



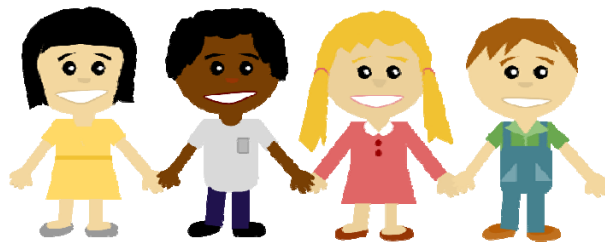
Embracing Challenges in Leadership

*The Northwest School Division Leadership
Academy*

Presenters: Carly Zaraska, Skylar Krepps,
Natasha Donovan, Becky Toews, Abbie Rubletz

Who are WE?

The Northwest School Division's Leadership Academy is a session driven program for grades 10-12, whose aim is to help inspire young leaders and to intentionally impact leadership development within the division. The academy spans over hundreds of kilometers and encompasses 11 different schools.



Today's Presentation in a Nutshell:

- **Carly Zaraska** will be talking about The Leadership Academy and how she has expanded 21st Century Learning literacy in the program.
- **Skylar Krepps** will be discussing her experiences in rural leadership programs, her successes and her critiques.
- **Natasha Donovan** will be talking about the importance of incorporating Indigenous culture into schools, and the connection between The Leadership Academy and the Aspiring Leadership program in the Northwest School Division.
- **Becky Toews** will be presenting about her views on the importance of community/school connections in guidance and leadership programs to ensure success after high school.
- **Abbie Rubletz** will be discussing the need for student/youth leadership specifically in rural communities, and how that need is unique and not as applicable to urban education.

21st Century Learning Literacy

- 21st Century Learning Literacy goes beyond being technology literate.
- Among so many other factors, post secondary establishments and workplaces look for leadership skills, communication skills, work ethic and critical thinking skills.
- The Leadership Academy offers all of these things. At the end of the 2 year program, students are expected to feel confident in all of these areas.
- To add to this skill set, new to the Academy this year is the implementation of a *Wikiclassroom* to help facilitate better communication.

What's Working For US, Online

- Having an online meeting place makes communication and collaboration accessible.
- Posting Modules with important assignment documents are just a click away.
- Mass messages sent via the Wikiclass make for easy communication.



What Has Been *Tricky* for US

- As a rural school division, and having students in The Leadership Academy in almost every high school in our division, meeting face to face isn't always the easiest thing to accomplish.

Conclusion: *Create a safe and collaborative learning space ONLINE! (Wikiclass, blog, etc.)*

- Setting up the Wikispace and getting each student as a member took way longer than expected. We were finally set up in December.

For the Future: *Begin adding new students in May and June so they are set up for the summer months.*



What Has Been *Tricky* for US continued

- Winter months sometimes make it harder to travel. During these months, we miss meeting face-to-face with school visits and group sessions.

Conclusion: *Set up video conferencing with each school and their delegates. (Google Hangouts, Face Time, etc.)*



Success in Rural Leadership

Our program

- The Leadership Academy gives students the opportunity, and connections for successful leadership. (collaboration and means)
- Flexibility within the program gives students the ability to exercise their own style of leadership through projects.

Other Programs

- Leadership 30, a class offered through my school, gives grade 12 students the opportunity and ability to create and complete projects that they believe in.
- 4-H in rural communities provides children of all ages an environment in which they may learn to lead themselves, as well as other.



Struggles in Leadership

- Living in a rural community poses challenges for individuals, often times these challenges inhibit the growth of leadership. Whether it be that a student does not feel as if their voice is welcome, or a lack of participation and commitment.
- Making schools a safe place for students to channel their inner leaders is vital to the success of both individuals and communities. When students feel that they have the ability to be leaders other areas such as participation have the opportunity for growth as well.



Bringing Communities Together

- The collaboration between community leadership and school is integral to the success of leadership within communities.
- Groups such as School Community Councils are what make events in rural areas successful, without working together in communities happenings in rural towns are not successful.



Opportunities for Leadership

There are many different types of leadership, and each of these leaders need different opportunities to flourish. By providing students with the needed opportunities we set young members of society up for success later in their life. Yet how do we tell what this success is supposed to look like?



Making Connections - Aspiring Leadership & The Leadership Academy

- The Northwest School Division and The Meadow Lake Tribal Council came together years ago to create the Aspiring Leadership Program.
- This program offers an annual Cultural Camp held in the North. Many schools from our division and even schools from outside of our division participate in the camp and The Aspiring Leadership Program.



Making Connections Continued

- I had the opportunity to take part in facilitating leadership activities at this year's Culture Camp Follow up Day. It was here that I made many connections from this program to The Leadership Academy.
- Essentially, I see the Aspiring Leadership program as a perfect segue into potentially taking the Leadership Academy course.
- While being a part of Aspiring Leadership, young leaders are given the foundational building blocks of leadership skills, with an emphasis on Indigenous culture and education.



Making Connections Continued

- The Leadership Academy and The Aspiring Leadership program have recently come even further together in collaboration to create a Wikiclass for The Aspiring Leadership students, teachers and mentors.
- It is here we hope to see further connections grow between the two.



Challenges of a Rural Student

- Based on my own personal experience, discussions with fellow peers, and research, I have found and feel that many students in rural schools find it hard to feel inspired or feel genuinely prepared to move onto post secondary.
- I have noticed a lot of my peers going to University and coming back within the first year.
- It seems that many of us do not feel set up for success in our post secondary aspirations.
- What are we missing?



Programs for Success

- SHAD is for students to spend a few months in university including dorms and being around campus and their classes available.
- Caps. Copes, Cops tests which give students information based on their test results of where they would succeed the most involving careers.



Programs for Success Continued

- Try a Trade which let's students talk to different colleges and try out a few things that involve a trade they're interested in.
- Career fairs where universities come to Saskatoon so students can interact with their reps and get to know what the Universities are about.
- Encounters with Canada. This prepares students for being independent as well as making connections in the real world.



Student Leadership Opportunities within Schools

- Small, and often disconnected, rural schools within larger Divisions have a distinct need for students involvement that is not shared by bigger centers
- Due to factors such as location and staffing, rural schools often lack diversity in the clubs, teams and programs offered to students
- The task of providing this diversity then falls on students and youth to advocate for what they would like to see
- Therefore, Rural Education has developed a unique dependence on students to take on leadership roles



Engaging Students and Encouraging Involvement

- Most often, these leadership opportunities are already available for students and youth
- Students are not always encouraged to take them, or are unaware that they exist
- Schools and/or communities demonstrate a well-documented need for student leadership in many forms- coaching, running community events, volunteering at fundraisers, sales etc.

Engaging Students and Encouraging Involvement Continued

- Youth are often underprepared, lacking in leadership skills, and are reluctant to take on such responsibility
- Therefore, the solution is not to create masses of new options, but instead to entice youth to engage in what already exists

Youth Leadership in Action

- Opportunities for youth leadership exist everywhere, even if they are not obvious
- One such example is refereeing sports; there is a documented need for sports officials, but the need is neither well advertised nor encouraged
- Such leadership roles are admittedly challenging, but are also insurmountably rewarding



Solutions for Better Engaging Youth

- In conclusion, the most effective way to engage youth in leadership roles is to encourage the ones that already exist
- In order to effectively do this, it is necessary to give youth the skills to *want* to be involved- communication skills, problem solving, creative thinking
- Leadership Academy is a program which excels in this; our sessions provide students with the confidence they need to involve themselves as leaders