing love is -Exit slips - how I showed love today	ELA
January 17, 2018	Teaching of the week: humility -*Story of humility -Writing about how to show humility	ELA
January 18-19, 2018	Humility Wolf painting	ART
January 23, 2018	Read - "Lets Read about the 5 Senses" -Narrated by Folf the Wolf -Represented humility	ELA/Science
January 25, 2018	Dreamcatcher teaching and creating community event -Miss M. was a guest to talk and create dream catcher -Parents of the grade 1/2 class attended.	ELA/SS
February 5, 2018	Honesty - sabe Footprint in art	Art
February 7, 2018	Storytelling	ELA/SS
March, - April	Read aloud from books purchased from BU	ELA

2018

April 2018	Seven Teachings: Courage Book: "Story of courage" Bear art	ELA/Art
Throughout April 2018	Guided reading books- circle of life series	ELA
April 19-30, 2018	How to make bannock sequence -Writing with art activity to go with it	ELA/Art
May 2, 2018	Ms. M. coming to make bannock with class	ELA
May1-4, 2018	Seven Teachings: truth Story & art	ELA/Art
April and continued	-Started animal unit in French learning the names of the \Seven Teachings animals -Made puppets	French/Art
April and continued	-Truth – Seven Teachings, read book aloud -Writing/ drawing about a time they told the truth.	ELA
October 1, 2018	Orange shirt day -Pocketful of kisses story and we made orange heart signs to wear for the march.	ELA Art
October, 2018	Seven Teachings carpet and have regular discussions about the Teachings using the carpet	ELA/ Class discussions

Grade: 1/2 Teacher 2

Date	Activity	Subjects Covered
October 2017	The Seven Teachings – humility- I can be humble by…(writing) Book: The Story of Humility Art - wolf	ELA/ART
November 2017	The Seven Teachings – love – eagle- (writing) - What is love?	ELA
November 2017	The Seven Teachings- eagle art Book: "The story of love"	ART
November 2017	The Seven Teachings Respect – (writing) - how to show respect Book: "The Story of Respect"	ELA
November 2017	The Seven Teachings Bison art	ART
December 2017	The Seven Teachings Courage- (writing) – what are some ways you can show courage?	ELA
December 2017	The Seven Teachings Bear dotted art patterns	ART/Math
December 2017	The Seven Teachings Honesty - (writing) – sabe - what is honesty?	ELA
December 2017	The Seven Teachings Sabe art with shapes Book: "The Story of Honesty"	ART/Math
December 2017	The Seven Teachings Wisdom-(writing) – beaver- what does the beaver represent?	ELA
January 2018	The Seven Teachings Chalk art of the beaver Book: "The Story of Wisdom"	ART
January 2018	The Seven Teachings Truth – writing on what does the turtle represent?	ELA
January 2018	The Seven Teachings Turtle art	ART
January 25, 2018	Dreamcatcher event with Ms. M. - discussed the meaning of a dreamcatcher and supplied craft	Art/ELA Parents of both Ms. Mekuria's class & Ms. Comrie's class attended
February 2018	Book: "I am a Hoop Dancer" (guided reading)	ELA

	The 7 Grandfather Teachings -Traditional knowledge	
February 2018	Book: "Getting Ready for the Feast" (guided reading) Writing: the importance of community, traditions and ceremonies	ELA/S.S
February 2018	Book: "The Gift of Water" Writing: the importance of water Science: the water cycle	Science/ELA
March 2018	Book: "4 Colours, 4 Hands" Class discussion: the medicine wheel	ELA/SS
March 2018	Book: "The Raven" Writing: About courage	ELA
April 2018	Book: Making bannock Writing: sequence writing Baking with Ms. M	ELA/Art
April, 2018	Book: "Can you give me my Name? -Class discussion -Spirit names -Elder Teachings	ELA/SS
Everyday 2018-2019	Sharing Circle	ELA
October 1, 2018	Orange Shirt Day -Phyllis's story -Talked about emotions	ELA

Grade: 3/4 Teacher 1

Date	Activity	Subjects Covered
November 29, 2017	Seven Teachings -Book: "Story of Love"	ELA Health
November 30, 2017	Activity: -I love myself (how? Show) -I love my earth -I love my ____	Health ELA
December 4, 2017	Book: "The Story of Respect"	ELA Health
December 5, 2017	Activity: -Follow how to show respect -What is disrespectful	ELA Health
January 8,2018	Activity:	ELA

	Book: "Honesty" Watch a video	Health
January 9, 2018	Story telling on books that are not true	ELA Health
January15, 2018	Inuit studies -Students research and teach about now/long ago	ELA SS
February 7, 2018	Continue Inuit studies	ELA SS
All year long	Daily sharing circles	ELA Health
February 2018	Book: "Polar Bears Past"	ELA
February 2018	Traditional & now Research subjects	ELA
March 2018	"Me" as an Inuit Life in the Artic and long ago	SS
March 2018	Presentations of home/food/jobs/clothing/the hand. -Comparison of our life and life of Inuit	SS
April 2018	Seven Teachings -Courage book Discussion on writing actively	ELA
April 2018	Book: "I am not a Number" -Circle discussion	ELA
April/May 2018	Louis Riel -Studying Manitoba (history of Manitoba)	SS
May 2018	Seven Teachings -Book: "Hunting the bison" -Book discussion	ELA
All year	Guided reading books	ELA
September 12, 2018	Talked about generosity	ELA
September 13, 2018	Circle discussion -Road to the Good Life -Positive feeling about self	All subjects
October 1, 2018	Orange shirt day -Miss L. showed video of Phillis' story online and read story about courage from Seven Teachings collection	ELA
October 12, 2018	Circle discussion -Being a good community member	Class discussion

October 9, 2018	Story about fishing, drying fish	ELA/Guided reading
October 16, 2018	Discussion on what do you call grandma? -Read Kohkum	ELA
October 17, 2018	Ms. M. will be discussing the 4 sacred medicines	Science
December 2018	After discussions of treaties, whole classroom created a classroom treaty and agreements	ELA, Health, SS

Grade 3/4 Teacher 2

Date	Activity	Subjects Covered
November 2017	Seven Teachings circle conversations & writing	Health ELA
December 2017	Talk and write up on cultural food	ELA
December 2017	Circle/Culture conversations/story telling	ELA Health
January 2018	"The North"- unit research, language, culture	SS health
January 2018	"The North" - traditions of the north.	SS ELA Health
January 2018	Book: "Story of Responsibility & Sharing" -Circle/writing.	ELA Health
January 2018	Story of perseverance	ELA Health
February 2018	Short story – "Legend of the Dream Catcher" (small groups)	SS ELA
February (end) 2018	"Mystery of the Mist" (small group reading)	SS ELA
March 2018	Symbols of Manitoba	SS ELA
April 2018	Hudson Bay Company research	SS ELA
April 2018	Louis Riel/ Métis research	SS ELA
April 2018	Métis poem Word association	S.S ELA
September 2018	Culture party	SS ELA
All year 2-3	Sharing circles	ELA

times a week		Health
September-October 2018	Seven Teachings - Referred to once or twice a week	ELA SS Health
October 2018	Reading groups "The three sisters" - cultural discussion	ELA

Grade: 5/6 Teacher 1

Date	Activity	Subjects Covered
November 1, 2017	First Nations/Métis worldview of living things -Discussions and legends video	Science
December, 2017	Discussion – how First Nation people learned to fight diseases using plants	Science
January 2018	Aboriginal people in the new country of Canada -Discussion/worksheets on treaties, reserves and Residential Schools	SS
January 29-February 2018	Discussion, reading worksheet on Treaties 1, 2 and 3 ***Numbered treaties teacher guide book**	SS
February 5, 2018	Using a paragraph frame – making treaties and reserves	SS/ ELA
February 20, 2018	Reading/discussion and questions about Métis and the battle of Bato.	SS
March, 2018	Treaty 3 & 4 -Discussion & worksheets with a video.	SS
May, 2018	Research project -Aboriginal Canadians and WWII	SS
May, 2018	Class discussion 1995-2004 - decade of the worlds' Indigenous peoples	SS
September 21, 2018	Discuss/research First Nations settlements in Canada in 1700's	SS
September 27, 2018	Study Métis settlements in Canada (worksheet)	SS
October 2018	Research a "tribe" of Canada to learn more about their specific way of life.	SS

Grade: 5/6 Teacher 2

Date	Activity	Subjects Covered
November 28, 2017	Students provided with time to share /collaborate writing with peers (Indigenous learning philosophy incorporated in daily practice)	ELA
October - daily	Silent time for prayer/meditation to begin day	Inclusion of spiritual
November, 28, 2017	Ms. M. came in to show a picture and talk to students about Mamaqwehsey (druids/little people) Open discussion	ELA/ SS
January 8, 2018	Novel study – "Ghost of spirit bear" (4 students)	ELA
January 22, 2018	Snow shoeing- all grade 5/6 -Fire discussion on what to use in forest	Phys-ed
April	Polar bear art	Art
March - end of June	Circle agenda groups	All subjects