

Indigenous Education Services

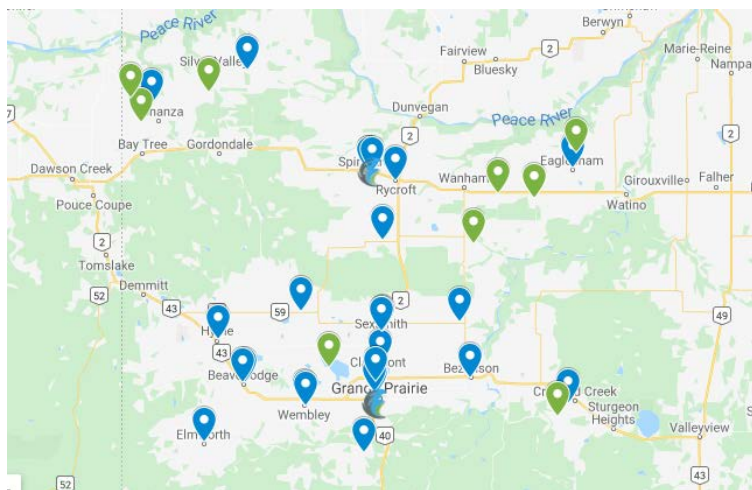


PEACE WAPITI
PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION

Educating Today for Success Tomorrow

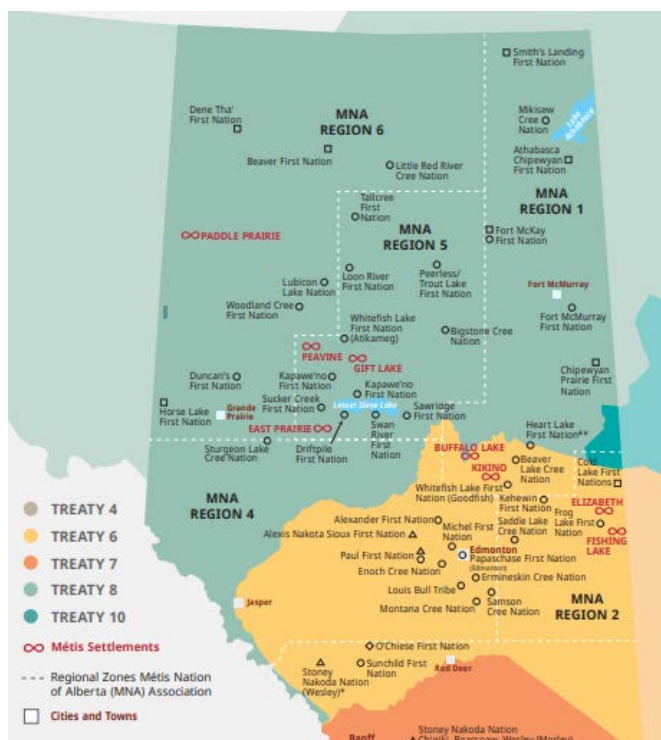
Our District

Peace Wapiti Public School Division (PWPSD) provides service to approximately 6,000 Kindergarten to Grade 12 students in 36 schools, including 9 Hutterite colony schools, 2 outreach schools, an online school, and educational programming at a group home facility. The system provides schooling for students from Horse Lake First Nation and the community of Kelly Lake. Excluding the colony schools, the smallest school has an enrollment of 41 students and the largest has 571 students. Alternative Education provides flexible programming to over 90 students.



We acknowledge that we are on homeland of the many diverse First Nations and Métis people whose ancestors have lived here since time immemorial. We are grateful to live and learn in the traditional territory of Treaty 8.

Policy AJ – Recognition of Lands and Peoples



Treaty 8

PWPSD is situated within Treaty 8 Territory, which was signed in 1899 and encompasses 850, 000 km and 31 First Nation Communities.

Métis Nation Region 6

PWPSD is situated within Métis Nation Region 6, which is the largest of six regions within the Métis Nation of Alberta.

Horse Lake First Nation

PWPSD provides schooling to Indigenous students from Horse Lake First Nation.

Community of Kelly Lake

PWPSD provides schooling to Indigenous students from the community of Kelly Lake.

Rural and Urban Indigenous Population

PWPSD provides schooling to Indigenous students who live off-reserve and within rural and urban settings.

Indigenous Education Services

Indigenous Education Services (IES) are supported in a variety of ways throughout Peace Wapiti Public School Division. At a district level, there is a full-time Indigenous Education Coordinator and an Administration Advisory Committee for Indigenous Education. Within schools that have higher populations of declared Indigenous students, there are Indigenous Liaisons dedicated to providing support to those students and their families. Within all schools, there are celebrations, guest speakers, the Collaborative Response Model is followed, and there are professional development opportunities and resources provided to staff regarding Indigenous education.

Purpose

The Indigenous Education Services within Peace Wapiti Public School Division function to support the positive experiences and success of our Indigenous Students.

Values

1. Supporting the holistic well-being and academic success of all Indigenous students, resulting in increased retention and graduation rates across the district.
2. Ensuring that schools are equipped to create learning environments that allow for increased understanding of and respect for Indigenous peoples.
3. Fostering opportunities for truth and reconciliation through building and strengthening community relationships.



Our goal is to make Indigenous Education come alive within our schools, and to make education better for our kids.

- Administration Advisory Committee for Indigenous Education



Indigenous Education Coordinator

The IEC operates at a district level to fulfill the three core values of the Indigenous Education Services. Through collaborating with staff and the community, the IEC works to support the following areas:

Indigenous Students

Support the success of Indigenous students by learning about their experiences, improving their learning environments, providing opportunities for celebrations, and advocating for Indigenous-focused support.

All Students

Provide opportunities for all students to celebrate and learn about Indigenous peoples by offering presentations and facilitating district presenters and events.

Indigenous Liaisons

Collaborate with the Indigenous Liaisons through meetings, sharing resources, working together on district and school-based initiatives, and sharing their voices and perspectives at a district level.

Educators & Administrators

Assist Educators and Administrators by sharing practices and resources across the district, collaborating with schools to implement Indigenous education, and offering professional development sessions.

School District

Continue to grow Indigenous Education Services within the district by connecting with the community, researching successful practices, and implementing a district-wide vision and action plan.

Contact:

Brigitte Benning, Indigenous Education Coordinator,

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Address: Central Office, 8611A – 108 Street, T8V 4C5



“As a Métis woman from this area, I am passionate about creating spaces where Indigenous students can thrive, all students can learn, and educators feel confident in their skills.”

- Brigitte Benning, Indigenous Education Coordinator

Indigenous Liaisons

The Indigenous Liaisons address the first value within the Indigenous Education Services, which is supporting the holistic well-being and academic success of all Indigenous students, resulting in increased retention and graduation rates. While the Indigenous Liaison responsibilities are unique to their school community, there are fundamental aspects of their role:

- Support, advocate and resource for declared Indigenous students within the school. This can include academic, emotional, social and cultural support depending on the students needs.
- Foster relationships between the family of Indigenous students and the school. This includes improving communication between the school and the student's family, and increasing family involvement within the school.
- Strengthen community connections for both Indigenous students and the school. This can include offering referrals to organizations within the community, as well as inviting Indigenous community members into the school.

Indigenous liaisons range in part to full time positions throughout the district:

Shirley St Cyr

Indigenous Liaison
Hythe Regional School

Barb Belcourt

Cree Instructor & Indigenous Liaison
Hythe Regional School

Marlene Letendre

Indigenous Liaison & Educational Assistant
Hythe Regional School

Miranda Belcourt

Indigenous Liaison
Beaverlodge Regional High School

Krista Lucas

Indigenous Liaison
Beaverlodge Elementary School

Bev Mustus

Indigenous Liaison
Ridgevalley School

JoAnne Bernier

Indigenous Liaison & Educational Assistant
Penson School

Morgan Cole

Indigenous Liaison & Educational Assistant
Whispering Ridge Community School

Corinne Dennis

Indigenous Liaison & Educational Assistant
Spirit River Regional Academy

Melissa Hanna

Indigenous Liaison & Educational Assistant
Harry Balfour School

Sheila Payeur

Indigenous Liaison & Educator
Clairmont Community School

Anna Underwood

Indigenous Liaison & Librarian
Helen E. Taylor School

Dennis Shinksi

Youth Advocate
Peace Wapiti Academy

Cindy Wunsch

Indigenous Liaison
Sexsmith Secondary & Robert W Zahara

Administration Advisory Committee

The AAC is made up of the Indigenous Education Coordinator, the Assistant Superintendent related to Indigenous Education Services, and four administrators from various schools within the district. This group meets throughout the year to discuss, guide and assist in carrying out district initiatives related to the Indigenous Education Services.

Committee:

- Brigitte Benning, Indigenous Education Coordinator, Central Office
- Kevin Elias, Assistant Superintendent, Central Office
- Anna Nelson, Principal, Beaverlodge Regional High School
- Scott Bowen, Assistant Principal, Clairmont Community School
- Cynthia Gauthier, Principal, Elmworth School
- Barry DeFord, Assistant Principal, Ridgevalley School

Indigenous Education Resources

Authored or Co-Authored by Brigitte Benning, Indigenous Education Coordinator:

- [Recognition of Indigenous Lands and Peoples- PWPSD Policy AJ](#)
- [Opportunities for Recognition – PWPSD Policy AJ Exhibit 1](#)
- [Land Acknowledgement Resource – Grande Prairie Aboriginal Circle of Services](#)
- [Working with Indigenous Elders & Knowledge Keepers - Grande Prairie Aboriginal Circle of Services](#)
- [Monthly Newsletters from Indigenous Education Coordinator](#)

Learn more about **Peace Wapiti Public School Division** and the **Indigenous Education Services** by visiting the website: pwsd76.ab.ca and following the Facebook page facebook.com/PWPSD/

