

Message from the Principal

Collaboration, Community, Creativity, and Celebration

As we reflect on the 2023-2024 school year, we are struck by the remarkable ways in which our students, advisors, and community have come together to create, collaborate, and celebrate. Our school priorities this year emphasized project-based learning, community-based learning and internships, mental health and wellness, decolonizing/indigenizing education through Truth and Reconciliation, Climate Justice, and anti-racist/anti-oppressive pedagogy and diversity/equity/inclusion while continuing our journey with Mino-Pimatisiwin & Mamàhtawisiwin.

This past year has been a testament to the resilience, dedication, and collaborative spirit that define the Seven Oaks Met School community. Together, we have navigated challenges, celebrated achievements, and we have fostered an environment that encourages both academic excellence and holistic personal development. We continue to innovate and uplift one another; always with the shared goal of providing an exceptional educational experience for every student who walks through our doors. Our students were inspired this year to take on meaningful projects, to help them build their skills in mastery, independence, generosity, and begin to move towards Mamàhtawisiwin and share their own gifts with those around them.

From the classroom to the stage, the laboratory to the volleyball courts, our students have embraced the opportunity to think outside the box, to explore new ideas, and to push the boundaries of what is possible. This spirit of creativity has been a driving force behind our collaborative efforts, as students, advisors, and families have come together to tackle challenges, share knowledge, and inspire one another. Whether working on interdisciplinary projects, engaging in thoughtful discussions, or supporting one another's endeavours, our community has demonstrated the power of teamwork and the transformative impact of collective endeavors. As a result of these creative and collaborative initiatives, we have witnessed the strengthening of our community bonds.

From academic accolades to artistic triumphs, and athletic successes to community service milestones, each celebration has highlighted the power of our community. Our year has been filled with many experiences such as visiting Camp Morninstar, camping at Experimental Lakes, creating a Fighting for Equity Film, putting on a 3 Met Schools student led drama production *She Kills Monsters*, and building houses for Habitat for Humanity, are just to name a few. This year we also saw the launch of several student-led initiatives, such as the astronomy club, creative writing club, animation club, student leadership, and youth in philanthropy. These clubs have helped foster a more inclusive school community,

where all students feel seen, heard, and can share and teach their gifts and talents with others.

Throughout the 2023-2024 academic year, we have witnessed our students' insatiable curiosity and their unwavering drive to make a positive impact. Whether they were delving into the intricacies of a scientific experiment, honing their creative talents on the stage or canvas, or lending a helping hand to those in need within our community, our students have consistently demonstrated a dedication to their own growth and a commitment to making the world a better place. We know that the creative spirit, collaborative mindset, and community spirit that have defined this past year will continue to guide us forward, as we strive to provide our students with the tools, resources, and support they need to explore their passions, embrace their unique talents, and make a meaningful difference in the world around them.

Wishing you a wonderful and restful summer,
Jennie Ruhr
Acting Principal, SOMet



Wellness and Community Based Learning - Clinton

This year in wellness we have had a great time exploring new activities and ways to get outside while being active. In class we have played a variety of low organized games and grew our skills in sports such as volleyball, badminton, basketball, floor hockey, tchoukball, and handball. We also tested our physical fitness in the weightroom with group exercises, weightlifting, HITT workouts, and creating personalized fitness plans. As usual, our wellness outings were a blast and got us out of the building for some physical activity. We went 10 pin bowling at La Verendrye Lanes, curling at Elmwood Curling Club, and sledding at Kildonan Park. We capped off the year with a final wellness carnival at Primrose Park.

The carnival had inflatable games such as bubble soccer and gladiator jousting, as well as a water balloon fight, face painting, and lawn games. Our sports team did amazing this year and we had some of the best turnouts for our teams. Our JV girls volleyball team finished in 8th place in the zone 12 MHSAA standings, our golfers played through the rain and did well, our badminton teams made it really far in the tournament, and our runners in cross-country had a great race through Crescent Drive Park.



Our community based learning has really taken off this year with a host of volunteering opportunities and special outings. Those who had the chance to go on one of our monthly wellness hikes could tell you that we had some great weather for hiking this year! Some of the places we went to included Cedar Bog Trail, Bunns Creek Trail, Elm Trail (Beaudry Park), La Barriere Park, Blueberry Trail (Grand Beach), Spirit Sands Trail (Sprucewoods) and several other amazing trails. While we weren't able to go ice fishing this year due to changing ice conditions, we were able to get out shore fishing at the docks in Selkirk twice. One student even managed to catch a giant catfish that was the highlight of the season! For volunteering this year we continued to build upon the relationships with our regular community organizations like Bear Clan, Agape Table, Animal Services, and Siloam Mission. We also forged new relationships with organizations such as Oak Table and the Christmas Cheer Board where students had the chance to give back to their community. It has been a great year for volunteering and connecting with our community.



Grade 9

Grade 9 has been all about learning how to be a Met School student, asking questions such as “*what are projects?*”, “*how do we prepare for interviews?*”, “*what does the perfect internship look like?*”, “*how do we build the skills we need to be successful as Met students throughout the next four years?*”. We explored these questions through our year-long theme of ‘Community’, exploring what it means to be a part of a community and how to care for and contribute to the communities we are a part of. We kicked off our year with an overnight camping trip to the Aki center, where we built community through learning from the land, cooking meals together, playing games and roasting marshmallows around the campfire. This camping experience helped us forge new friendships and memories that we carried with us throughout our school year together.



Our first big project was the Upstander project, where students chose a human rights injustice that they care about and impacts either our local or global community and used their personal strengths to take action against their chosen injustice. We kicked this project off with a trip to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights where we learned about different injustices that are happening around the world and the action that different individuals have taken to fight against these injustices. Students came up with a range of project ideas, from campaigning for local middle schools to have boxes of care and concern in support of youth mental health, creating a zine to bring awareness to scoliosis with the long term, videos about the Black Lives Matter movement and so many more.



Next we focused on how to create a design thinking project through the Caring for Our Watersheds project. Students came up with unique solutions to challenges that our watershed faces and wrote project proposals to receive funding for their projects. A significant number of our students placed within the top 50 in our province and one project, which proposed organizing a clothing swap and mending workshop in our school to target clothing waste, placed #7 in the province and received funding from Nutrien to make their project a reality!



Next, our teacher candidate Kulwinder explored the scientific method with the students, organizing different experiments and activities that helped them learn about the basics of the scientific method, with the final project of designing their own scientific method experiment process. Our final project of the year had students reflect on important people in their life who had a significant impact on who they are as a person today, then focused on a single story or moment to write about. Through this project, students developed their personal writing skills while also thinking about the people close to them who make up their personal community.



Another huge way we connected with our community is through leaving to learn trips. We had so many amazing experiences this year, such as visiting Camp Morningstar, the Indigenous resistance camp opposing silica mining on Treaty 5 territory, going to the Forks, seeing a show on constellations and Indigenous storytelling at the Planetarium, attending the press conference for the warming huts v.2024 and learning about biodiversity at the zoo with Kulwinder. On top of that, students also connected with the community through their first internships of their Met school journey. Students had many incredible internship placements, such as Red River Applied Health program, Aqua i-Laser, Architects at Play, Primerica, Bison Books, and many more.



Grade 10

It has been a wonderful and very busy year for the Grade 10s. We began the year with a brainstorming session about what a large-scale project could look like, making sure to include curricular connections to Grade 10 Science and Geography. The project we came up with was the Archipelago project, in which students designed and created island nations from the ground up. Students needed to create flora, fauna, topography, history, and societal structures. They wrote detailed Wikipedia-style articles and created tabletop-sized models of their islands. These models were showcased at both the coffeehouse fundraiser in December and the “Met Ex” project fair in March.



The Grade 10s spent a large part of this year exploring their relationship with nature through a series of outings and assignments that helped them to build their understanding of Earth systems, the degree to which human activity has destabilized these systems, and actions we can take collectively to ensure a healthy environment for ourselves and future generations. In the fall, students went on a two night trip to the Experimental Lakes Area in Northwest Ontario where they collected data to try to understand why different lakes had very different zooplankton. They also spent beautiful days hiking, repairing trails and listening to traditional sky stories late into the night.



In the spring, the 10s spent a day in the Whiteshell, exploring connections between humans and the natural world. In the morning, an Indigenous elder led us on a tour of the Bannock Point Petroforms. Our guide explained the meaning of these ancient formations and led us on an intimate spiritual journey through this very sacred place. In the afternoon, one of our students led us on a hike to Sturgeon Falls, where we learned about forest succession and the geologic history of the area.



Throughout the year, the 10s completed their own personal student-based projects (SBPs). Highlights included a cookbook that incorporated local chefs, a short-story animatic, a school newspaper, a research paper/infographic on bilingualism, and a live bake-off show that raised funds for Rainbow Research Centre. Our students also engaged in many amazing internship placements, including the Ode'immin Birth Centre, Winnipeg Animal Services, Architects at Play, Vincent Design, and the University of Winnipeg Departments of Psychology, Education, and Sociology.

Grade 11

Grade 11 has been a year of increased expectations. Students have needed to balance their school assignments and projects, with time out in the community on internships, extracurricular activities and life and work obligations outside of school. At times that balance has been tough for students to achieve. Throughout this school year, the grade 11 students have become involved in numerous Seven Oaks Met School clubs and activities including theatre, sports, ethics bowl, and social justice, just to name a few. Our students continue to develop into role models within the school and representatives of Big Picture Learning more broadly.



Students were encouraged to develop projects for real-world audiences, rather than simply sharing them with an advisor and classmates in their Exhibitions. An important step in this process has been finding mentors in the community who can provide high-level feedback and specialist knowledge to support students' work. Examples of student success in this area have included:

- inviting a professional fight choreographer to help teach stage fight safety to the cast of *She Kills Monsters*;
- Working at the pharmacology lab of Dr. Henry Dunn to study the expression of the ELFN1 gene
- Learning to prepare a wide variety of breakfast foods under pressure during the morning rush at Salisbury House
- Helping staff from BitSpace Development to do 360-degree photography and icon graphic design for the update of the North Forge workshop safety information in a VR environment
- Getting coaching from a music composer for *Flighty Fellon Games* on how to score a student-created video game about an omniscient ancient whale



Meanwhile, in our workshops for English and Canadian History, students focused on the interplay between stories and power. This started with a unit in the fall on the Power of Stories, through which students learned how to tell powerful stories about their lives, using the techniques developed by the Moth Radio Hour podcast. This was followed up novel studies on Fahrenheit 451 or Animal Farm to learn more about how authors tackle the themes of power dynamics through literature. They then worked with Lasha Mowchun, a local filmmaker funded in part through the Artist in the Schools program, to interview family members about their experiences fighting for equity in Canada. The students then turned the footage into 5-7 minute short documentaries, with animation for some scenes. These were shared with the whole school through a special screening at SOPAC. After spring break, students shifted to doing individual projects about Land, Resources and Power in Canada. Each student chose a different current news story about a conflict over land or resources in Canada and explored the history of that land. By studying how power has been exercised over time, students came to realize that all current conflicts have deeper historical roots.



Grade 12

During the final quarter of high school, we have focussed on connecting the threads we had laid out at the beginning of the year: Senior Thesis Projects (STPs), Global Issues, Community Based Learning (CBL), autobiographies, and the provincial English and Math exams.

For our STPs, students have been pursuing ideas that are rooted in using their inherent skills and abilities to help others and/or prepare for post high-school life. Students would have 1-on-1 meetings with advisors and peers, worked with mentors, and pulled together their learning over the last four years. We had students running a school play, repairing cars, developing prototype clothing tech, creating art, writing books, planning school trips, running clubs, preparing science projects for the Manitoba School Science Symposium and Canada-wide science fairs, designing buildings, and many more. Students finished with an exhibition to highlight success or challenges they had and their goals for the future. Finally, they celebrated their learning at the STP Fair at the end of June.



In Global Issues, students engaged in the model UN activities we have been developing all year long. Zach, our student teacher, developed a robust simulation protocol where each student group country engaged with complex geopolitical topics through resolutions and roleplay. Through the system that Zach created, student's researched an issue, presented a resolution to their fellow UN members, and debated/bargained/acquiesced for resources, social capital, and their countries' larger reaching goals for the planet.



For CBL, many students had informational interviews, shadow days, and continued their virtual or in-person internships. We had students working with professors at the University of Manitoba and Winnipeg, in auto shops, with tech firms, architecture firms, retail stores, and restaurants, in entrepreneurship training, with textiles, in non-profit organizations, and more.



For autobiographies, students put together all of the stories they have written this year into one final document where they also connected all their stories to a single or group of themes, tying together all the thematic study work we have done this year. Due to our focus on other things, we did not get out of the building as often but we still managed to have a last hurrah at the Manitoba Museum and Science Museum, tying together our learning in Global Issues for all and Science exploration for those in a science credit.



At the end of the school year, students completed the provincial Math and English exams. Though the English exam was a little less than standard, students' work in preparation for this exam paid off and it was a successful assessment and the Math exam, similarly, was a successful assessment. It was a packed year leading to the completion of all our major goals for these graduating students.



Learning Through Internship/Community Based Learning - David

This year marked my first year as Internship Coordinator for the Met Schools. The start of the year was great as I had a chance to meet all of the new grade 9 students as I supported the grade 9 advisors and students through internship readiness. Students developed many new skills related to finding internships including professional communication via phone and email, preparing for interviews, and creating a resume and cover letter template for themselves. As always, students also learned about workplace health and safety and worker's rights from Safe Workers of Tomorrow, Red Cross trainers came in to provide first-aid training, and Rory Brett helped out by teaching all new students a food handlers course. They completed their internship readiness by conducting mock interviews with members of our community and completed portfolios of their learning to demonstrate a readiness to begin internships for the year.



Throughout this year, students secured amazing internships in many different industries such as graphic design at Brandish, cake decorating at Cake-ology, history and education at the Manitoba Museum, culinary arts at Across the Board, automotives at Fountain Tire, science at the University of Manitoba and Winnipeg, and so many more! Our group internships continued to provide foundational learning for our students as well as they participated in Tech Hub making video games, developed digital art skills at Toybox, learned business entrepreneurship at North Forge through the MICE program, explored culinary arts through Kitchen Brigades, explored the city through art with City Builders, and dove into graphics technology with Sandbox.



The Met Schools also worked hard to provide community based learning opportunities for all students, even if they were between internships or finding it challenging to secure one that met their learning goals and interests. This year we strengthened our relationships with community organizations such as Agape Table, Bear Clan, Siloam Mission, Harvest Manitoba, Winnipeg Animal Services, Main Street Project, and more by taking groups of students to volunteer at least once a week.



At the end of each year, we welcome several organizations to our school for the Community Needs Fair where they get to meet students looking for authentic project work and internship opportunities for next year. This year we welcomed several new organizations to the event including Fireweed Food Coop, Main Street Project, and Toba Centre for Children and Youth. We also had several returning organizations including Youth Employment Services, Harvest Manitoba, and Architects at Play. Each organization brought incredible project ideas and internship opportunities that they want students to get involved in and we look forward to strengthening our relationship with each one of them in the fall.

