



PARKLAND
SCHOOL DIVISION



MEMORIAL COMPOSITE HIGH SCHOOL ANNUAL EDUCATION RESULTS REPORT 2023-2024

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Table of Contents

- Page 3 2023-2024 at MCHS
- Page 4 A Proud Parkland School Division High School
- Pages 5-9 Belonging at Memorial
- Pages 10-12 Collaborative Response
- Pages 13-14 Indigenous Education at MCHS
- Page 15 Wellness at MCHS

Memorial Composite High School is grateful to be located in Treaty 6 territory and Metis Region 4. These bountiful lands provide our students, staff, families and friends with homes, food, comfort, recreation, as well as a society currently offering many freedoms and opportunities. We take our responsibility for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada seriously and commit to educating our students about the wrongs of the past and learning about our true history so that we can work together to make positive changes. We are especially grateful to our neighbors who have been on these lands for time immemorial, Paul First Nation, Enoch Cree Nation, Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation, and Alexander Cree Nation as well as friends from the Metis Nation.





2023-2024 at MCHS

The 2023-24 school year was another busy and positive year at MCHS. There are usually challenges in a school year and right at the start of the year it became apparent that there was another enrollment bump bringing the student population to well over 1300 students. Adjustments were quickly made and the year was underway.

This report will illustrate that progress has been made and that the school is in a better place but there continue to be advancements to pursue. The strength of Memorial is the people, students and staff, who come to school each day which will undoubtedly see the school continue to improve.

We bid farewell to Ms. Jensen who served as Principal for the past eight years and welcome Mr. Haley for September 2024.

Students

1373 Gr 10-12
150+ identify as Indigenous
Varied backgrounds -
town, acreage, farming

Leadership

Principal : Carolyn Jensen
Grade Administrators:
James Coghill
Marsie Fisk
Dianne Jewell

Programs

Diploma
Knowledge & Employability
Living, Working, Academic Skills
Academic Achievement Center
Transitions
Iyiniw Kiskinwahamatowin/
Weechasta Wuthpiwchukehbi
(Indigenous Based Program)

Teaching Staff

61 Teachers
3 Counsellors
2 Indigenous Graduation Coaches

Support Staff

13 Educational Assistants
8 Office Staff
1 Library Tech,
1 AAC Coordinator
1 School Resource Officer



A Proud Parkland School Division High School

Our Vision:

Our students possess the confidence, resilience, insight and skills required to thrive in, and positively impact the world.

Our Mission:

We assure supportive learning environments, meaningful experiences and healthy relationships that create opportunities to develop resilience, to gain diversity in perspectives and to achieve enduring success.

Our Ultimate Goal:

Student Success and Well-Being

Our Values:

- Learning opportunities that are purposeful, essential, relevant, authentic and responsive;
 - Excellence in achievement;
- Trustworthy, respectful relationships; and,
 - Resilience and self-awareness





Belonging at Memorial

PSD Priority - Equity, Diversity and Community

Goal - MCHS staff work toward understanding and addressing current inequities within the school so that all students and staff feel they belong and are valued members of our school community.

Belonging at Memorial has been priority work for several years now. Three years ago, as a result of a student incident in the community, Memorial staff engaged in focused and frequent learning to understand what comprises oppression and bias. Through that learning, the school initially focused on representation and understanding the needs of students from marginalized groups. It is complex work that continues. With this new understanding, the staff has re-engaged in their work in community building in the school through a broader lens.

Professional Learning Into Action

Teachers were ready to put their learning into action in their classrooms this year. In June 2023, the staff reviewed [PSD Administrative Procedure 390: Community, Equity and Belonging](#) so the work they chose to do was aligned with Parkland School Division expectations. Teachers developed rubrics to measure the procedures listed in the five key areas: supportive learning environment, meaningful experiences, healthy relationships, opportunities to develop resilience and diversity in perspectives. In the fall, teachers then worked with their department colleagues to translate rubric items into action in their classrooms.

Teachers reported that it was positive to review AP 390 to see a clearer path to implementing this work. Initially, they found the rubrics cumbersome to work with but when they reduced the items in the rubric to what was manageable, they found it easier to translate to their practice. While the rubric tool was not well received, teachers did continue to be highly engaged in the Belonging work with a 95%+ positive response for each when surveyed about their professional development, available resources, their ability to respond to marginalized students, their intentional work on inclusivity and the school's messaging that everyone belongs at Memorial.

Additionally, there were half day PD sessions where the John Humphrey's Center for Peace and Human Rights delivered a session on *Holding Space for Safe and Brave Dialogue* and there Ms. Cox and Mrs. LaVallee delivered sessions on, Understanding Trauma Informed Practice & Community Building in Classrooms.





Belonging at Memorial

Understanding Student Data About Belonging

In surveying students about their feelings of belonging at Memorial in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years, we noticed a trend. Students were reporting that they felt adults cared about them and supported them (77% to 89% over four surveys) and they generally felt like they belonged (73% to 82% over four surveys). However, there were much lower reports regarding peers treating each other respectfully (81% to 64% and declining over four surveys). We wanted to have a deeper understanding of this trend.

Volunteers for focus groups were sought through student sign ups via a Monday Torch lesson, QR codes posted around campus, and asking some students individually to participate. There were 27 listed volunteers with each invited to bring a friend to a pizza provided lunch meeting. Students were asked if they identified with any particular groups and were matched with students with similar backgrounds. There were five group meetings - Persons of Color, Indigenous, two 2SLGBTQIA+, and one general.

The groups were led by members of the staff steering committee with some questions to start conversations. Students in all five meetings were engaged and provided many insightful comments. A brief summary of their key insights include:

- As a school there are safe spaces and students recognize a zero tolerance for racism so feel protected.
- Staff is making an effort but there is an inconsistent response from teacher to teacher.
- Microaggressions occur most often in the hallways and are often unnoticed, most common are “dirty” or pride related comments.
- The student population is tentative with some not knowing how to speak out and others engaging in poor behavior despite knowing it's wrong.
- An educational approach is the right approach. For example, continue to use Torch lessons to educate and engage. Staff need to address minor microaggressions educationally, not confrontationally.

Students from the focus groups were invited to continue to share feedback and take a leadership role in this area, but there were no volunteers.

Additionally, to gain a deeper insight into students’ understanding of respect, an additional question was added to the student survey.

- The item “Students treat me respectfully” continued to decline with a 66% in the fall, then 63% response in the spring.
- The added item was “I treat other students respectfully.” received a 94% response on both surveys.

This leads us to believe that students would benefit from some learning related to understanding the perspective of others which is developmentally appropriate for adolescents.

It is worth noting that MCHS Administration has been very open with this data in an effort to understand the nuances of it as well as our response to it. With recent survey results, there may be an influence on student perceptions because of this overt messaging.





Belonging at Memorial

MCHS QSA It Gets Better Project

At the end of the 2022-2023 school year, the MCHS QSA applied for and won a grant of \$10000 USD from the It Gets Better Project to increase awareness, community and support for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth at Memorial and in the community. It was a one year grant for the school.

With the leadership of Ms. Hertz, Ms. Cox and Ms. Williams (QSA Advisors) and Max Halliday (QSA President). The QSA identified four projects they wished to undertake with the funds.

- Resource Purchases to Assist with Events
 - With Pronoun Day occurring in October, the group made a major purchase of decor as well as giveaways like stickers and buttons for this year and future years. There were additional smaller purchases for the Community Pride Festival in this regard as well.
- School Assembly
 - On April 9, Dr. James Makokis from the nearby community of Enoch and his partner Anthony Johnson addressed the students in a whole school assembly. They addressed oppression for both Indigenous people and people from the 2SLGBTQIA community. Their talk started with a bit of a heavy history lesson and sharing some troubling personal stories from their youth but ended with an upbeat and encouraging message for students from either of those groups and for student allies too.
- Enhancing the MCHS Pride Festival to Become a Community Pride Festival
 - Over the course of the school year there were four planning meetings involving the Stony Plain Youth Center, Spruce Grove Community QSA, and student volunteers invited from PSD schools.
 - With some assistance, students managed the event planning, communications and logistics.
 - Fortunately on June 4, we had good weather for the lunch time MCHS QSA Pride Festival and after school/evening Community Pride Festival. There were food trucks, local businesses, music and activities. The event was well attended and received much positive feedback.
- Crosswalk Painting
 - The QSA identified that they wished to paint a Pride crosswalk at the front of the school and an Every Child Matters crosswalk at the back of the school.
 - PSD Facilities provided direction on the type of painting supplies to use and ordered in the materials.
 - The initial painting day was inadvertently scheduled on a weekend where there was an event with lots of traffic at the school so was postponed. It was then rained out on the second date.
 - The materials remain at the school to be used during the 2024-25 school year.





Belonging at Memorial

Continued Community Building

The staff takes very seriously the belief that Everyone Belongs at Memorial. Inspired by their professional learning regarding oppression and marginalization, there was an effort to create school spirit activities to encourage students to participate and hopefully increase their feelings of belonging through participation. MCHS School Spirit and Belonging events for 2023-24 include:

- September
 - Grade 10 Welcome & Registration Day - lunchtime barbeque
 - MCHS Club Fair
 - Indigenous Students Welcome Lunch
 - Apple Day
 - National Truth & Reconciliation Day - Torch lesson and assembly
- October
 - Pizza Sale for Hope Mission
 - Anime Movie Night
 - Bros for Breast Cancer fundraiser
 - Shikaoi Student Visitation - Foods 30 students fine dining luncheon
 - Halloween Costume Judging
 - Jersey Day - Oilers first home game of the season
- November
 - 2022-23 Awards Night
 - Indigenous Holiday Market
 - Anime Movie Night
 - Pep Rally
- December
 - The Four Days of Christmas - a Student Leadership event





Belonging at Memorial

- February
 - MCHS Alumni Basketball Game
 - Anime Movie Night
 - Pink Shirt Day
 - Grad Musical Chairs
- March
 - Indigenous Post-Secondary Night
 - International Travel - Trips to Disneyland, Germany, Japan and Spain/Portugal.
 - Rotary Bikeathon - raising over \$50 000 for the Alberta Cancer Foundation
 - Grad Dodgeball
- April
 - QSA Belonging Assembly - Dr. Makokis & Anthony Johnson
 - Rotary Pancake Breakfast
 - Ribbon Skirt Making - for the graduation ceremony
 - MCHS Hosts the Visual Arts Celebration
 - Grad Memorial Feud
- May
 - Memfest - local Anime convention
 - Hats on for Mental Health
 - Grad Name That Tune
- June
 - Pride Festival
 - Grad Slopitch



In addition there were 18 clubs and 23 sports teams which students could join.

MCHS Torch Lessons

Monday Torch lessons continue to be an avenue to bring awareness to students regarding topics of community, equity and belonging. There are other topics addressed by Torch lessons. These are the ones related to belonging for 2023-24:

- September - National Day for Truth & Reconciliation/Orange Shirt Day
- October - The Unified Club
- October - Pronoun Day
- November - Metis Week
- December - Human Rights Day
- February - Black History Month
- March - International Women's Day
- April - Murdered & Missing Indigenous Women
- May - Asian History Month
- May - Unified Jamboree
- June - Pride Month





Collaborative Response

PSD Priority - Programming and Pedagogy

Goal - MCHS staff design, deliver and share research-informed, effective and responsive teaching and assessment practices to promote student achievement with a focus on expanding intervention support for all students.

MCHS has been using the Collaborative Response process for several years now to organize teachers to support each other and learn together to meet the needs of their students. It is a complex process that is well established but continues to be refined to provide more effective support to teachers to support their students.

Teachers Supporting Learning

A key element of the Collaborative Response process is regular team meetings, approximately four per semester, for teachers to bring forward learning issues they are seeing in their classroom and engage with colleagues to problem solve to address the concern. These meetings during Torch Time are highly structured and have been led by Lead Teachers up to this year. In an effort to build teacher capacity and improve the impact of these meetings, this year the role of Facilitator was rotated among team members. Initially there was some trepidation by some, but teachers took on the role and as they experienced the lead role understood more the need for high level engagement in the meetings to support their colleagues. In the year end teacher survey about collaborative response, it was noted by several teachers that this was a positive change and that meetings improved. One third of Memorial teachers are referring 10 or more students in a semester to the team to seek ideas/strategies to support their students and overall 93% of teachers are making referrals.

Another key element to Collaborative Response is the [MCHS Continuum of Supports](#) that is developed by teachers as a tool to indicate the supports that every teacher will provide to every student (Tier 1) and identify strategies for some students in need of additional support (Tier 2). The Continuum was updated at the end of the 2022-23 school year and the updated checklist format proved to be much more helpful to teachers this year. There are 56 practices/strategies listed with a usage rate of 83% in the fall which climbed to 88% in the spring. A similar increase has occurred each year the Continuum has been in place showing it is an effective tool to broaden teachers' response to student learning needs.

Having worked for several years with Collaborative Response fully establishing the process, teachers indicated last year that they believed they had a strong understanding of student intervention and support with this model and now needed to translate this work to their classroom instruction. Late last year, there was discussion at Leadership Council about supporting teachers to ensure they had the understanding to scaffold learning, ensuring that they were aware of the starting points in a course and providing background



Collaborative Response

knowledge to students who needed it. This resulted in an August PD session from the Alberta Assessment Consortium - *Priority Outcomes & Prerequisite Skills: Developing a 10-20-30 Scope and Sequence*. Using Torch Time meeting time, departments dug into this work and realized they were actually comfortable in this area so moved their professional learning focus to varied assessment. Departments focused on creating alternate ways for students to demonstrate their learning. This learning was shared with colleagues across the school on the May PD day with several structured 1:1 conversations. Varied assessment is a very big topic so further work would be recommended to ensure full examination and implementation by teachers.

As noted MCHS has been engaged in Collaborative Response for several years now with initial staff wide training taking place in the 2018-2019 school year. The pandemic interrupted the implementation. To bring new staff members joining MCHS up to date, groups have been attending the Jigsaw Learning Retreat in the spring to learn the theory behind the Collaborative Response model. However, in 2022 Jigsaw Learning did a major update to their Collaborative Response model so teachers attending recently are seeing improvements to the process which many of their colleagues are not familiar with. It is recommended that Jigsaw Learning be re-engaged at MCHS for staff wide training again to bring the entire staff together.

MCHS has been using a software module on PowerSchool to document the meetings that have been taking place for two years. It has been cumbersome and the provider has not been particularly responsive. The communication function of the software is very helpful to teachers. There are other products available. In the future, an alternative to the existing software would be beneficial.

Tier 3 School Based Student Supports

Another key element of Collaborative Response is layered meetings meaning that if a Collaborative Response Team finds a situation for a student where the level of support needed is beyond the realm of a classroom teacher, there is a formal process to follow to ensure that Student Services and Administration are aware the student and their level of need. The School Based Support Team has been in place since the outset of Collaborative Response implementation but has rarely been accessed. In an effort to make this process more accessible, the process was adjusted to move the SBST meetings into Torch Time and to put more of the onus for referral on the Counsellor attending the CR meeting. Even with these changes, the SBST process did not see increased engagement. This could be because there is a Counsellor and Administrator in each CR meeting and both of those teams have weekly meetings where students of concern are discussed with interventions applied quickly. However, this warrants further investigation to ensure that all personnel involved with the student are aware of school interventions.





Collaborative Response

Several factors (our Collaborative Response work, increased enrollment, and the impact of the pandemic) led to the creation of two school level programs being created in the 2022-2023 school year. As part of implementation, a second year review took place this year.

- Transitions Program - In year one of the program, the intent of the program was fully met with the opportunity for students who were missing essential skills due primarily to attendance were able to build those skills and join a -2 level diploma program. However, this year the class was essentially a Knowledge and Employability level class where parents had not been advised of placement appropriately through their child's transition to high school. Work was done improving program descriptions in the Student Handbook and working with feeder schools to clarify the process. As well, clarity of MCHS decision making was made to offer the program but ultimately label and structure the program according to the population that enrolls.
- Indigenous Based Program - This program was created in the second semester of 2022-23. Uptake of the program improved tremendously year over year. This year would have seen 34 students enrolling in the program if the previous year's enrollment was doubled but 42 (29% increase) enrolled.

Student Use of Torch Time

As a school we are comfortable with a good number of students choosing to go off campus for Torch Time as approximately one third of the school is on the honor roll and an intention of Torch Time is for students to develop agency in their learning. However, there has been a sense in the two years leading up to 2023-24 that student participation in Torch Time was declining. As the Torch registration software we use does not provide actual attendance only registration data, this year the office gathered daily attendance of Torch Time to get a true sense. The attendance was more concerning than anticipated with only 31% of students attending Torch Time on average in semester one and 21% in semester two. This will require further examination and adjustments.





Indigenous Education at MCHS

PSD Priority - Indigenous Perspectives and Ways of Knowing

While MCHS is considering this PSD priority in the background of Belonging at Memorial and Collaborative Response, it is very much intertwined with both focus areas. As we engage in our belonging/equity and intervention work, supporting our Indigenous students comes to the forefront often.

Key items for Indigenous Education at MCHS for 2023-2024:

- As noted above the Indigenous based program is serving more students and providing a safe connected place for students to be.
- MCHS Indigenous student credit completion is trending upward but there is still work to be done to increase graduation rates.
- The entire MCHS staff visited the Fort Edmonton Indigenous Peoples Experience for the October PD day. Staff participated in facilitated conversations about the Cree language and Truth and Reconciliation.
- Engagement with Paul First Nation occurred twice during the school year for the first time. On November 24 and again on February 13, elders and Band Councillors came to the school to open lines of communication regarding the education of Paul First Nation students. It is hoped the relationship will grow.
- The MCHS Indigenous Education staff launched the [Metis Education at MCHS](#) website to assist staff and students in learning about Metis people and their history.
- The first Indigenous Education Post-Secondary event was held on March 20 with seven post-secondary institutions sending their Indigenous Liaisons to set up booths. Students and community members from Paul First Nation, Enoch, Alexander and Alexis were invited.
- An annual event is for the Board of Trustees to tour PSD schools. This year Memorial chose to provide the board with two experiences rather than a walkabout of the building. One stop was to visit with five grade 11 and 12 Indigenous students to have a lengthy discussion about the successes they are experiencing at Memorial and how the Board could replicate this in other schools. Our MCHS students were very well spoken. This was impactful for Board members as it was subsequently referenced in leadership meetings.
- The PSD Indigenous Cultural Graduation continues to be a wonderful event with MCHS hosting and taking the lead. Graduates are invited to attend Metis Sash and Eagle Feather teachings prior to this ceremony to learn more about the significance of the event. There are drummers and dancers and a feast to follow. This is a unique and meaningful event to celebrate the achievement of graduation for our Indigenous students.
- School wide Indigenous educational/awareness events and Torch Lessons continue to be a priority. In the 2023-24 school year, the following took place:
 - September
 - Indigenous Student Welcome Lunch
 - Torch Lesson - National Day for Truth & Reconciliation/Orange Shirt Day
 - Assembly - National Day for Truth & Reconciliation



Indigenous Education at MCHS

- November
 - Torch Lesson - Metis Week
- December
 - First Annual MCHS Indigenous Holiday Market
- April
 - QSA Belonging Assembly - Dr. James Makokis & Anthony Johnson
 - Ribbon Skirt Making for graduation
 - Torch Lesson - Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls & 2 Spirited
- May
 - Metis Sash & Eagle Feather Teachings for graduates
- June
 - PSD Indigenous Cultural Graduation





Wellness at MCHS

PSD Priority - Student and Workplace Wellness

Similarly the PSD priority of wellness of staff and students is very much intertwined with both the Belonging at Memorial and Collaborative Response work. As we envisage supporting students from diverse backgrounds, their wellness is a consideration. And as we intervene to support students, their wellness is also a consideration. To support students in either way, the wellness of the staff will improve the outcomes.

Key items for Student and Workplace Wellness at MCHS for 2023-2024:

- Toward the end of the 2022-23 school year, there was a soft launch of the [School Based Youth Mental Health Clinics](#), a partnership between Parkland School Division and the Westview Primary Care Network. This year saw the process for student referral and family access refined. MCHS students in need benefited from weekly access to a Social Worker and at minimum monthly access to a physician. This is a very positive addition to the school.
- The nutrition program that was established in 2022-23 under the guidance of Parkland School Division was handed over to Memorial. Budget and purchasing procedures were established. A parent volunteer joined us weekly to assist with organization. Two fridges were placed in public spaces and were stocked daily for students to grab and go. Breakfast and lunch were available for students to prepare for themselves daily. The food program moved into the common area during exam times to ensure students were nourished. It was quickly realized that the space allocated was not adequate and a renovation was slated for the summer of 2024.
- Research has shown that education sector employees have not recovered well since the pandemic. In response, Parkland School Division implemented the Guarding Minds survey of staff to gather data on the wellness of its employees. Results were disaggregated and forwarded to schools. MCHS staff members fared in the middle of the PSD results. This is positive in the sense that Memorial staff members are in line with the rest of the education sector which overall is in need of wellness support. Leadership Council began to examine the results to determine strategies to support staff members to build capacity, provide relief, manage workload and recognize their accomplishments.
- Torch lessons continued to be an avenue to educate students regarding wellness. In the 2023-24 school year, the following lessons took place:
 - October - Movember and Men's Health
 - November - Bullying Awareness
 - February - Pink Shirt Day
 - March - Online Safety
 - May - Mental Health Week

