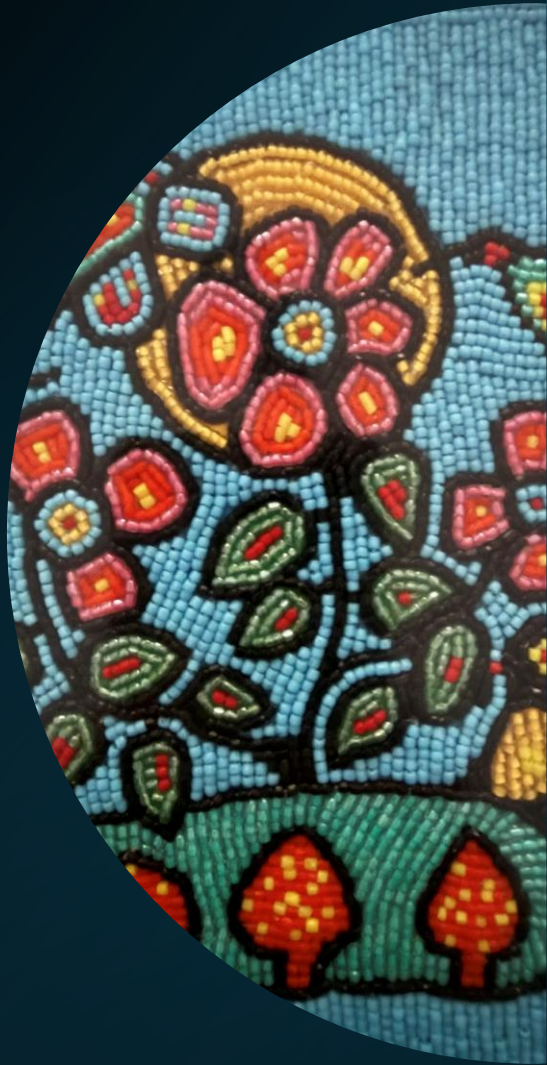




Indigenous Student Transitions: Leading for Belonging and Success

Exploring the role of educational leaders in supporting Indigenous students through critical transitions across their educational journeys.

Marnie Ross
Superintendent of Education
Saskatoon Public Schools

Saskatchewan Principals
Short Course 2026

Marnie Ross

Nêhiyaw Iskwew

- Red Earth Cree Nation, Timber Bay/Montreal Lake, Chakastaypayson
- Second Generation Educator
- ITEP Graduate
- M.Ed in Ed Admin
- Grew up going to school in many urban centers and First Nations.
- Passionate about supporting transitions.

TCFN & SPSD

- Teacher
- FNIM Learning Leader
- Educational Consultant
- ITEP Field Experience Facilitator
- Collegiate Vice Principal
- Collegiate Principal
- Superintendent
- Doctoral Student

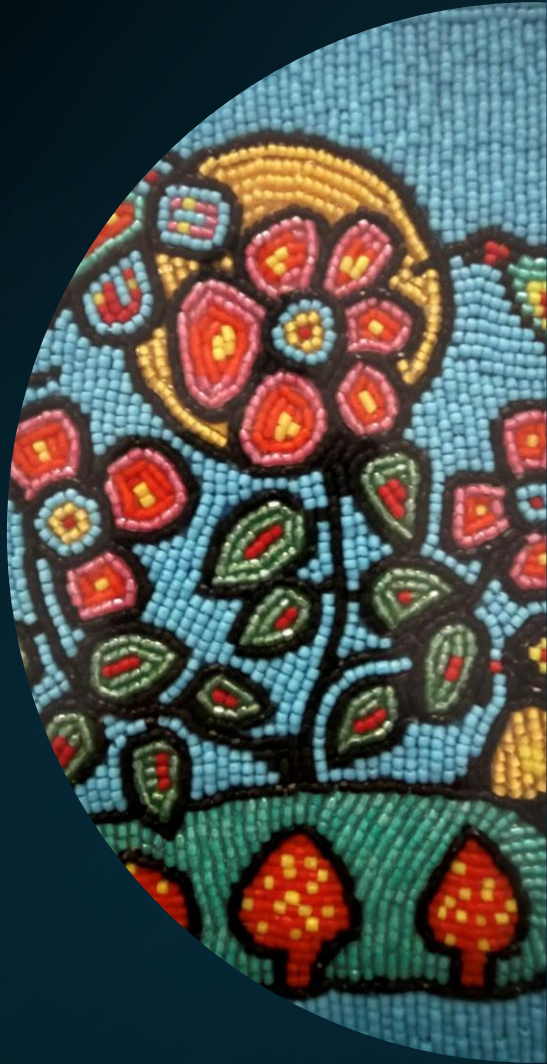


- Indigenous Leadership
- Leadership Identity and Values



Leaders have the capacity to create the conditions and the environment to create change and provide authentic and effective support.

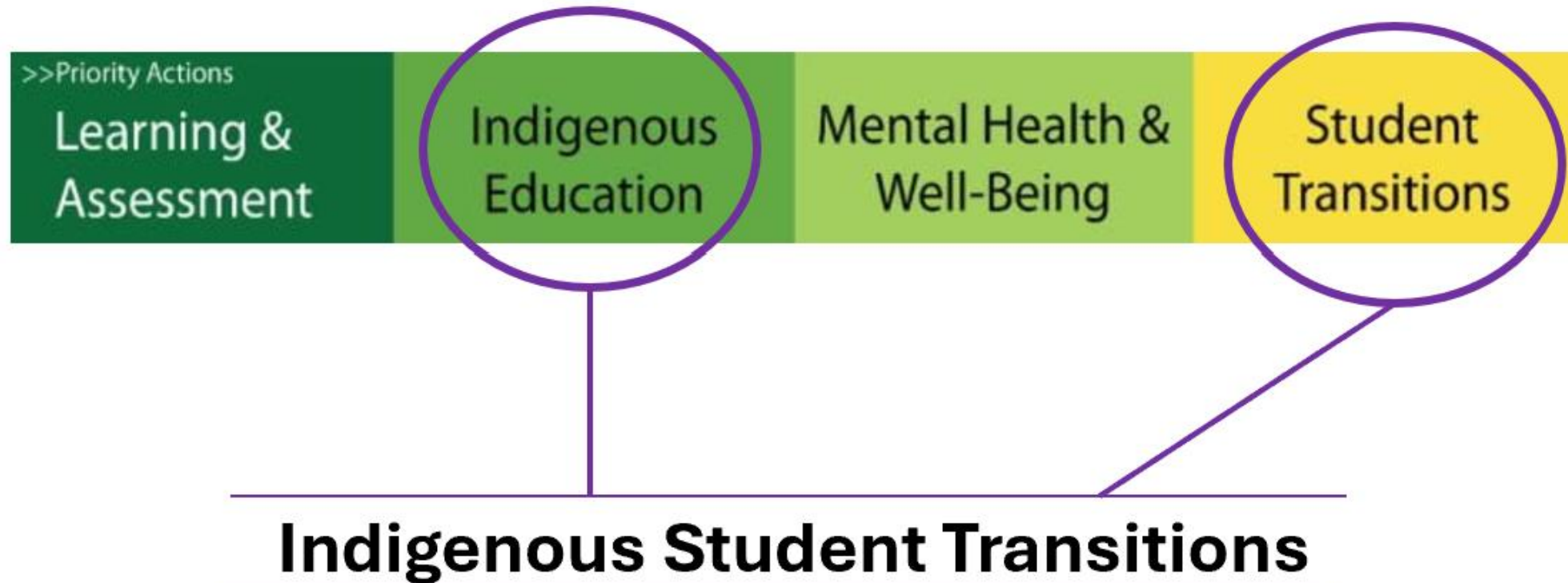




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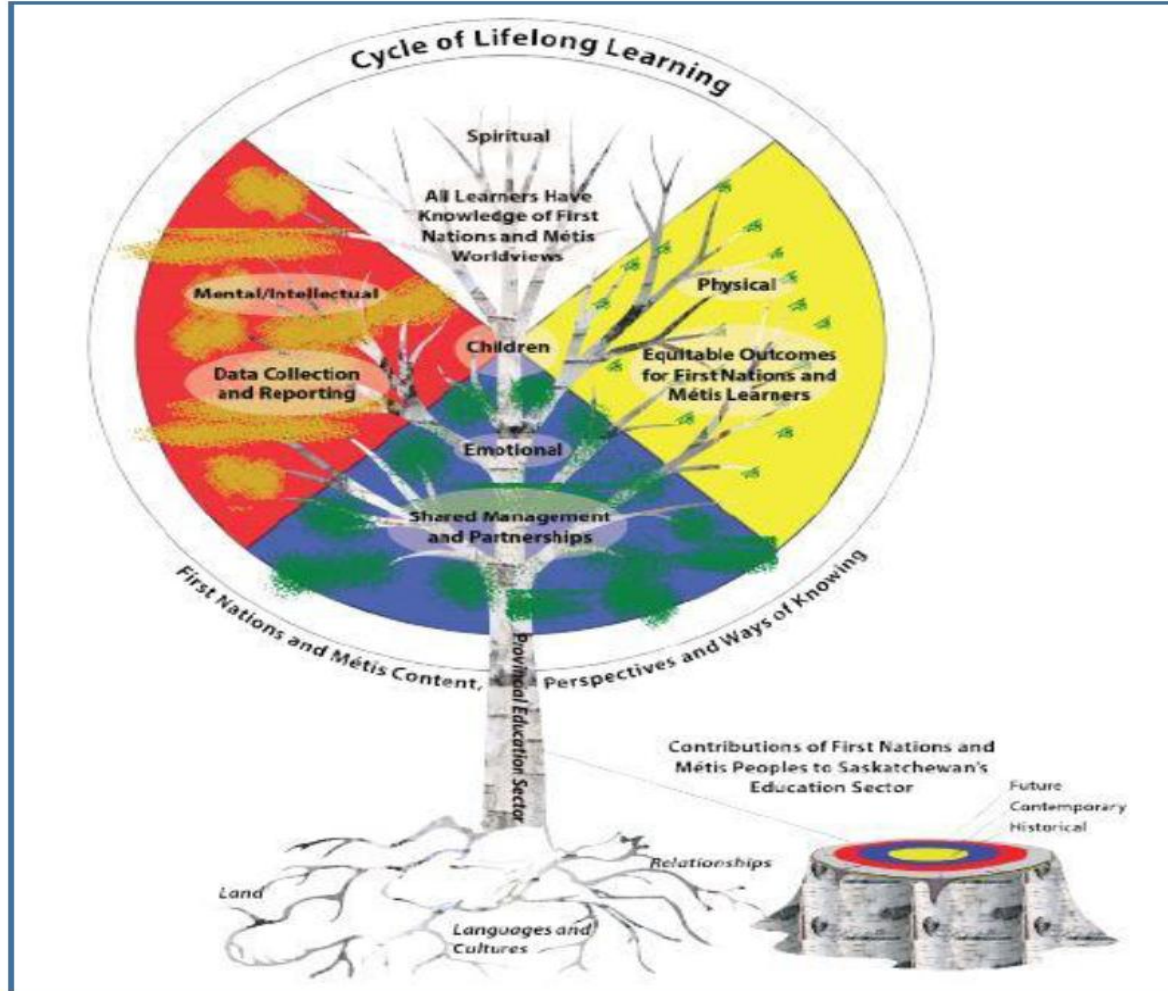
Priority Actions from the Provincial Education Plan



Student Transitions is a way to actualize the priority action of Indigenous Education

Indigenous Education: Actualize the goals of Inspiring Success: First Nations and Métis PreK-12 Education Policy Framework

THE WHITE BIRCH TREE



CRITICAL POLICY GOALS

All learners demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the worldviews and historical impact of First Nations and the Métis Nation

Equitable opportunities and outcomes for First Nations and Métis learners

Shared management of the provincial education system by ensuring respectful and equitable partnerships with First Nations and Métis peoples at the provincial and local level

Culturally appropriate and authentic assessment measures that foster improved educational opportunities and outcomes

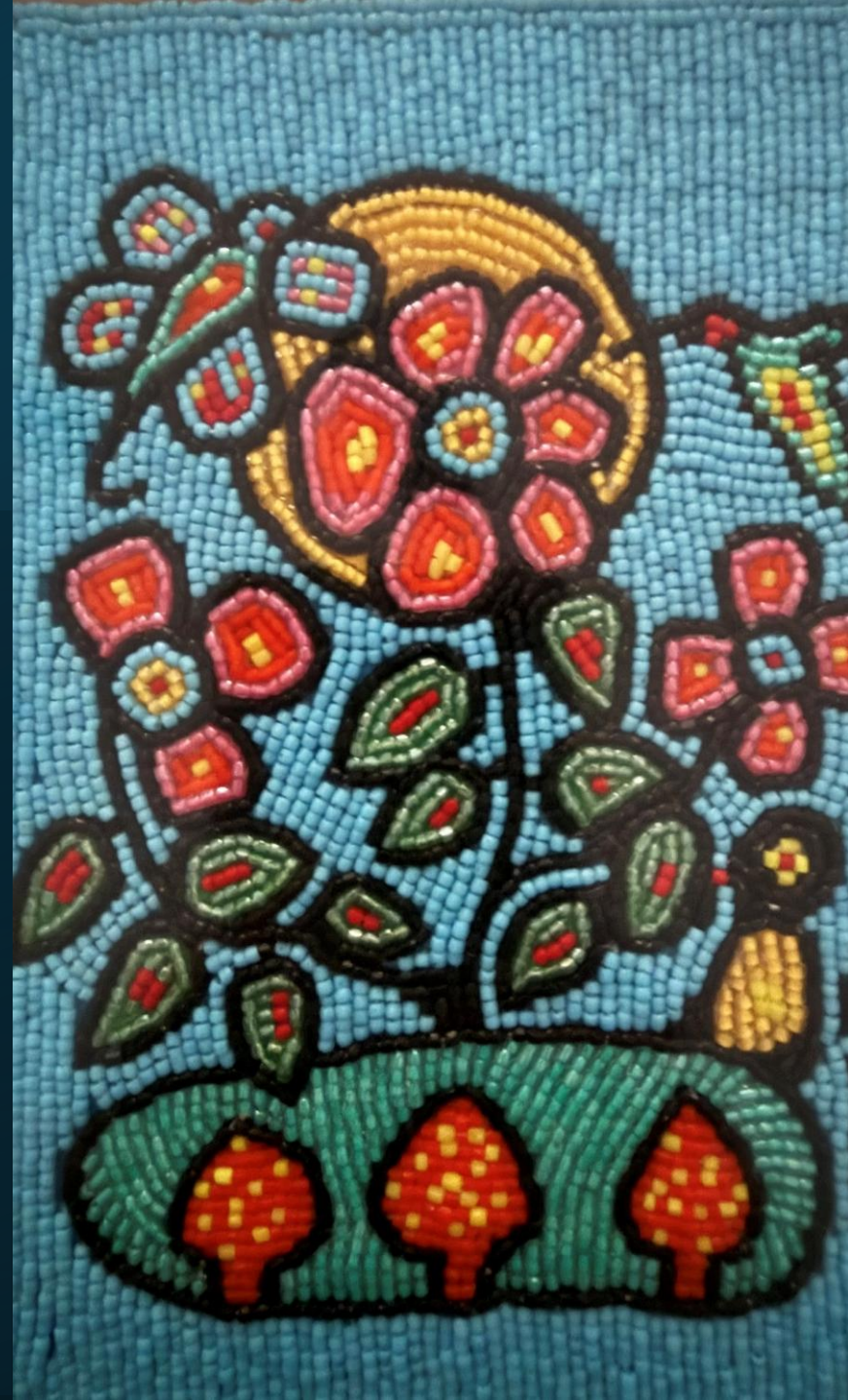
First Nations and Métis languages and cultures are valued and supported



Student Transitions

- Foster connections for learners and their families while supporting learners as they enter and progress through school to graduation and determine a life pathway.
- Engaging families and caregivers from school entry throughout a child's education will be an important focus of this action.
- Actions in this priority will support student attendance and engagement, particularly during key transition points.
- Through the work of this action, every student will have a plan for graduation that will prepare them for their career and life pathways.

How do Indigenous
students experience
Student Transitions?



Alignment of the Goals/Outcomes

Provincial Educational Plan

- *Supporting Indigenous Academic Outcomes*

Indigenous Learners experience Improved Outcomes.

Division/Education Authority Goals/Outcomes

- *Supporting Indigenous Academic Outcomes*

Strategic Plan

School-based Goals/Outcomes

- *Supporting Indigenous Academic Outcomes*

Focus on Equity through the Lens of Assessment

Teacher Professional Learning Goals

- *Supporting Indigenous Academic Outcomes*

Guiding Literature for My Leadership Practice

***Silencing
Aboriginal
Curricular Content
and Perspectives
Through
Multiculturalism:
'There Are Other
Children Here'***
St. Denis V (2011)

***From Colonialism
to Neocolonialism.***
Cottrell M. &
Orlowski, P. (2019).

***An Indigenous
Self-Declaration
Relational Policy
Framework***
Martell G. and
Mercereau N.
(2025)

Key School Transitions

Elementary to high school

Class-to-class transitions within the school day

Subject-to-subject transitions

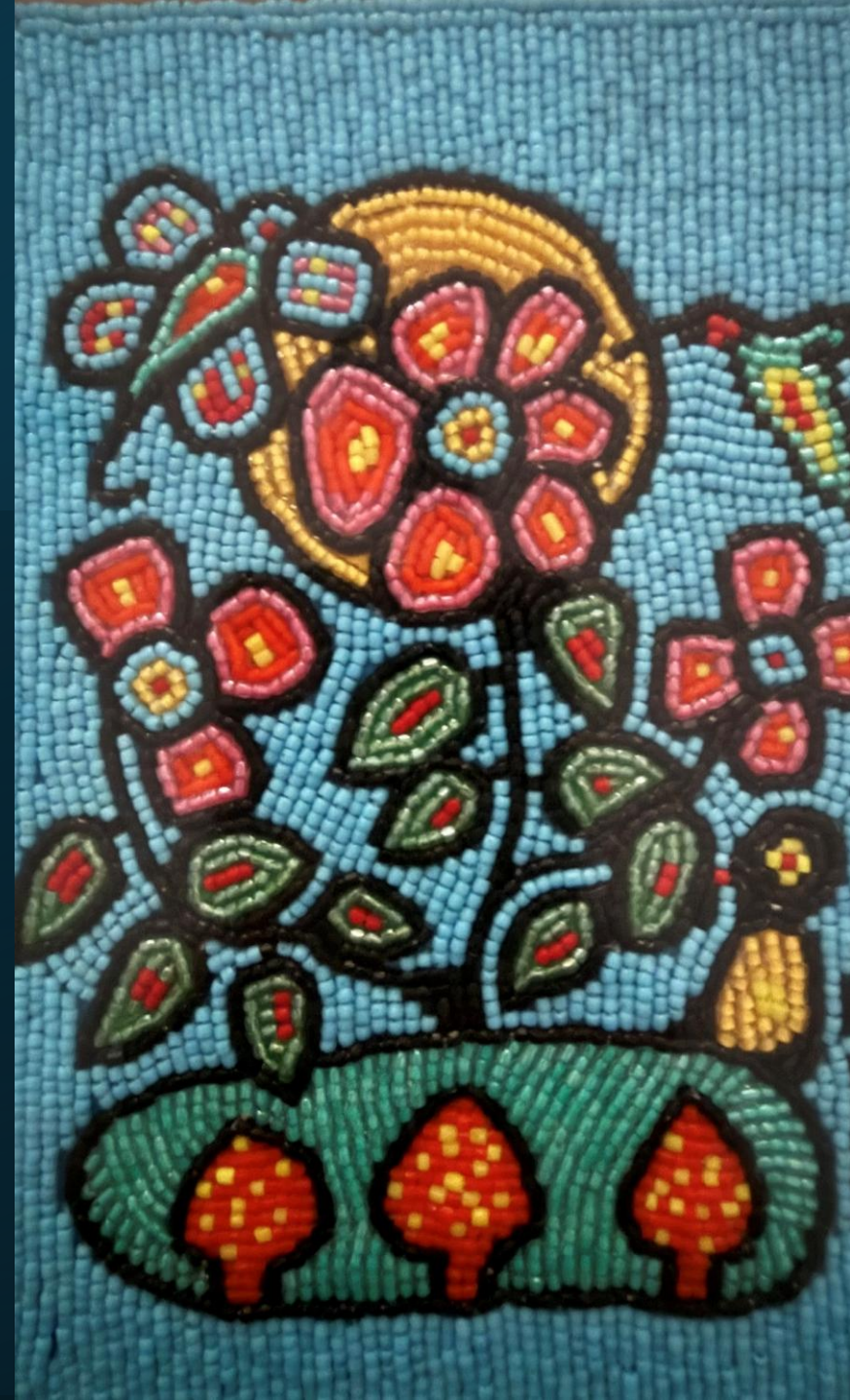
School-to-school transitions

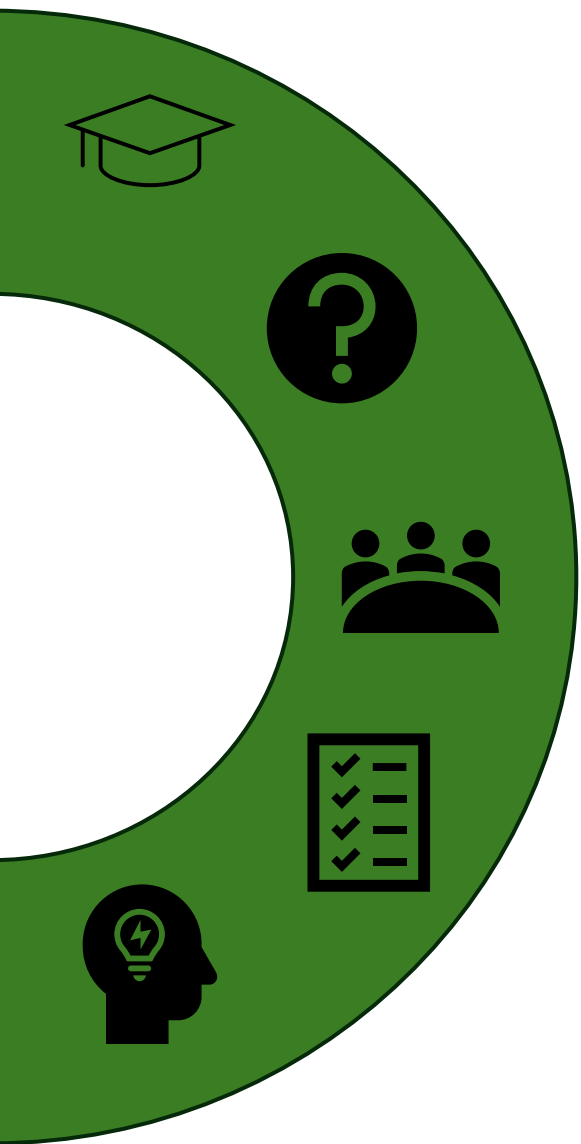
- Within a division
- From division to division
- From First Nation Community

High school to post-secondary education, trades, or the workforce

How do Indigenous
students experience
Student Transitions?

How do we plan to
support Indigenous
Students through key
transitions?





Leadership in Action

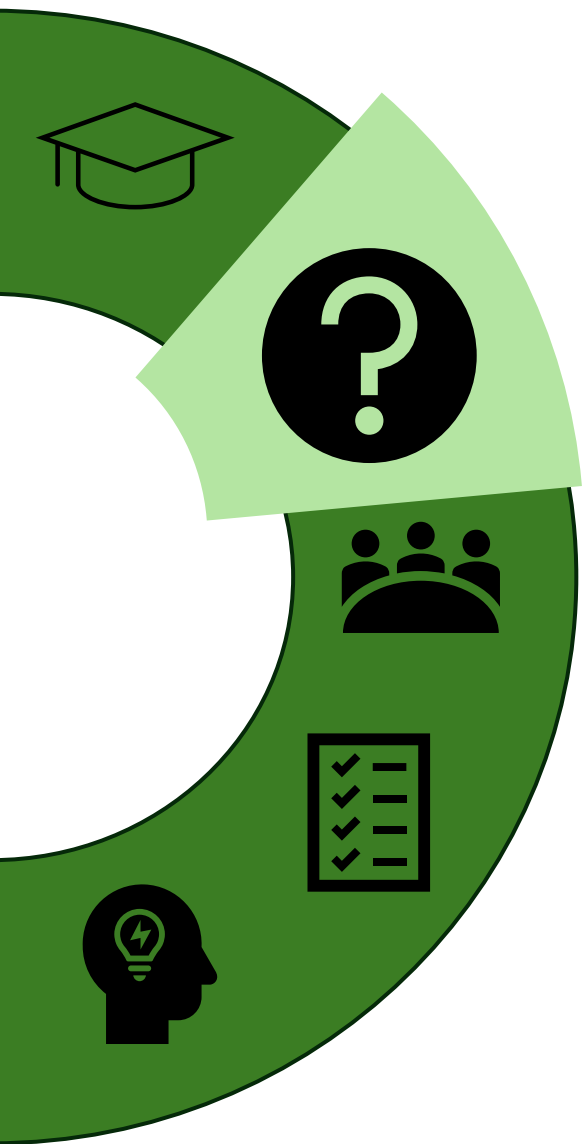
- Leaders create the conditions for success by providing direction, support, and accountability.



1

IDENTIFY OUTCOME(S)

- Identify the intended end result or impact you want to achieve.
- Create an initial action plan with roles, responsibilities, and next steps.



2

INFORMATION

- Explore the knowledge, information, and understanding needed to achieve the outcome.



3

TEAM

- Identify the individuals and partners whose involvement is essential to achieving the outcome.
- Finalize the plan together.



4

ACTIONS

- Identify the actions needed to achieve the outcome.
- Assign actions and responsibilities to the appropriate people.



5

LEADERSHIP

- Provide leadership to support implementation, accountability, and follow-through.

What did you think about that process?

Do you think it would be an effective process to support an Indigenous student transition?

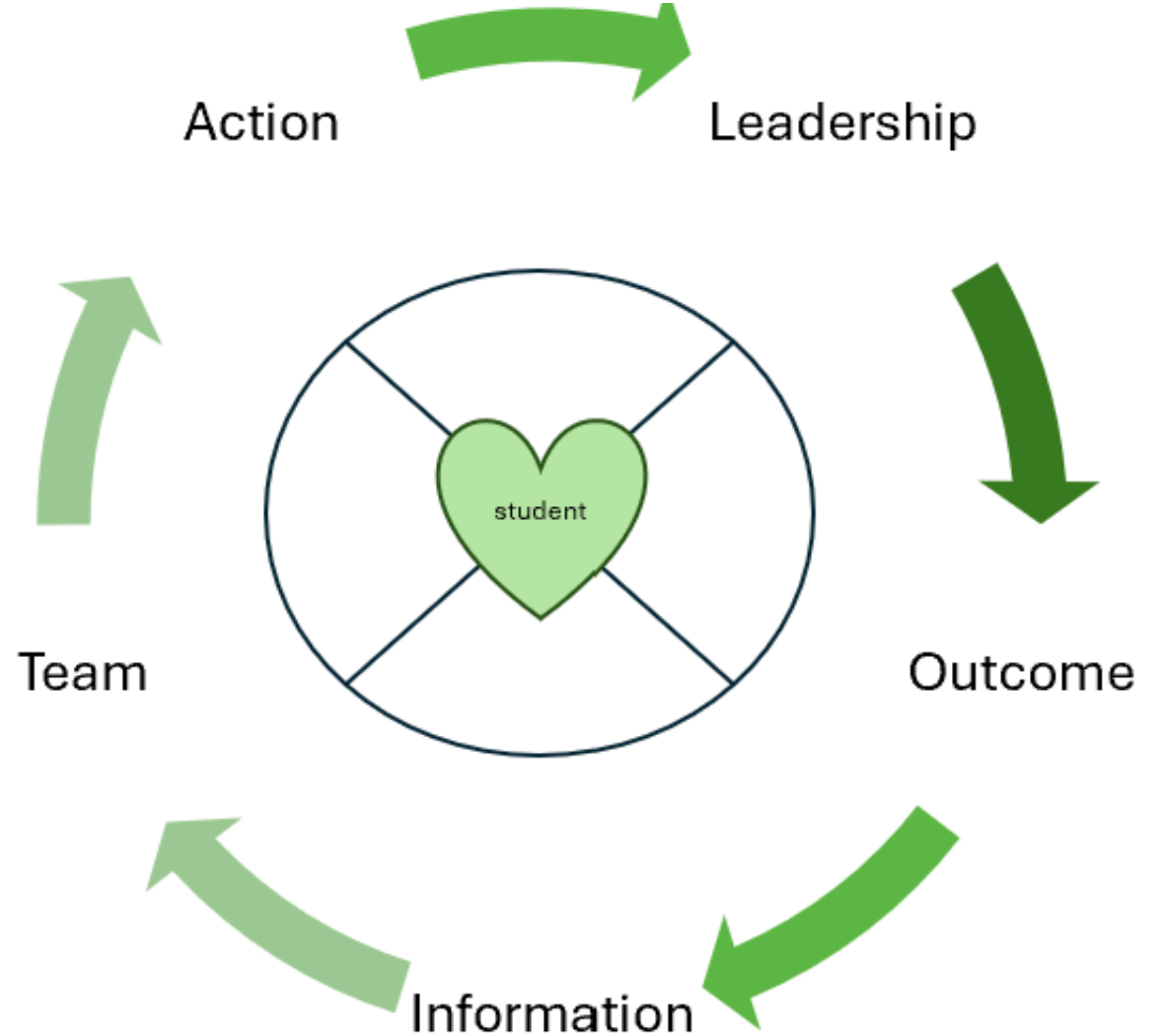
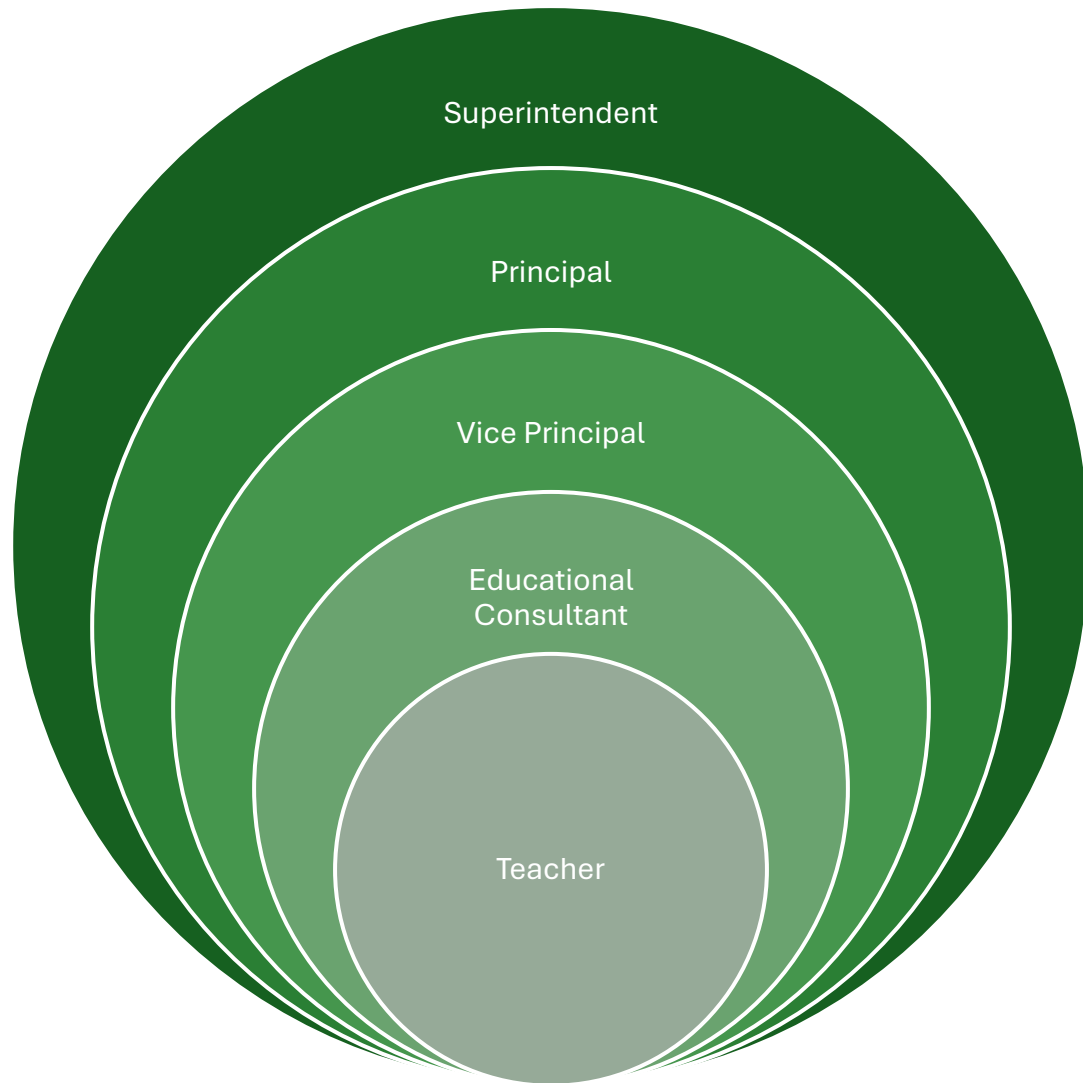


Leadership in Action

- Leaders create the conditions for success by providing direction, support, and accountability.
- What might an Indigenous lens bring to this process? How might it change it?



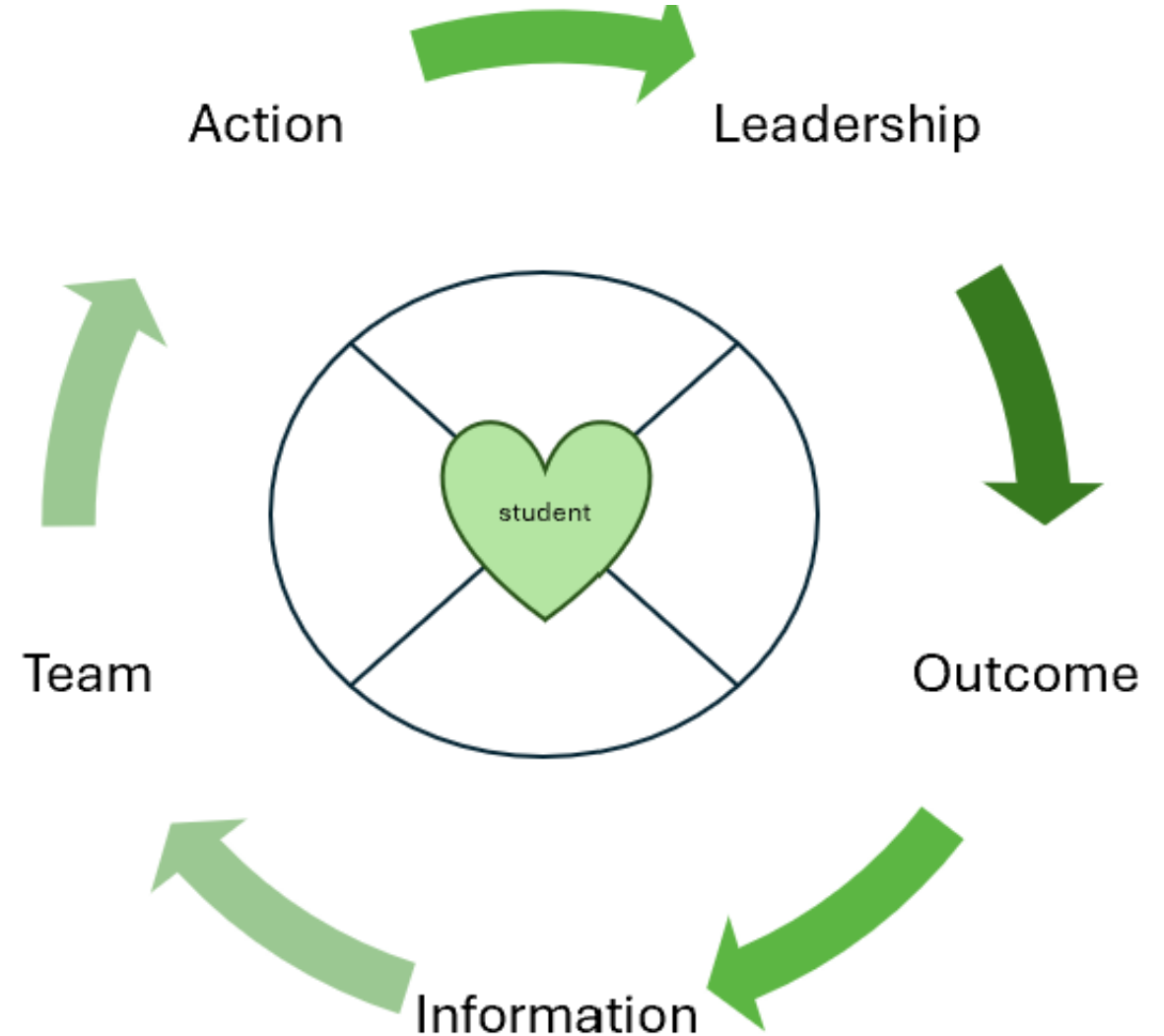
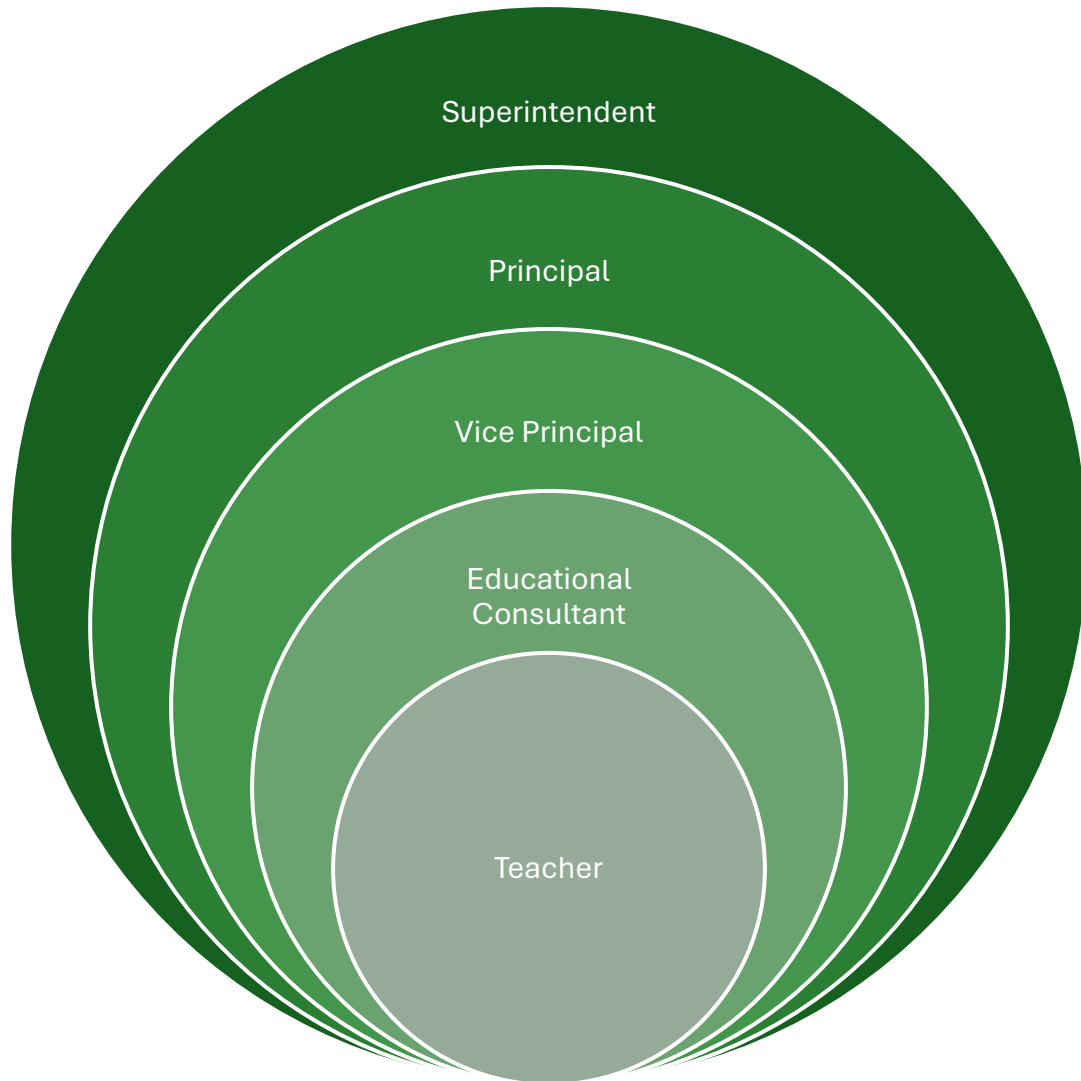
Career and Life Pathways after Graduation for Indigenous Students



Actions to Support Career and Life Pathways after Graduation for Indigenous Students

- Purposeful selection process starting in grade 10
- Indigenous Student Monitor Groups in Edsby
- Professional learning for guidance counselors on Indigenous student grade 12 transitions
- School board awards for grade 12 indigenous students
- grade 12 graduation transition lunches for planning postgraduation
- guest speakers to speak with grade 11 and 12 students
- removing barriers for costs to applying for school including ordering high school transcripts
- indigenous graduation recognition at all collegiates
- purposeful planning to indigenous grade 12 transition events hosted by post secondary institutions
- partnership developments to support transitions such as BIRM
- Indigenous student advocates with purposeful professional learning about transition planning by FNMI unit

School to School Transitions for Indigenous Students



Actions to Support School to School Transitions for Indigenous Students

- Building an intake process for all students with the centralized goal of gathering as much information to be able to provide the most effective programming for that student.
- using a team approach to support school transitions for indigenous students such as identifying the roles and responsibilities of different people in the school.
- ensuring transparency of process with parents and caregivers
- ensuring students parents and caregivers understand their rights within education
- ensuring our staff understands student rights and school responsibilities to ensure accountability and support through transitions
- ensuring our staff uses a relational approach in communicating with other schools other school divisions or other First Nation communities
- Ensuring there is a plan of follow up and support for new students in the school within the first few weeks and months.
- ensuring that we are reciprocating by being good partners through transition processes for students to move from our school to a new one, such as sharing information promptly phoning back if required.
- Supporting staff to deepen their understanding of the diverse experiences and realities of First Nations communities, both within and beyond our school division.
- Tracking transition data
- Following up with students who have exited our schools and have not registered at another school.



Reflections:

- In supporting indigenous student transition make your plans and actions focused on the needs of the indigenous students
- Consider planning and leading through an Indigenous lens when doing this work. An indigenous lens often means approach a situation the way that indigenous families and communities would want
- Lean on Indigenous supports to do this work as much as you need.
- What is good for Indigenous students strengthens learning for all students.
- School-based leaders have the capacity to make a significant difference in student transitions, particularly through effective processes, coordination, and follow-through within the school.
- Keep listening, learning, reflecting, and acting together.



Thank you!

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