

*Métis Curricular Challenges and
Possibilities: A Discussion Initiated by
First Nations, Métis, and Inuit
Education Policy in Ontario*

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Introduction

Indigenous peoples are largely absent from mainstream curricula or if Indigenous peoples are present, they are discussed in a historical context in Canada (Battiste, 2002; Newhouse, Voyageur, & Beavon, 2010) and internationally (Caracciolo, 2011; Harrison & Greenfield, 2011). Indigenous people are not generally portrayed as resilient, contemporary,

or knowledgeable members of society. More often than not, they are hidden in plain sight (Newhouse et al., 2010).

Métis scholars and their allies have identified that Métis remain marginalized in curriculum. If mentioned, Métis are often presented as a people in the past. Usually, the leader of the 1885 Northwest Resistance, Louis Riel, who is a revered figure and should be discussed, is the only Métis acknowledged. One man stands as the only representative of the entire and diverse Métis nation in official school curricula (Adams, 1989; Anuik & Kearns, 2012; Dorion & Préfontaine, 1999; Miller, 2004; Sealey & Lussier, 1975).

The 2007 *Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (hereafter known as the *Framework*) asks school boards to “provide a curriculum that facilitates learning about contemporary and traditional First Nation, Métis, and Inuit cultures, histories, and perspectives among all students, and that also contributes to the education of school board staff ... [and] teachers” (p. 7). It is a conduit to push First Nation, Métis, and Inuit initiatives beyond the exceptional program or course found in a few Ontario schools. However, in our recent *Report on Métis education in Ontario’s K-12 schools* (2012) for the Métis Nation of Ontario’s (MNO) Education and Training Branch, we found only a small portion of school boards were engaged actively in bringing the above mandate to life. Our study and the research literature show the challenges as being largely a lack of awareness of Métis history and no real engagement with contemporary Métis people or culture.

Métis Curricular Context

Educators have been immersed in a dominant Eurocentric educational system and absorbed, consciously or not, a curriculum that values Western ideology. This knowledge/power system has acted as a form of cognitive imperialism (Battiste, 2000, 2008) that has profoundly misrepresented Indigenous people in a curriculum that reinforces and perpetuates racism and ethnocentrism (Caracciolo, 2008; Donald, 2009). If educators encounter Aboriginal content in their own schooling experiences, there is “at best, a neutral understanding and, at worst, a disturbing legacy” (Cherubini & Hodson, 2011, p. 190) conveyed to students.

Lack of awareness about Indigenous people is systemic educationally. One of the largest obstacles to overcome is the colonial myth of the empty land that dehumanizes Indigenous people (Caracciolo, 2008; Donald, 2009). Colonialism takes many different shapes and forms “but everywhere it locked the original inhabitants and the newcomers into the most complex and traumatic relationships in human history,” as colonialism is “the conquest and control of other people’s land and goods” (Loomba, 2008, p. 8). Colonialism is a dynamic relationship between people whose effects continue to be felt by all; whether or not one is privileged by those historical relations or devalued by them. It is this relationality that needs to be remembered (Donald, 2009; Haig-Brown, 2008).

The Métis are part of the legacy of relationality. However, until recently, most of the written history of Canada neglected Métis (Anuik,

2009; Anuik & Kearns, 2012; Kathy Hodgson-Smith Infinity Research Inc., 2005). In 1975, Sealey and Lussier said that students of Métis history see the Métis and Louis Riel in 1885 and then witness their subsequent demise in the pages of Canadian history. In addition, in 1999, Métis scholars Dorion and Préfontaine argued:

the great man of history theory still applies to Métis history and Métis studies. For instance, popular historians continue to work on projects that concentrate exclusively on Louis Riel rather than having a more thorough treatment of the Prairie Métis people's historic grievances.

(p. 4)

As to Métis, some may have learned about Louis Riel and possibly, the 1885 Northwest Resistance (Anuik, 2009; Miller, 2004); however, there is a lack of awareness around the diversity of Métis. When it comes to acknowledgment of the legacy of colonial relationships and consideration of teaching on Indigenous peoples, Ng-A-Fook (2011) recalls that it was not until he was a graduate student and “asked to decolonize narratives of my settler relationship to the land … and … the original people who live on it” that he began to question “the ways in which such educational assimilation works as a process … for forgetting our inheritance of a colonial past” (p. 322). As a result of this recognition, Ng-A-Fook sees the possibility of “begin[ning] to advocate for a curriculum that asks teachers and students to remember colonialism’s narratives of forgetting” (p. 322). We might now ask how we might interrupt colonialism’s dominant

narratives to see the relationality between and among newcomers and Aboriginal people, between all Canadians.

Overall, to counter the myth of the unsettled land, of Indigenous people existing only in the past is challenging. Leblanc (2012), for example, in her research with the First Nations School in Toronto, found that educators felt very real challenges in moving beyond “teaching the war of 1812” to grade 7 and 8 students in Ontario beyond a “colonial perspective,” even though the teacher tried to incorporate Indigenous perspectives, as the “teacher has to scavenge for most of the resources” (p. 57). And, although there is a teacher toolkit “for Aboriginal inclusion in curricula, the only strategy it offers for grade seven and eight history students has to do with Aboriginal people in relation to the fur trade and the Red River Rebellion” (Leblanc, 2012, p. 58). Leblanc (2012) concludes that although a more nuanced exploration of the role of Aboriginal people in these past events is encouraged, the resources fall short of that, which contributes further to the lack of engagement by Aboriginal youth in education. Certainly, the endeavour to appreciate contemporary Indigenous peoples, knowledges and perspectives is necessary. Some of the participants in our study have begun to take up the *Framework* in practice and work with and alongside Indigenous people. Here, we share what some First Nation and Métis educators and allies would like to see challenged and where opportunities are evolving or need to evolve in Métis education.

The Study

Our study was informed by educators involved in First Nation, Métis, and Inuit educational initiatives. They are also responsible for implementation of the *Framework*. They responded to our survey; participated in interviews with us; and shared published and unpublished school board documents.

The Survey

To understand the impacts of Indigenous education policy on Métis learners' and provide a clearer picture of challenges, opportunities, and promising practices, our research drew from the voices of educators, including superintendent, (vice) principal, teachers and staff, policymakers as well as scholars. We asked, through an online survey of superintendents of Aboriginal education and/or Aboriginal education officers/coordinators/leads in all school boards in Ontario, Catholic and public, Anglophone and Francophone, for promising practices in Métis education and for insights on the progress to implementation of the *Framework* (2007). Electronic surveys were sent to all school boards in Ontario, Anglophone (n=64), Anglo-Catholic (n=29) and Anglo-public (n=35), and Francophone (n=12), and Franco-Catholic (n=8) and Franco-public (n=4). The survey asked a number of open and closed questions that gave us both quantitative and qualitative data to draw upon for our research report.¹ We asked the above representatives to focus on the initiatives specific to Métis students. The survey explored the curricular areas where Métis history, culture, and perspectives are infused, such as

the Native Studies course offered at the secondary level, and additional areas that foster awareness of Métis knowledge and history for all learners, teachers, and staff. Overall, 33 completed surveys were returned for a response rate of 43%.

From the survey, we learned that some school boards have either hired or moved staff into dedicated roles to enhance and revise curriculum and include perspectives and histories. The final two questions from the survey and the ones on which we expanded in the site visits and oral interviews concerned resources and promising practices and challenges and barriers. In this paper, we expand on the relevance of the survey responses and site visits for Canadian curriculum.

Site Visits

We followed up the surveys with site visits to observe Aboriginal-focused initiatives and conduct in-depth interviews with key educational stakeholders involved in Indigenous education in select school boards. We visited two sites and conducted five semi-structured interviews with staff responsible for the *Framework's* implementation in five school boards. Semi-structured interviews guided by qualitative research methodology (conversations shaped around a set of questions), set in an appreciative inquiry format (Pinto & Curran, 1998), captured educators' comments, observations, reflections, and ideas concerning Métis education in Ontario. Too often, qualitative research subsumes Métis under a broad Aboriginal category or attaches artificially Métis to First Nations people with the implication that their histories, knowledges, languages, and

experiences are similar (Anuik & Kearns, 2012). Therefore, the interviews served not only as an opportunity to understand barriers, challenges, and opportunities in relation to Métis but also as a chance to understand the knowledge that staff had of Métis at the time of our visit.

In the spirit of building relations, we draw on the work of Harrison and Greenfield (2011), who seek not to “evaluate” educators’ competencies with regard to their abilities to teach Aboriginal education, knowledge, and perspectives but want instead for “teachers to tell … about their practices” and share “ideas and activities they could use in their classrooms” (p. 68). In this way, we wish also to understand educators’ engagement with Aboriginal focused curricula. In particular, we want to share ideas about Métis focused curricula.

Challenges and Possibilities: Métis Curriculum

Métis Curriculum: Overview of the Findings

There are several trends apparent in the findings on available Métis curriculum from the survey and site visits. In this short section, we distill these lessons. In the discussion section, the stories from the participants give voice to these understandings. Respondents to the survey and participants in interviews identified adaptations to support learning occurring on school grounds. Examples given included the display of Métis signs and symbols, such as the Métis sash and flag and the presence of Métis people in schools who share their knowledge, teachings, and perspectives. Resources have been developed such as the Toronto District School Board’s Do’s and Don’ts in Aboriginal Education guide, exemplar

lessons, unit plans, projects, and professional development ideas. Books such as David Bouchard's *The Seven Sacred Teachings* and Jan Beaver's *The 10 Most Significant Crossroads in Aboriginal History* are also being used in classrooms. Finally, schools have taken field trips to Métis places to learn about people, culture, and history.

We have also learned of staff working to raise critical awareness as a means to decolonize education. These teachers consider how Métis history is being presented, for example, the story of Louis Riel, and incorporate anti-racist education across the curriculum (see Hutchinson, 2007; Kanu, 2011; Schick & St. Denis, 2005a, 2005b; St. Denis, 2007, 2010; St. Denis & Schick, 2003). Their practice includes strategies to detect bias, to question the silence surrounding Métis identities, and to consider whether multiple representations of a variety of Métis people can be shown and discussed and whether Métis people are portrayed as a contemporary living people or as historical figures. In their schools, opportunities to hear, learn, and interact with Métis people exist. They pay attention to history and the legacy of colonialism, considering whose perspectives are included and excluded from historical events. Finally, some staff consult with Métis organizations for further direction and guidance.

Métis Curriculum: Discussion

*Interweaving our learning, synthesis,
and understanding of the findings*

In our written surveys to school boards, we asked respondents if "there are any ... Aboriginal courses being offered" in the school board "that

would include Métis content?" The large majority replied, "no." Two Métis educators filled out the survey on behalf on their school boards. In response to the above question, which was "no," the Métis representative, an Aboriginal education coordinator for a southern Catholic School board, said that her school board was in the initial phase of applying for grant funding for workshops and creating lists of "Métis, First Nation and Inuit books and novels for schools" to purchase. The board had met with "FNMI² families to discover what they would like included in the schools." The second self-identified Métis survey respondent, the Aboriginal education lead/ESL coordinator (AEL/ESLC) in a southern public school board, answered the same question:

The grade 6-8 curriculum calls for information about Métis participation in the development of the Canadian federation and the foundations of our culture/society. Further, Métis-Canadian history should be addressed in Canada and World Studies at the grade 10 level. Currently, resources for this often do not relate to Ontario Métis and teachers struggle to find up to date resources to help connect Aboriginal Canada's story to course materials.

This teacher finds that Métis are often not discussed and observes a lack of Métis focused curricular resources in the mainstream educational system.

As to Métis, the AEL/ESLC goes on to criticize the Louis Riel myopia (see also Dorion & Préfontaine, 1999; Miller, 2004; Sealey & Lussier, 1975). She observes little change in "teaching of the story of ... Riel ... since the

1960s." Riel emerges in a vacuum when students see "his conviction and execution," and teachers ask for "persuasive essays arguing for or against him as a traitor to Canada." The evidence to use comes in the form of "possible reasons why Riel may or may not be a villain." Students are "then asked to take a side and argue it: the message inferred being that there is no right or wrong way to view this topic" (AEL/ESLC). The survey respondent wrote:

The presentation of Riel as a topic for debate [oral or written] does little to educate students about the contributions of the Métis of the West to the development of Canada as a whole or the advancements of democratic rights for all Canadians that came about as a result of the sacrifices of the Western Métis. I believe it helps perpetuate ... anti-Western, anti-French attitudes still prevalent in Ontario and fosters a sense of indifference towards multiculturalism and Aboriginal peoples in general.

Despite the growth in available curriculum on Métis (Eigenbrod, Kakegamic, & Fiddler, 2003; Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2013; Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research, n.d.; MacLean & Wason-Ellam, 2006; Meyer, 2013; Resources for Rethinking, 2013) and Louis Riel, very little of it is taken up at school. "Educators['] ... perspectives on Riel are largely influenced by what they learned in school themselves AND what is found in textbooks and resources for teaching intermediate history" (AEL/ESLC, emphasis in original). The problem is not acute to this Aboriginal education leader's school board. "This is a

province-wide issue that no single school board can resolve effectively by itself. To solve the problem we need access to both professional development that will enlighten and enrich teachers knowledge of the Métis and better resources” to bring contemporary and “historical perspectives on Riel to classrooms” (AEL/ESLC).

This AEL/ESLC recommends that a deliberate attempt to find “up to date information on the Métis heritage of Canada and its role in giving us a unique and successful place on the world stage” be made. Riel is certainly a key figure in Métis history, and ought to be studied. However, Riel is often used for controversy in classes, if he is studied at all, and there is little evidence of the study of Riel and/or Métis from an Indigenous perspective in schools.

This Métis educator is asking educators to consider more deeply whether Riel should be viewed as an either/or proposition and whether this is appropriate. The AEL/ESLC’s story demonstrates not only gaps in Métis curricular resources but identifies problems with teachers’ practices. It seems as though teachers work in isolation with a set of factual data in a discrete unit of study. The content stops at 1885, the year of the Northwest Resistance.

The erasures of Métis are systemic, historically. By 1906, they lose the opportunity to name themselves in one of the most important Dominion government records: the Census. In that year, the category for mixed/Métis ancestry did not appear on the forms of the special western Canada Census (Waiser, 2005). The omission, at a time when European, Canadian, and American settlers moved throughout Canada, and to

western Canada, leads students and educators to believe that Métis retreated “into the bush” and succumbed eventually to newcomer settlement (Giraud, 1986; Stanley, 1992) or were absorbed into the agricultural economy of the Prairie Provinces (St-Onge, 2004) and central and Eastern provinces (Kearns, personal communication with Elders; Kearns, 2013). The focus on Riel and the 1885 Northwest Resistance in class implies that he is often seen as a figure that impedes the grand narrative of the expansion of English-Canadian Confederation and “nation building” (Stanley, 2006, p. 34).

Teachers use a debate format to pose a hypothetical question: “is Louis Riel a Father of Confederation, a traitor to Canada, a hero, a villain, mad, a visionary, and so on.” The classroom becomes a place to run a safe experiment, where students consider Riel in relation to the dominant narrative’s signposts. If students vindicate him or uphold his conviction for treason, there is no consequence. However, Riel becomes the only Métis they know—they do not understand Métis as Aboriginal people. The use of an adversarial format—whether a debate or persuasive paper—framed in a “yes/no” scenario assumes that all learners operate from this value base (Monture-Angus, 1995). There is no consensus, only conflict. At the same time, though, the format disarms any possible conflict because the belief is that “there is no right or wrong way to view this topic” (AEL/ESLC). Therefore, ignorance of Riel and his relation to Métis is stabilized, particularly, for those students who judge him guilty of treason. Students cannot ever view the topic in a wrong way.

The lack of viewing Canadian history from Aboriginal perspectives is an educational and public problem. Newhouse et al. (2010) point out, in the context of a Member of Parliament's private member's bill to overturn Riel's conviction, and subsequent criticism by a University of Toronto professor, who felt it was unimaginable to "honour" Riel in any way. They continue:

while a debate about Louis Riel can be highly emotional, what is important to note is the unwillingness of many to accept alternative theses and interpretations of history. The official history is indeed hard to challenge. The story of Canada is incomplete, perhaps immorally so, unless we also include the history of Aboriginal contributions.

(Newhouse et al., 2010, p. 12)

Educators, or the larger public, who frame the Riel story as a detached debate or simple exercise in class do not fully appreciate Métis as people with their own perspectives on history. How might educators and other educational stakeholders respond to the Métis in a more respectful and relational way?

The Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007), generated through a national discussion facilitated by the Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre (AbLKC), in concert with the Métis National Council and the MNO, outlines

the relationships of learning within a cultural and ecological context, using the cyclical and natural processes of growth of a tree to illustrate the complex living entities—

requiring certain conditions and nutrients for optimal growth and thus ultimate well-being of Métis peoples. The regenerative natural cycle of the tree is compared with the cycles of Métis learning comparing the health of the root system with the forest of Métis learners. Viewing the learning processes in this way focuses on the interconnectedness of all relationships, thereby sustaining and maintaining balance and harmony. (AbLKC, 2009, p. 20)

If Riel's plight in 1885 was framed through the lens of the above learning model, then instruction starts at Riel in relation with Métis families, communities, and places, as well as in relation to other Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Learners would account not only for the Dominion government's perspective of national security and safety but consider also Métis citizenship and nationalism. They would assess Riel as a man aware of his purpose, the "sacred act of living a good life" (*Métis Holistic Lifelong Learning Model*) and reflect on "the contributions of" Riel and "the Métis of the West." They would consider also understandings of citizenship and place held by Riel and the Métis (AEL/ESLC).

Beaver (2008) sets up a creative controversy in the figure of Riel. The title "Louis Riel madman or hero" seems able to command students' attention. However, she contextualizes this alongside Chiefs Big Bear's and Poundmaker's separate efforts against the Canadian state and photos of Riel's trial. She discusses the impact that his execution had on those surrounding Riel and how the French responded to Riel. Looking at

multiple players and dynamics when viewing historical figures and moments, by including First Nations and the French, both Beaver and the AEL/ESLC profiled above are signaling a move away from a colonial frame to one that challenges colonial power. In addition, the AEL/ESLC calls for diverse stories of Métis.

Educators and Contemporary Curriculum

In our research for the MNO, we found that one of the barriers named by school boards in their efforts or failures to implement the *Framework* was either access to resources or regular access to Métis educators. Harrison and Greenfield (2011) find also in their work, in assisting enhance curriculum with Indigenous knowledge, that educators sought assistance as to how to reach out to Indigenous community members before engaging with curricula. Indigenous educators, including councils, community members, Elders, Old Ones, and knowledge holders, offer more than just facts; they ground knowledge in place and act as role models (Anuik & Kearns, 2012; Harrison & Greenfield, 2011).

Curricular Possibilities

In an interview, one superintendent in a northwest Ontario public school board showed his commitment to providing more Métis focused texts in schools. He said:

we bought the book *Seven Sacred Teachings* for every kid in
our board because it is part of our character education. The
issue with it, though, is if teachers do not have a little bit of

knowledge on the Seven Teachings, it sits on the shelf, or they look at the pictures and play the DVD [accompanying the book] once in a while.

This observation showed the promise as well as the limitation of the *Framework* objectives to “provide a curriculum that facilitates learning about contemporary and traditional First Nation, Métis, and Inuit cultures, histories, and perspectives among all students, and … contribute … to the education of school board staff … [and] teachers” (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 7). If resources exist, educators need the opportunity for professional development to engage curricula.

The challenge above is also one of confidence. Non-Aboriginal teachers defer to their Aboriginal colleagues to instruct, whenever possible, and when such people are allegedly not available, then their practice reverts back to the “teacher as expert” model (Donald, 2009), in this case, a passive engagement with the text. For this superintendent, “it cannot only be Indigenous people teaching Indigenous content. It has to be all teachers feeling confident to teach it.”

Even though participants in our study suggest a shortage of Métis curricular and human resources, there is an expectation from this northwest Ontario public school board superintendent for educators to “push … hard on the local curriculum,” understanding the importance of “learn[ing] the history of the Métis in Ontario.” Métis curriculum is part of this journey, but there is a need to build confidence in teachers. For this superintendent in Ontario, to improve teacher confidence while

generating curriculum and helping teachers to transform their practices and feel comfortable with the perspectives and content, he shared that he:

put a teacher group together—they are developing lesson plans to share with all of the teachers so that [they] ... may adapt the lesson plans with their own classes or use the lesson plans identically to the ones developed in the working group.

In addition to the commitment of this school board to more local curriculum with “Métis themes” in Native Studies, and “Aboriginal local histories and local ideas” that are part of “the curriculum” in “school,” teachers become confident under his guidance with the content to be covered in class. The sharing of First, Nation, Métis, and Inuit knowledge “has to be in every classroom” and for every student and may happen when teachers feel confident to engage the resources in class in a respectful context. As an administrator, he shows through his facilitation that Métis curriculum is Canadian curriculum for all Canadian educational spaces.

We argue that the promise of new initiatives tethered to the curriculum mandate in the *Framework* lies in the opportunities to bring teachers into relation with Métis curriculum and perspectives. The way forward is for teachers to become confident through collegial engagement with curriculum and local educators and in development of their own resources and lesson plans. Our participants identify not only the challenges but define what resources and support look like in effective First Nation, Métis, and Inuit educational spaces.

Nourishing Métis People and Curriculum

Although Métis curriculum remains a systemic challenge, there are a number of promising practices that have emerged. The Seven Sacred Teachings (2009), by David Bouchard, is one of many stories that may be used to enrich the curriculum with Métis images that honour the past and also show connections to the present and future. There are also some successful collaborations among Métis councils, school boards, and traditional knowledge holders and revered Métis people who animate, perform, and reflect contemporary Métis. For instance, the Durham District School Board created welcome wheels in visible entry points to schools and raised the Métis flag on Riel day. At least five school board survey respondents said there were displays of the Métis sash in schools. These symbolic representations and public celebrations help school spaces be more welcoming to Indigenous people, as traditionally, they have not (Harrison & Greenfield, 2011).

Relationships are beginning to be built in some educational spaces. For example, Métis Marcel Labelle constructed a birch bark Métis voyageur canoe for the Oshawa and Durham Region Métis Council and with support from the Durham District School Board, built the canoe in a school space and mentored youth. He spoke with a number of Francophone and Anglophone school age students about this work. Labelle is now working on similar projects with other school boards, constructing smaller canoes. These projects are contingent on the efforts of several key people, sometimes volunteers, to apply for grants, garner support, coordinate the implementation of projects, and oversee

completion of the project (the benefit is great, but the project is short term and contingent upon funding).

As contingent as these strategies are, they are useful to build capacity. Some school boards are working with teachers and helping them to infuse their curriculum through professional development opportunities. As one Catholic school board superintendent writes: “we have four projects currently being funded by the Ministry.” Of the four projects, one seeks to develop the school boards’ “website” and manage their “data collection.” The second explores “high school leadership initiatives.” The third seeks to promote more “awareness and knowledge to our classroom teachers” by specifically working with “grade 3, 6 and 7 elementary teachers.” Lastly, the board said it also is working “with high school teachers who teach subjects that contain Aboriginal expectations (history, religion, law, etc.).”

Other school boards added very interesting anecdotal evidence that Métis stories and perspectives were being incorporated at different grade levels. For example, the AEL/ESLC referred to above writes that:

teachers from grade k-8 have had the opportunity to participate in symposiums featuring Métis teachers/speakers: this year our symposium focused on 7th Generation Stewardship and our keynote speaker was our Métis Elder; this helped teachers to form new understandings of Métis perspectives on our environment/spirituality and make plans to take this learning to their students ... through our character

education work, we provided schools with the Métis picture book *The Giving Tree [A retelling of a traditional Métis story]* (2009) as a mentor text for teachers to share teachings on responsibility in the month of January.

Engaging with appropriate texts and learning with and alongside Métis people is important in bringing Métis curricula to life. Through sharing Métis stories, all students can begin to have more awareness and understanding of the Métis. Elders and other Métis people can help animate knowledge, culture, history and stories, as well as show the Métis as contemporary people. In sharing these efforts, the onus falls upon the listener to begin or continue building a nuanced Métis curriculum.

Conclusion

Overall, there is still a lack of awareness in most schools and school boards of Métis history and culture. As for curricular resources, there is still much to be developed to broaden the appreciation, awareness, and understanding of the historical Métis, to expand the story of Riel, as well as explore contemporary Métis and the Métis Nation in the federation of Canada. Therefore, we recognize that there is still much to be storied, shared, and learned about historical and contemporary Métis. We believe, though, that some efforts are at least beginning to redress the curricular absence of Métis. We suggest that in addition to welcoming Métis Senators, Elders, knowledge holders, and community members into classrooms and schools to help form relationships and animate Métis knowledge and heritage in curricula, teachers must also support all

students to become resilient citizens with an informed awareness of the Métis Nation and the history. To do this obligates them to search for and develop Métis curriculum for all learners—Métis and non-Métis—that depicts Métis history accurately, shares an understanding of the history of colonization, as well as contemporary challenges, and pays critical attention to the evolving definitions of Métis identities that are cultural, legal, local, and national. The educational system must provide opportunities and create a space for Métis students, families, and communities to share and celebrate their history, culture, perspectives, and knowledge with schools. It is our hope that curriculum and teachers' practices will begin to reflect a relational position with Métis parents, families, and communities and thus serve to nurture a Métis spirit at school.

Endnotes

¹ For a copy of the survey sent to English and French school boards as well as further findings and recommendations, please see the *Report on Métis education in Ontario's K-12 schools* (Anuik & Bellehumeur-Kearns 2012):

[http://www.metisnation.org/media/246898/aniuk%20kearns%20m%C3%A9tis%20education%20in%20ontario%20report%20final%20draft%202012%20\[3\].pdf](http://www.metisnation.org/media/246898/aniuk%20kearns%20m%C3%A9tis%20education%20in%20ontario%20report%20final%20draft%202012%20[3].pdf)

² First Nation, Métis, and Inuit.

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