



DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Belong | Achieve | Reconcile | Lead | Inspire

Committed to the success of every student





Land Acknowledgment

Lakehead District School Board is located on the traditional territory of the Ojibwe people of Fort William First Nation, signatory to the Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850. We acknowledge all of the First Nations, Metis and Inuit who reside in this territory and across our Nation; we are committed to moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation and respect for all Canadians.

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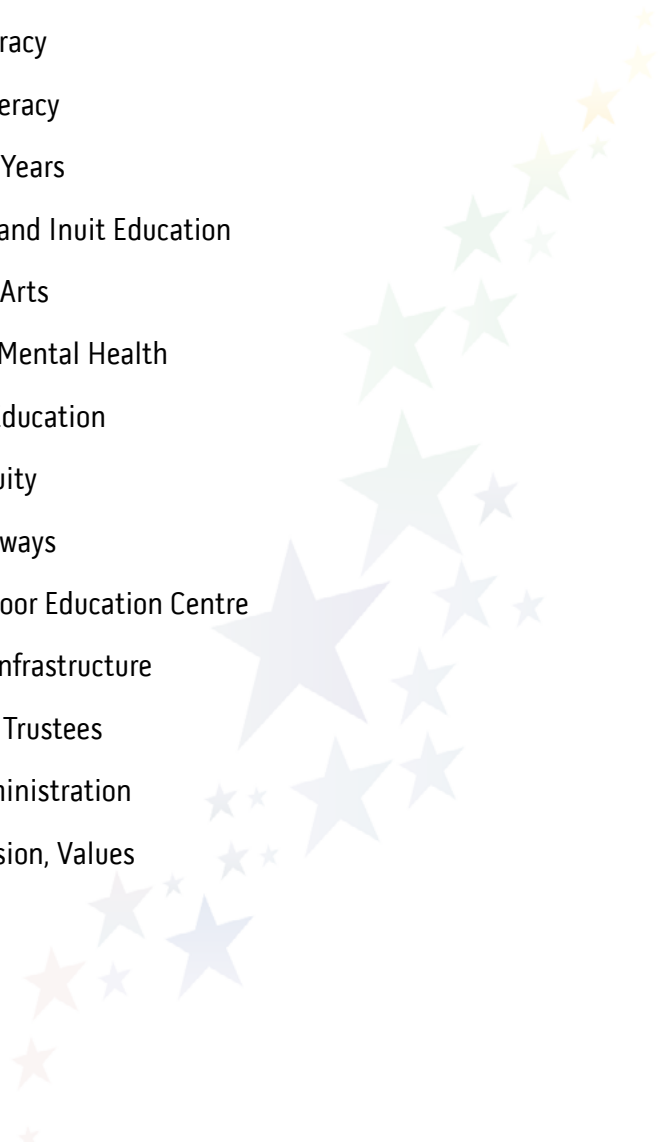
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Message from the Director and board Chair

Dear Families, Staff and Community Members,

It is with great pride that we share the remarkable progress and achievements made by everyone at Lakehead Public Schools this past year.

With a focus on our Strategic Plan pillars of Belong, Achieve, Reconcile, Lead and Inspire, our efforts in 2023-24 highlight the incredible commitment of our staff, students and our school communities.

Lakehead Public Schools strives to create an environment where everyone feels valued and supported; a place to belong. By prioritizing inclusivity, equity, and community-building, we have taken significant strides toward ensuring that everyone at Lakehead Public Schools has a place to thrive. Student-led projects highlighted inclusiveness and diversity across our schools from Hammarskjold's "You Belong Day" to [C.D. Howe's Howler Pledge](#).

As one of only a few school boards in Ontario that saw improvements in all areas last year with its EQAO results, Lakehead Public Schools has put a major focus on literacy and math for our students to achieve. Staff and students also continued to achieve, winning national awards for teaching, Reconciliation projects and even video games. We were also so proud to see the Hammarskjold Vikings Senior Girls Basketball team make history by becoming the first team from Thunder Bay ever to win a AA OFSSA title.

We continued on the path of reconciliation in 2023 by strengthening our relationship with Fort William First Nation, raising their flag at all Lakehead Public Schools. We also completed our first full year of the Anishinaabemowin Revitalization Project full of gratitude and learning. We will continue our work under the guidance of our Community Advisory Committee to further support the revitalization of Anishinaabemowin in our schools and community.

Whether launching a new pilot childcare program or welcoming more than 4,000 students to Kingfisher Lake Outdoor Education Centre for its 54th year, we continued to lead by offering unique experiences, facilities and programs that sets Lakehead Public Schools apart.

And finally, throughout the year, we remained inspired by so many moments of courage, passion and creativity throughout Lakehead Public Schools. As you'll see, hear and read through media articles throughout this report, Lakehead Public Schools is never short of inspirational stories to share with our community.

As this was the final year of our 2021-24 Strategic Plan, we stand on the pillars of Belong, Achieve, Reconcile, Lead and Inspire, looking back on another successful year at Lakehead Public Schools while working toward the next Strategic Plan to carry this momentum forward.

Thank you to everyone who helped make Lakehead Public School's 2023-24 year such a remarkable one. We hope you will read this Director's Annual Report 2024 with pride.

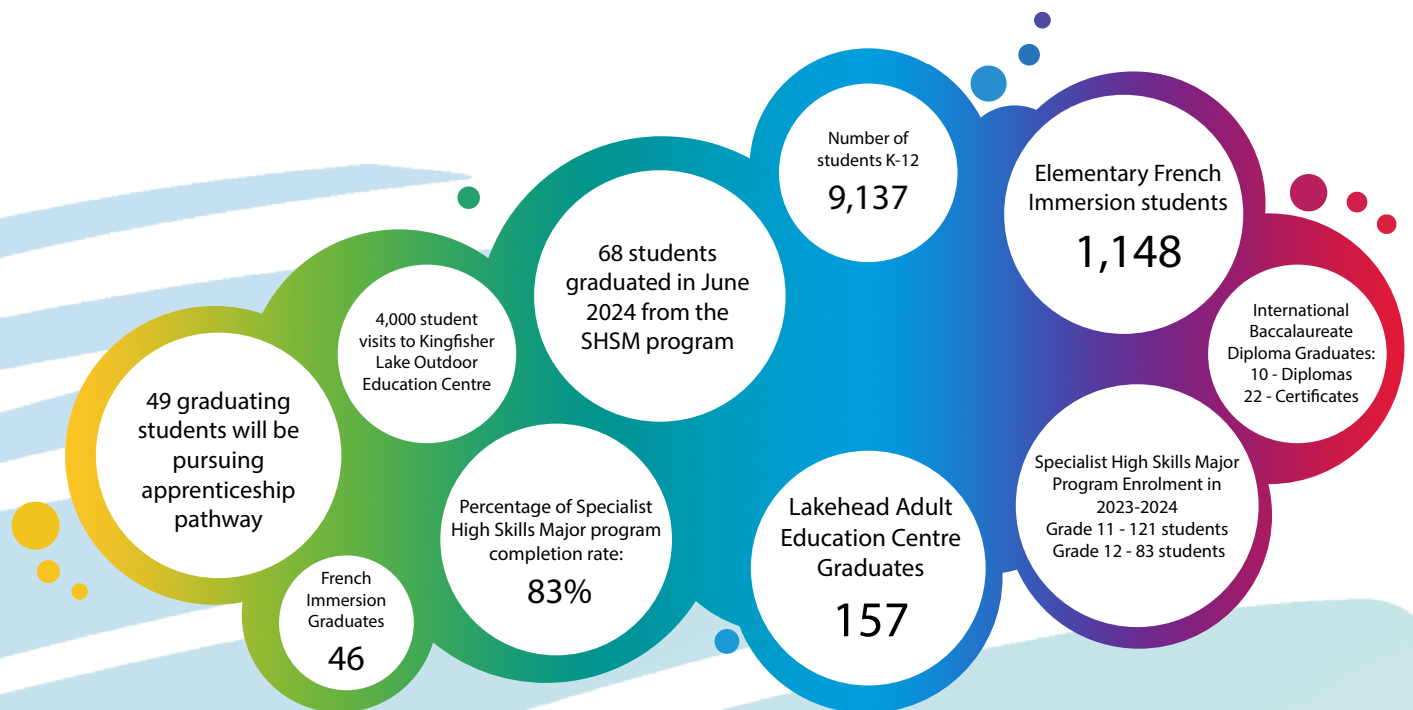


Sherri-Lynne Pharand
Director of Education

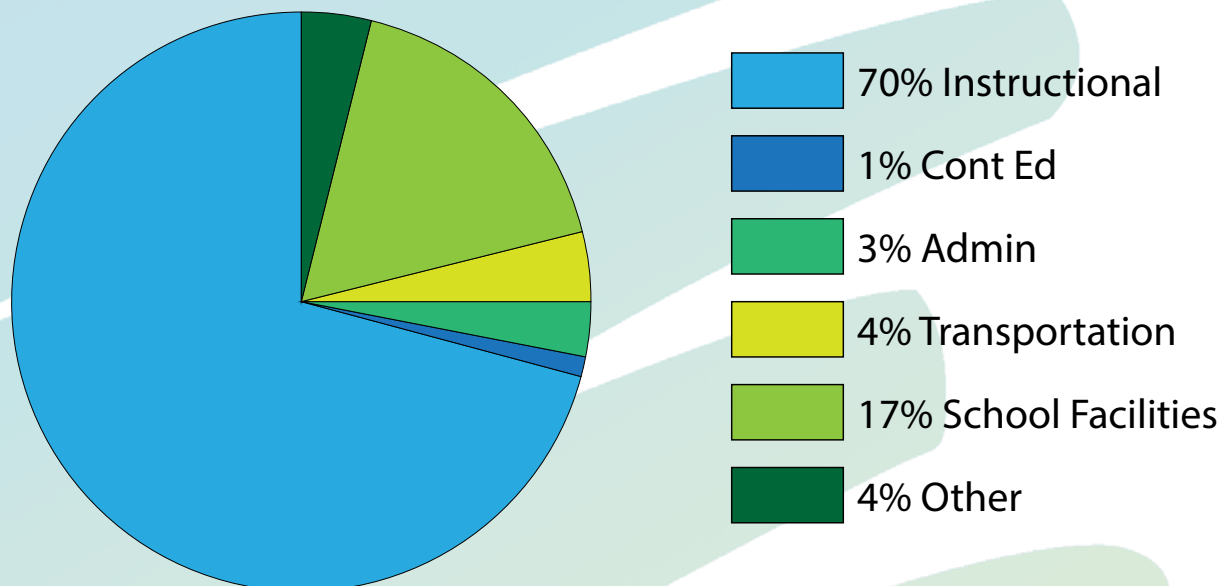


Ellen Chambers
Trustee Chair

Statistics at a Glance



Operating Expenses



LITERACY

Lakehead Public Schools continues to provide programs and supports so that every student can achieve high levels of personal and academic excellence. The development of foundational reading skills in English and French Immersion remains a top priority across our system. We continue to provide training and professional development in all grades to ensure that literacy instruction is evidence-based and consistent across the system. As part of our Distributed Leadership Forum (DLF) and at school-based PLCs, elementary school teams examined best practices and high-impact teaching strategies used to teach fluency and comprehension, completing our system study of Scarborough's Reading Rope and the essential components of reading.

We continue to focus on professional development and support strong Tier 1 (whole-class) reading instruction, and using data to identify and address student needs. Four elementary system literacy intervention teachers support classroom teachers to implement Tier 2 interventions as appropriate, and to monitor student progress and the effectiveness of targeted interventions. Mandatory early reading screening for students in Year 1 Kindergarten to Grade 2 began this year and has provided data that will allow teachers to identify the support they need to develop reading proficiency. Principals and vice-principals are working together at monthly sessions to learn how to work effectively with school and student data as we work towards the goals in the school and board student achievement plans.

At the spring DLF, school teams started to examine writing instruction across grades and subject areas. A focus on writing instruction and what that looks like in a structured literacy environment is an important next step in our system learning about effective literacy instruction. Teams of primary, junior and intermediate teachers are collaborating on the creation of a writing continuum that aligns with the revised 2023 Language curriculum documents, providing resources and a scope and sequence for teaching writing that will support consistency across the system.

Our focus on improving literacy outcomes for students has resulted in strong EQAO scores in reading and writing for students in Grades 3 and 6.

EQAO reading results

| Grade 3 | 23/24 | 22/23 | 21/22 |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| Reading | 83.1 | 74.1 | 64.6 |
| Writing | 75.8 | 68.3 | 55.3 |

| Grade 6 | 23/24 | 22/23 | 21/22 |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| Reading | 84.7 | 84 | 80.9 |
| Writing | 82.7 | 83.5 | 75.6 |

LITERACY



At the secondary level, educators are embedding literacy strategies and supports across all curriculum areas. Professional learning has focused on high-impact instructional strategies—those proven to enhance student learning—such as explicit instruction in vocabulary, literacy strategies, and scaffolding reading and writing tasks. A structured approach to adolescent literacy instruction is being emphasized, helping educators develop students’ proficiency in their reading and writing, with a focus on subject-specific literacy. Professional development days have highlighted strategies to support students in various forms of writing, focusing on organizing ideas, understanding subject-specific content, and addressing different writing purposes.

Each secondary school has at least one literacy coach who directly supports Grade 10 students preparing for the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT). These coaches provide targeted instruction to build the specific skills needed for success on the test. Additionally, with the support of secondary destreaming coaches, secondary schools administer the Dynamic Indicators of Benchmark Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) to de-streamed Grade 9 students in their Semester 1 English class, followed by diagnostics for students not meeting benchmark expectations. Interventions include explicit instruction in vocabulary, English morphology and syntax, repeated reading routines, and the use of Lexia Power Up, a digital literacy tool for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. Progress monitoring will follow, to determine the degree of impact of the targeted instruction. The same process will be completed with students who have Grade 9 English in the second semester.

Secondary Chairs’ Forum continues to focus on strategies to build student understanding of subject-specific literacy skills, which further supports the discussion of these topics among Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). For almost all students, both reading and writing will improve with support and practice, so a secondary priority has been to make sure this thread runs throughout four periods of the day and is not limited to just English classrooms.

| | 23/24 | 22/23 | 21/22 |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| OSSLT | 79.5% | 81.6% | 77% |

2nd Annual “Lit”erally Lakehead Literacy Conference

In August, the 2nd annual “Lit”erally Lakehead Literacy Conference welcomed current and aspiring educators from across the region to a day of learning focused on implementing effective, research-based literacy instruction across all grade levels and subject areas. Keynote speakers Tara Armstrong and Christine Senior, experienced literacy teachers from Durham District School Board, focused on effective strategies for adolescent learners who are still striving to attain foundational literacy



skills. Breakout sessions included something for every educator from Kindergarten to Grade 12, including Leading the Instructional Program in Literacy for Current and Aspiring Leaders, Strategies for Supporting Students with Learning Disabilities, Anti-Oppression Book Tasting: Expanding Your Book List, and many more. Close to 150 educators attended this summer learning opportunity!

French as a Second Language Carrefour

“Vous êtes bienvenus de nous joindre pour une soirée facultative afin de célébrer, collaborer et approfondir nos connaissances du FLS à tous les niveaux.” French Immersion teachers have continued to work collaboratively to examine how to effectively implement structured literacy in the French immersion classroom to support students to attain the foundational reading skills. Through OPSBA funding focused on the recruitment and retention of French teachers, we offered an evening “carrefour” focused on structured literacy and FSL learners. Guest speakers Angeline Humber (Greater Essex District School Board) and Jordan Sloane (Renfrew County District School Board) led a group of LPS French immersion teachers through an engaging examination of our FSL curriculum through a structured literacy



lens to ensure alignment with the recommendations of the OHRC's Right to Read report, an exploration of assessment tools to identify the strengths and needs of students as readers and consider

instructional next steps. The carrefour agenda also included an examination of resources and tools available to implement a structured literacy approach in the FSL context. Each teacher who participated in the learning was provided with ready-to-use resources that support the implementation of structured literacy.

Elementary Summer Learning

247 students participated in the Elementary Summer Learning Program which was held for 3 weeks in July at 4 elementary school locations. Daily programming was provided by LPS teachers targeting literacy and numeracy. Lakehead District School Board staff and community partners also provided numerous experiential learning opportunities for students both onsite and out in the community. Students were provided the opportunity to enhance their literacy and numeracy skills through a variety of engaging activities and tailored instruction in a supportive learning environment. This year's camps included a “Readiness to Learn Camp” for students entering Year 1 or Year 2 Kindergarten. This camp focused on helping children develop essential skills while fostering their creativity and curiosity. Students participated in activities to promote social skills



including expressing feelings, sharing, taking turns, and working together, as well as gross- and fine-motor development and early literacy and math skills.

As part of our summer learning programming, Lakehead Public Schools partnered with Superior Life Skills to offer additional learning opportunities for our students. These camps included “Play Skills Camp,” focusing on social skills and sharing, “Children’s Friendship Camp,” focusing on making friends, joining play and sportsmanship, and “Summer Send Off Camps,” focusing on developing independence with school routines and managing anxiety.



In all of our summer learning camps, students with needs were supported by Student Support Professionals (SSPs) who supported the individual learning needs of students. There were SSPs in almost every Summer Learning Program classroom. These educators worked as part of the team with the other educators, assisting students in both academic and non-academic learning opportunities.

Secondary Summer Learning

Grade 8 First Nations, Metis, Inuit Reach Ahead Credit was offered to all students entering Grade 9 who self-identify as Indigenous. The program ran for 3 weeks in August and provided students with an opportunity to earn their first secondary school credit as well as gain familiarity with their school and build relationships with peers and staff before September. A total of 42 students earned a Reach Ahead credit.

Armstrong Public School Reach Ahead Summer Credit - Lakehead Public School Summer staff offered a creative new program to students who attend Armstrong Public School. Thirteen Grade 8’s earned a Learning Strategies secondary school credit and engaged in career / pathway planning exploration with community partners such as the Ontario Provincial Police, Emergency Services and Ministry of Natural Resources. Students also participated in hands on activities aimed at exposing them to the skilled trades.

The Focus on Youth Project (FOY) is a seven week paid cooperative education program for secondary students. Students work with Roots to Harvest staff at the community garden site and are responsible for growing, harvesting, and marketing food. Students also participate in pathway planning and developing skills and competencies to be successful in future employment opportunities.

Travel for Credit was a new summer program option for students interested in earning a Civics and Career Studies credit through a combination of in class and experiential learning. Students travelled to Ottawa, Montreal, and New York City. The students participated in many local experiential learning opportunities and

LITERACY



presentations from various community members during the classroom component of the course.

E-Learning was offered during the summer months and two hundred and sixty credits were earned during this time to both Lakehead Public School students as well as students outside our board.

Cooperative Education – Students who are in Specialist High Skills Major programs, the Naval Program, or students who have gaps in credit accumulation had the opportunities to participate in a summer cooperative learning program where they strengthened employability skills, worked with industry and community partners, and explored future career goals.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0x9hkcg8lxk>

Summer Learning Program students get a history lesson during visit to Fort William Historical Park

More than 100 Lakehead Public Schools Summer Learning Program students spent a day on self-guided tours breaking bread, visiting farm animals and learning history:

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/fwhp-visit-students-1.7266610>

Summer Learning stint Strives to help children feel more enthusiastic about school

https://www.chroniclejournal.com/news/local/summer-learning-stint-strives-to-help-children-feel-more-enthusiastic-about-school/article_f05d296c-4577-11ef-924a-ffe798c1685c.html

NUMERACY

This past May our MAAP Team held the first ever Lakehead Public Schools Family Math Night at Elsie MacGill. It was a great opportunity for families to meet our math educators, school board officials and trustees to create a lifelong love of math for our students.

The Ministry of Education launched the Ontario Math Achievement Action Plan (MAAP) in 2023 in order to increase school board accountability and boost math competence in our schools. Lakehead Public Schools assembled a MAAP Team, which is now led by our Assistant Superintendent: Math and IT Lead Nick Sacevich as of August 2024.

EQAO Math Results

| Grade 3 | 23/24 | 22/23 | 21/22 |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| Math | 70.5 | 58.4 | 48.2 |

| Grade 6 | 23/24 | 22/23 | 21/22 |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| Math | 51.1 | 43.9 | 32.6 |

In 2023-24, Lakehead Public Schools was pleased to announce that Grade 3 and 6 Math Education Quality and Accountability Office assessments saw large increases from the previous years, with 70.5 per cent of Grade 3 students meeting the provincial achievement for math, up from 58.4 per cent in 2022-23, and 51.1 per cent of Grade 6 students, up from 43.9 per cent. More than 51 per cent of Grade 9 Math students met the provincial achievement standard last year, up from 49 per cent in 2022-23.

Since then, we've provided a scope and sequence for staff in Grades 1-8 so that they have a common schedule for math. We've created beginning, middle and end of year assessments in Knowledgehook to monitor school and system progress in math for grades 3 through 8, with a focus on grades 4-5 and 7-8 professional group learning sessions.

As of November 2024, Professional Development Day mornings now have a



numeracy focus, using assessment data to plan for systematic instruction and interventions to meet student needs. Staff will be looking at the importance of using clear and concise mathematical language to help students with math vocabulary and effectively communicate their understanding of math concepts and ideas. Instruction has also been developed to focus on word problems to continue helping students understand math in a deeper way.

This year we hired five math coaches to support grades 3 and 6 staff and students, increasing content knowledge and instructional practices as well as supporting transitions of students with Individual Education Plans from grades 7 and 8 to grade 9. An additional 3 coaches support de-streaming efforts at our secondary schools, which includes math.

We've partnered with Lakehead University to be able to offer subsidized training for our teachers on Additional Basic Qualifications (ABQs) related to math, with courses being taught by our own educators and a focus on resources, strategies and tools specific to Lakehead Public Schools.

Lakehead Public Schools' Family Math Night

Add your family, subtract the unknowns by meeting educators, divide your time by playing games and multiply the fun! Hear about Lakehead Public Schools' Family Math Night:

<https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-391-superior-morning/clip/16063670-aj-keene-lakehead-public-schools-family-math-night>



EARLY YEARS



Each year we are excited to welcome our youngest learners to Lakehead Public Schools! The early years is a time for discovery and new experiences, and the perfect time for children to learn that Lakehead Public Schools classrooms are safe spaces that foster a sense of belonging. We continue to experience strong enrolment in kindergarten, which begins with our January Welcome to Kindergarten event. This family-friendly event attracts new and returning families who are welcomed by board and school staff and students, as well as community partners who help to provide Kindergarten students and families with the services they need to learn and thrive in an educational environment.

Kindergarten educator teams engaged in training and professional learning throughout the year that was focused on literacy, math, and supporting students to develop self-regulation skills. Through a combination of explicit instruction and intentional, play-based learning, LPS educators support students to attain the foundational skills that will help them to achieve their goals throughout their educational journey. The LPS Key Messages for Kindergarten document serves as the foundation of the professional development planning by the Kindergarten committee, made up of central and school-based Early Years staff. PD planning is responsive to the needs of kindergarten educator teams



The central Early Childhood Educator and Early Years resource teacher work closely together to provide at-the-elbow support to Kindergarten teams in all schools, in areas such as establishing routines, implementing effective instructional practice, supporting positive student behaviour, and self-regulation. A mentoring program for newly-hired ECEs includes a full day shadowing an experienced ECE in one of our Kindergarten classrooms.

Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQs) were administered to all students entering Year 1 Kindergarten this year. This questionnaire helps educators identify student strengths and needs as they enter school for the first time. It also provides an opportunity for school staff to build begin to build relationships with families and caregivers as they collaborate to complete the questionnaire. The data collected is used to plan for smooth transitions to school, and also to identify Tier 1, 2 and 3 instruction and intervention that will help young learners to be successful.



Bright Beginnings

In response to the growing challenges in kindergarten readiness—particularly following the pandemic's impact on early development—Lakehead Public Schools introduced the Bright Beginnings program, an Education and Community Partnership Program (ECP). This targeted kindergarten readiness class is designed to support students facing difficulties in their

EARLY YEARS

transition to the kindergarten environment, while also providing parent education in topics related to child development and wellness. Bright Beginnings focuses on individualized, small-group instruction to meet the unique needs of each child and bridge the readiness gap for children entering school.

Lakehead Public Schools Childcare

In September 2024, Lakehead Public Schools began to offer board-operated, licensed after-school child care for kindergarten and school aged children at Five Mile Public School and Gorham and Ware Public School. The programs are staffed by Early Childhood Educators and child care workers at both locations who work collaboratively to deliver high-quality child care programming to our students and families. Professional development provided by Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) as well as other community partners has included strategies to build healthy relationships with children and families, how to ensure (and document) that programming is engaging to children and builds on their interests, "Seeing Beyond the Behaviour" which focuses on intervention for when children become escalated and how to safely deescalate and bring them back into play once again, and how to support children who have had adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) to thrive. We are very proud of our Child Care teams and all of their hard work to establish these new programs to provide high-quality child care programming that will help promote positive outcomes for children, while supporting families to work.



Tikanagan Teachings

Community members Destiny Linklater and baby Makwa provided Tikanagan teachings to Kindergarten students in our elementary schools. As part of the LPS Indigenous Education Learning Continuum, Destiny and Makwa taught our early learners about the Tikanagan and about Anishinaabe ways of teaching and learning: the child is at the center of the family, safe and secure, looking out onto the world, observing and learning from the world around them. Miigwech to Destiny and Makwa for sharing their gifts and teachings with us!



FNMI EDUCATION

Lakehead Public Schools continues to be fully committed to providing the best possible education for Indigenous students and all students through the implementation of the Indigenous Education Framework. Embedding Indigenous perspectives across the curriculum continues to be a focus of our training and professional development. This year the FNMI education team completed training for educators and administrators in Grades 4 to 6 and began the training cycle for educators and administrators in Grades 1 to 3. This well-received training provides resources for schools and after the training session is complete, embeds the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Resource Teacher in the school for a few days to be available to all staff to answer questions and work at-the-elbow as needed. This model allows educators time to consider the professional development they have engaged in and the opportunity to ask questions and clarify understandings after they have had a chance to reflect on their learning and how they will implement it in the classroom.



The Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada, or “the big map” was an impactful teaching and learning experience for students and adults this year. The FNMI education team has designed learning experiences on the map that allow students and adults to explore multiple aspects of Canadian history and present-day Indigenous Peoples living in Canada, highlighting the complexity of Indigenous histories and the diversity of cultures among Métis, Inuit and First Nations people living in Canada.

On the big map students learn history, geography, and about themselves, their classmates and their communities. They learn respect for all people and for the earth and environment, they learn what it means to make a commitment and to keep that commitment.

Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Resource Teacher Jasmine Sgambelluri was awarded the 2024 Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence. Jasmine is a respected role model, facilitator and safe presence with Lakehead Public Schools. She seeks to braid Indigenous ways of knowing with digital learning and the classroom environment to encourage students and educators to discover and understand their relationships to themselves, each other and their communities. She collaborated with Elders and Knowledge Carriers to create the Mashkiki Mikinaak – Seasonal Celebrations and Commemorations related to Indigenous Education resource that will help teachers ensure Indigenous perspectives and ways of teaching and knowing are represented in our classrooms. Congratulations Jasmine!



Mashkiki Mikinaak: Seasonal Celebrations and Commemorations

This beautiful resource was completed and introduced to educators, administrators and support staff this year. An excellent example of collaboration and community engagement, Mashkiki Mikinaak provides teachings and links to videos and resources that enable teachers to seamlessly embed Indigenous content and perspectives as they plan instruction in all areas. The document itself is not only a planning tool, but also a learning resource for staff as they increase their knowledge and awareness of Indigenous culture, celebrations and commemorations in our community. The resources provided also enable teachers to embed content without relying solely on guest speakers to share their knowledge.

Anishinaabemowin Revitalization Project

We completed our first full year of the Anishinaabemowin Revitalization Project full of gratitude and new learning. The Anishinaabemowin Revitalization strategy has three priority areas for the first five years, while working towards the end goal of collaborating with Indigenous community partners to establish an Anishinaabemowin immersion program:

- Increase teacher capacity/fluency in Anishinaabemowin;
- Establish mentor-learner model to engage students in Anishinaabemowin programs; and
- Develop family language nests and other engagement opportunities to promote use of Anishinaabemowin in homes.



Progress has been made over the year towards these priorities. Three elementary NSL teachers who are second-language learners continue to be released for part of their teaching day to focus on Anishinaabemowin learning. These teachers are supported in their classrooms by working with a fluent speaker to co-teach and support student learning once a week. We will continue our work under the guidance of our Community Advisory Committee to further support the revitalization of Anishinaabemowin in our schools and community.

Kendomang Zhagodenamonon (KZ) Lodge

Westgate and Hammar skjold Schools each have a KZ Lodge program which is a partnership program with the Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre. Students earn Grade 9 credits while participating in experiential and land-based learning. Students learn traditional teaching by TBIFC staff as well as community partners and elders.

Some examples of the learning activities include Orange shirt beading project, Three Sisters garden harvest, traditional tea and wild rice teachings/cooking, traditional medicine teachings, traditional line art, traditional corn jewelry creations,

traditional bundle teachings, regalia teachings with mini regalia art project, traditional physical activity games with Mushkiki, goose teachings, moose and deer hide tanning, traditional fish/meat smoking

Students also have opportunities to learn more about the Skilled Trades, language learning, and recreation activities such as canoeing at Kingfisher Outdoor Centre, Archery with the Friendship Centre, Self Defense classes at ONWA.



Mino Bimaadiziwin

Mino Bimaadiziwin, the LPS Indigenous Youth Leadership Program, was attended by 32 students from Grades 7-10 with four youth mentors who were recent graduates from Lakehead Public Schools. The student mentors are previous participants in the Mino Bimaadiziwin Leadership Program who returned to share their experiences and perspectives with the current participants. The program was hosted August 12-16, 2024, at Fort William Historical Park with an overnight trip to Kingfisher Outdoor Education Centre.

National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation Award

At the beginning of the year, Ms. Barnwell gave her Grade 8 students at Woodcrest a history project. Annika Harrison turned that project into a national award-winning documentary! Based on conversations with her father, a residential school survivor, Annika's film was one of 25 projects selected by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation's Imagine a Canada. In May, she went to Winnipeg to receive her award. Hear more about Annika's project on CBC Superior Morning: <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-391-superior-morning/clip/16075624-annika-harrison-i-am-here-because-they-survived>

Hammarskjold Shows off Tiny Homes Built by Students

KZ Lodge students at Hammarskjold spent their year building a tiny homes for Ginoogaming and celebrated with the community in June.

<https://www.tbnewswatch.com/local-news/hammarskjold-shows-off-tiny-homes-built-by-students-9087035>

Fort William First Nation Flag Raising

Recently, the Fort William First Nation flag was raised at Westgate Collegiate & Vocational Institute... and there are plans to raise it at all Lakehead Public Schools.

Kali Bernst, Principal of Indigenous Education and Program at the Lakehead Public School Board and Michelle Solomon, the chief of Fort William First Nation, spoke with CBC's Jasmine Kabatay about the recent efforts: <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-391-superior-morning/clip/16066993-jasmine-kabatay-fort-william-first-nation-flag>



THE ARTS

Fostering community partnerships in the arts continues to play a major role in the success of our school communities. Last year students from all Lakehead Public Schools had incredible opportunities to take part in music, drama and visual art.

In-person and virtual trips to and visits from the Thunder Bay Art Gallery provided numerous learning opportunities for students across Lakehead Public Schools. Thanks to Carnegie Hall's Link Up program, more than 1,000 students got a chance to play their recorder live at the Thunder Bay Community Auditorium with the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra. More than 185 Grade 3 students from Vance Chapman, Elsie MacGill, Kingsway Park and Nor'Wester View also hit the stage with the TBSO this past November as part of the Grade 3 Sing Along, which featured classic songs like Beethoven's "Ode to Joy".



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zw9ZGuXu1QA>



School productions were a big hit as Hammar skjold's "The Wizard of Oz Youth Edition", Westgate's "Zombie Prom", Nor'Wester View's "Matilda the Musical" and Superior's "Mean Girls High School Version" dazzled audiences across the city last year. Superior's production raised \$10,000 for Our Kids Count.

In September, MusiCounts Canada, which supports music programs across Canada announced that Mr. Kowlessar and Westgate were one of 74 successful applicants across Canada to be offered a grant. MusiCounts Canada has provided Westgate's music department \$11,000 to support the band program, which has been used to purchase brand new flutes, clarinets, alto saxophones, tenor saxophones, trumpets, trombones, and music for the program.

Lakehead Public Schools entering the world of eSports

Thanks to the generous sponsorship of Tbaytel, Hammar skjold High School, Westgate CVI and Superior CVI are ready to rumble in the digital arena. On Wednesday, Oct. 2, 2024, members of Lakehead Public Schools and Tbaytel gathered at Superior CVI to announce \$30,000 from Tbaytel to help fund the LPS eSports League: <https://www.tbnewswatch.com/success/lakehead-public-schools-entering-the-world-of-esports-9604827>

With the release of The Ministry of Education's PPM 169 in June of 2024, Lakehead Public School's Mental Health portfolio has been actively implementing the 11 requirements outlined to continue to support the mental health and wellness of students.

A three-year mental health and addictions strategy and one year action plan was the start of a new 3-year mental health strategy. This strategy and our one-year action plan are both available [here](#). We continue to work with providers across the community to develop efficient pathways for students who require community services as identified by our school social workers. This includes the identified lead Children's Mental Health Agency as we embark on the Right Time Right Care initiative to ensure students in the community are receiving the most appropriate tiered level of service. School and lead agencies have been assigned specific implementation to help guide this process.

The mental health team at Lakehead Public Schools provides universal classroom mental health promotion programming as well as more specific group programming when challenges have been identified among youth. In 2024, collaborations with community and provincial agency initiatives continued to allow up to Tier One and Tier Two mental health and substance use, universal and targeted programming for classrooms. These agencies included Thunder Bay Counselling Centre CHOICES program, Thunder Bay District Health Unit, mental health classroom presentations, the Child Development Institute universal SNAP for Schools Program and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and Youth Wellness Hubs' Ontario PreVenture Initiative.



In September of 2024, a Child and Youth worker was hired onto the Lakehead Public Schools' Mental Health Team whose primary focus is to provide universal evidence-informed classroom programming in elementary schools. Individual clinical services as well as case management and bridging to more intensive services are provided in all schools by registered social workers to students.

All school social workers are required to use evidence-informed treatment modalities in their practice, this includes therapeutic modalities and measuring student treatment progress. The Greenspace Mental Health measurement-based care platform has been purchased and is currently being utilized to track client progress throughout treatment using consistent patient-reported outcome measures. The goals of this initiative include incorporating data and insights into clinical discussions, helping our social workers make evidence based clinical decisions and empowering students who are receiving services by giving them more opportunities to see their progress and how decisions are made about the care they receive. There have been positive responses to this new method from students and clinicians in that they feel validated in the progress they are making in the collaborative treatment process.

Lakehead Public Schools implemented Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention Protocols in the spring of 2024 for all staff. Training has been developed and is currently being rolled out in schools to staff. This protocol and training give school staff working with students the tools needed to identify students who are struggling, how to ask critical questions and carry out the necessary next steps with the appropriate supports. Staff are signed on to OTN should there be a need for Virtual Care Delivery services.

Enhancing educator and staff mental health literacy, mandatory mental health literacy learning for students, and family mental health literacy and awareness have all continued to be a focus at Lakehead Public Schools. We continue to work towards providing creative and effective ways for educators to learn about mental health and how to support students in the classroom who may be struggling, how to talk to their parents/guardians as well as bring awareness to other resources that are available to assist students in the community. All educators were given a



welcome back package at the beginning of the current school year that contained a package of hard copy resources for them to use in their work with students in classrooms. In addition, the mental health portfolio was invited to support the Ontario Principals Council Initiative of Leading Mentally Healthy Schools. This initiative brought principals from elementary and secondary schools together to build awareness and leadership capacity to effectively utilize School Mental Health Ontario materials in the daily work of normalizing mental health conversations and creating more mentally healthy school environments across the province.

The Ministry of Education in collaboration with School Mental Health Ontario have developed mandatory curriculum modules for grade 7, 8 and 10 students. The roll out of these are actively supported by the mental health portfolio in the way of teacher training to ensure they understand the connection to the curriculum, are familiar with the online platform, and are comfortable with the content. In January of 2024 teachers began teaching the grade 7 & 8 modules to their students and in the fall of 2024 Grade 10 civics and careers teachers were trained. Lakehead Public Schools provides mental health resources and opportunities for families to obtain information from our website as well as the mental health team are actively engaged in promoting mental health supports and resources at the school level by way of wellness nights and open houses.

The mental health portfolio works closely with special education to support the roll out of universal social emotional learning initiatives such as "Little Spot", "Second Step", "SNAP" and individual and small group skill building sessions as identified to encourage social emotional learning.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Lakehead Public Schools believes that all students can learn. We strive to enable every student to learn effectively, to reduce achievement gaps and to improve learning outcomes for all.

Together with families, schools and students, the Special Education department works to meet the diverse learning needs of our students, providing a variety of resources, programming and opportunities for success. Our tiered system of intervention ensures that for most students, their needs are met in their classroom, with the educators meeting their learning needs through individual education plans, accommodations to programming and access to interventions as appropriate. The special education department works closely with the literacy and numeracy coaches to ensure that training for classroom teachers in these areas includes a focus on meeting the needs of all students, including those with special education needs.



Lakehead Public Schools has implemented many of the recommendations from the Right to Read report, ensuring that students with learning disabilities are being provided timely, consistent, and research-based interventions. The special education department has ensured that changes to literacy programming, based on structured literacy practices, includes a focus on early identification for students with learning disabilities. Further, tiered interventions are in place for students that may require more intensive interventions beyond the interventions provided by their classroom teachers. Lakehead Public Schools continues to offer the Empower Reading Program at all elementary schools and we now run this program in our secondary schools, ensuring that literacy remain a focus from K through 12.

Like other school boards across the province, Lakehead Public Schools has seen an increase in the number of students with an Autism diagnosis. Our successful partnerships with community agencies have allowed us to provide specific programming for some of our youngest Autistic learners. Professional development opportunities for educators have focused on communication tools, alternative goal setting and the use of visuals to support learning and growth.



SPECIAL EDUCATION

Lakehead Public Schools believes in, and supports, inclusive education. We also understand that for some children and youth, and their families, an alternative setting with more access to life skills programming is preferable. Our Special Needs Classes at the secondary level are active in Special Olympics, vocational placements and engage in meaningful learning and social opportunities within their schools. At the elementary level, our Special Needs Classes provide support to students to develop communication skills, participate in class and school wide experiential learning opportunities and support skill building in the area of independence.

Summer learning programs continue to be a wonderful learning opportunity for many of our students. Students with diverse special education needs participated in summer learning, which has had a significant impact on their academic and social-emotional skills.



EQUITY



As stated in the Belong pillar of our Strategic Plan, Lakehead Public Schools provides a safe, welcoming equitable, accessible and inclusive environment that reflects the diversity of our community. Over the past year, Lakehead Public Schools has used the data from its demographic census conducted by the Office of the Human Rights and Equity Advisor to tailor our service delivery to students, staff, and community members. In particular, we have been striving to ensure all members of our school community see themselves reflected, respected, and represented in the organization.



In October, more than 80 students from across Lakehead Public Schools took part in Harmony Movement Canada. Designed for grades 7-12, this interactive program engages participants through games, multi-media activities, and group discussions to introduce them to the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion while developing their abilities to take leadership for social change.



We also kicked off the I AM: Campaign for Lakehead Public Schools, which encourages students and families to share information about their identities to help us better understand the diversity and needs of our community and improve programming for students.

Students will now design and lead programs in their schools like culture days, cooking experiences and a whole lot more. Last year projects included Kingsway's Anti-Racist Cookbook, a Welcome Wall at Westmount and a cultural fashion show at Superior.

GSA's across Lakehead Public Schools are fully supported, highlighted every school year with Progress Pride Flag raising events at our schools.

Last year we offered school-based staff training on anti-oppressive pedagogy along with human rights training for senior leadership and management with Hicks Morley. Our Equity Action Plan for 2024-2027 was also redeveloped.





<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HpNrYZXA4p0>

Lakehead Public Schools show support to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community

The Lakehead District School Board raised up the Progressive Pride flag for the sixth year on Monday.: <https://www.tbnewswatch.com/local-news/lakehead-public-schools-show-support-to-the-2slgbtqia-community-8974230>

EQUITY



PATHWAYS

At Lakehead Public Schools, a key priority is ensuring students have the chance to explore various pathways, including secondary school options, post-secondary education, apprenticeship training, and career opportunities in the workforce. This approach helps students make informed decisions about their futures and equips them with the skills and knowledge needed for success in their chosen paths.

Specialist High Skills Major

Lakehead Public Schools has over 270 students engaged in the Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) program which includes Arts and Culture, Aviation, Business, Construction, Environment, Health and Wellness, Hospitality and Tourism, Justice Community Safety and Emergency Services, Manufacturing, and Transportation. As part of our SHSM programming, LPS offers MCT4C credits in each of our secondary schools and teachers in the math department and technology department work collaboratively to bring authentic learning tasks while building the skills required in both subject areas. We are proud to add two additional SHSM programs to LDSB; Environment (Superior) and Construction (Westgate). All SHSM programs allow students in Grades 11 and 12 to focus their learning on a specific economic sector while meeting the requirements of the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

A continued partnership with Canadian Tooling and Machining Association and Ontario Council of Technology Education resulted in new precision cutting technology and machinery in our secondary schools. Technology teachers undergo continuous training to stay up-to-date with the latest advancements in technology using Fusion 360, Glow Forge and 3D printers. Ongoing training ensures educators can effectively integrate these tools into their teaching and provide students with relevant, hands-on learning experiences.



To challenge stereotypes and empower young women in the trades, we have successfully introduced a Grade 11 all-female manufacturing class. This initiative fosters confidence, breaks down barriers, and promotes inclusivity in the field. Additionally, we remain committed to ensuring that students in technology and SHSM classes receive hands-on instruction using state-of-the-art equipment, equipping them with the skills needed for success in the workforce.

School College Work Initiative (SCWI)

Lakehead District School Board partners with Confederation College to offer the School College Work Initiative. Students enrolled in SCWI are able to earn both a college credit and a secondary credit. In 2024 LDSB had 150 students participate in college course such as Welding, Tech Studies, Foods of America, Aviation to name a few.



Level One Apprenticeship Program

We are pleased to announce that interested Grade 12 students can complete their level 1 apprenticeship training in Automotive service Technician (310S) and plan to expand the offerings to General Carpentry (403) in 2025. We plan to further expand the programming to ensure we meet student needs as they evolve. LDSB is very proud of our two students that successfully completed their level one training in Automotive Service Technician.

Exploring the Trades

Skilled trades continue to be a preferred pathway for many students in secondary school. Skilled trades events were offered to students in Grades 7 to 12 to ensure that students had multiple opportunities to learn with and from industry partners. Through these experiences, students actively engaged in learning tasks and were able to ask industry specific questions to inform their decision making about future education, career/life goals. Our goal at Lakehead Public Schools is to continue to provide opportunities for students to participate in technology as well as Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) options which will prepare them for future careers.

Transition to Secondary

Grade 8 to 9 transition information sessions took place in all intermediate classrooms. Guidance counsellors and Indigenous graduation coaches met with Grade 8 students in their schools, and Grade 8 students toured secondary schools to familiarize themselves with the space and to participate in activities to provide them with an understanding of the many electives available in secondary school. Through the school visits, students developed peer relationships through team building activities and engaging workshops and were invited to participate in the annual secondary school pow wow in the spring. Families joined secondary school staff at the annual open house to visit subject departments and meet administrators, teachers, and guidance staff. The Grade 8 transition information sessions help students to make informed decisions for secondary school courses and programs, and students learn to plan for future education and career goals with the support from guidance counsellors and educators.

Experiential Learning for Guidance Counsellors

To better understand the apprenticeship pathway and our region's labour market, guidance counsellors participated in tours of industry and a panel discussion with industry partners. Guidance counsellors will continue to receive professional development opportunities in the 2025-2026 school year which will provide them with the information that will assist students who may be interested in pursuing an apprenticeship program.

Technology and Skilled Trades: TAS10

Ontario's new Technology curriculum emphasizes hands-on, experiential learning to prepare students for the evolving world of work, focusing on innovation, critical thinking, and real-world applications. At Lakehead Public Schools, educators are engaging in specialized training to align their teaching with this updated curriculum. By equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge to deliver high-quality instruction using modern strategies, tools, and technologies, we ensure students are well-prepared for success in post-secondary education, apprenticeship training, and careers in high-demand sectors.



Exploring Pathways Through Experiential Learning

Lakehead Public Schools is providing educators with specialized training on LEGO Education to bring innovative, hands-on learning to intermediate grades. This training equips teachers with the tools to engage students in coding, robotics, and problem-solving activities that spark curiosity and creativity. By incorporating these dynamic STEM experiences, students begin exploring pathways into the skilled trades while developing essential 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and digital literacy. This initiative supports a strong foundation for future learning and career opportunities in technology driven industries.



KINGFISHER LAKE

Kingfisher Lake Outdoor Education Centre

Last year Kingfisher Outdoor Education Centre welcomed more than 4,000 students. Since 1970 this incredible place has taught students more about the land and the plants and animals we share it with. Cooking, canoeing, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and fire-building are just a few of the activities students took part in last year while staff provide experiential, curriculum-based learning. Overnight programming continued to also be a highlight in 2023-24.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6LxmC890aLU>



Facilities & Infrastructure

At Lakehead Public Schools, we are committed to provide safe and secure spaces for our staff, students and school communities. In the 2023-24 fiscal year, our facilities team completed more than two dozen capital projects worth \$8,364,509.00 including:

Program Renewal

- new sensory room at Vance Chapman Public School.
- Inviting Schools
- interior and exterior painting of Nor'wester View Public School; and
- new play structure for Nor'wester View Public School.

Energy Management

- ongoing steam to hot water conversion at Westgate Collegiate and Vocational Institute;
- new LED lighting retrofits at Crestview Public School, Five Mile Public School; and Superior Collegiate and Vocational Institute (phase 1);
- new Building Automation Systems (BAS) & crawlspace ventilation for Sherbrooke Public School and duct cleaning;
- three new Heat Recovery Ventilators (HRV) at Five Mile Public School; and
- new BAS and unit ventilators for C. D. Howe Public School (ongoing to be complete August of 2025).

Electrical

- back-up power system for Gorham and Ware Community School;
- new over current and surge protection for Gorham Ware Public School; and
- new exterior lighting at the Kiss n Go area of Westmount Public School.

Site Work

- new play area improvements for Nor'wester View Public School;
- sidewalk improvements at Kakabeka Falls Public School; and
- new pavement for student drop-off and traffic flow at Crestview Public School to alleviate traffic congestion on Oliver Road.

Accessibility

- new accessible surface for play area at Westmount Public School;
- new paved play area around the back of the school at Whitefish Valley Public School;
- new accessible surface for play area at Whitefish Valley Public School;
- new multi-needs washroom at Westmount Public School; and
- new video surveillance entry system for Jim McQuaig Education Center.

Building

- upgrades to second floor boys and girls washrooms at McKellar Park School;
- new floor tiling for Nor'wester View Public School and Algonquin Public School;
- refurbish well water intake system at Five Mile School;
- office and meeting room renovation in atrium area at Woodcrest Public School

Many exciting upgrades are scheduled for the upcoming school year. As always, our upgrades and infrastructure projects satisfy the legislated requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Environment, Ontario Fire Marshall, and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.



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Mission, Vision, and Values

Lakehead District School Board's mission, vision, and values were developed in collaboration with our valued stakeholders both inside our organization and within the broader community. Our mission, vision, and values shape all of our actions and decisions across the school system.

Our Mission:

Lakehead Public Schools is committed to the success of every student.

Our Vision:

We promote and support equity of opportunities and outcomes for students, in an environment that is accessible, safe, inclusive, and respectful. We support every student and staff member to be inspired and successful lifelong learners.

Our Values:

Inclusion, Respect, Integrity, Empathy, Responsibility.



You belong here

A horizontal brushstroke in a rainbow color palette (yellow, green, blue, purple, red) is positioned directly beneath the text "You belong here".