



In this space, we'll be sharing information and resources related to First Nations, Métis and Inuit education throughout EIPS. We'll highlight what's happening in our Division schools, provide resources available for students and families, and share upcoming school and community events. Our goal is to share an update at the beginning of each month.

DECEMBER 2023

Upcoming Events and Important Dates

Welcome to Frost Exploding Moon - pawâcakinisîsipîsim <ᐊᓂਪσਿੰਧਾ>

Christmas and New Year's Events Around Town These events are not EIPS directed. We are sharing events that are happening around us this Christmas season in the greater Edmonton area.

December 16-17 – [miyitowin മിറ്റോണ് Exchange of gifts](#), in Edmonton

December 16-17 – [Wholly Handmade](#), in Sherwood Park, at the Agora

December 18 – Sharing Métis [Winter Solstice Stories with Jason Bigcharles](#), Rupertsland Institute

December 20 – [newayak kisikohk–Cree Night Sky Teachings with George Desjarlais](#), in Edmonton

December 21 – [Winter Solstice Storytelling with Jerry Saddleback](#), in Edmonton

December 26 – [Indigenous Campfire Conversations with host Beaver Hills Biosphere](#)

December 31 – [Metis Crossing's New Year's Eve Celebration & Community Dance](#)

January 2024

January 8 – [In-person Cree Language Classes](#), in Edmonton

January 10 – [Online Cree Language Classes](#), over Zoom

Upcoming Days of Significance

There are many important dates of significance in the coming weeks, and EIPS is planning many engaging learning experiences for staff and students across the Division. Please mark your calendars now, so you don't miss out on these very special events.

Family Gathering | January 10

The EIPS First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education team is thrilled to invite you all to our Indigenous Education family gathering on **Wednesday, January 10 from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.** It will be a **Métis Kitchen Party!** Glen Allan Elementary, located at 106 Georgian Way in Sherwood Park, has generously offered their gym space for our gathering. Please join us for a meal to begin the evening and then spend time together listening to Métis fiddle champions Alex Kusturok and Brianna Lizotte as well as learning some basic Métis dance steps. It will be a wonderful family dance party to lighten up the long winter evenings! To help with our planning and guarantee there'll be enough food for everyone in attendance, RSVP through the online form as soon as possible to secure your spot.

[RSVP online](#)

You may have seen our two special guests on the news when they were part of the Indigenous delegation to travel to Rome to meet with the Pope. Alex and Brianne brought the beauty, strength and resilience of their Métis culture by playing their fiddles in the Vatican. [Watch the video](#) You can learn more about [Alex Kusturok](#) and [Brianna Lizotte](#) from their webpages.

IMPORTANT UPDATE:

January 4 is [National Ribbon Skirt Day](#), but EIPS is on winter break at that time. Therefore, we've planned our own EIPS division-wide Ribbon Skirt/Ribbon Shirt Day on **February 7**.

Direct Student Support

Do you know who your Lead Teacher is at your child's school? Connect with Ms Zapesocki, the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Lead Teacher at the school.

'Tis the Season our loved, near and dear may need a helping hand Our team of lead teachers, consultants and administrators want you to know we're thinking about you. Below is a list of community organizations offering support and assistance—whether you're looking to offer help or receive it—throughout this holiday season.

- Bissell Centre: 780-423-2285
- Canadian Native Friendship Centre: 780-761-1900
- Fort Saskatchewan Food Bank: 780-998-4099 | fortsaskfoodbank@gmail.com
- F.R. Haythorne Junior High has food hampers for families. Contact Lana Lastiwka at 780-467-3800.
- Lamont County of Lamont Food Bank: 780-619-6955 | countylamontfoodbank@gmail.com
- WECAN Food Basket: The WECAN Food Basket Society operates as a 'warehouse without walls.' They buy food in bulk and distribute to community-based depots. Members—\$5 annual membership—enjoy access to purchase fresh and nutritious food at an affordable price. [Locations](#)
- WINGS [Season of Safe Nights](#): 1-866-331-3933

Merry Christmas, Happy Solstice and we'll see you in the New Year!

Resources of Interest

Grant for Métis students. Drayden Insurance has created a scholarship to better support Métis post-secondary students in their academic careers. Three students will receive a \$1,000 scholarship towards their tuition. [This scholarship is by nomination](#).

Study Help for Métis students. Rupertsland Institute has secured access to Alberta ExamBank for K-12 Métis students to test their understanding through online practice. Métis students can sign up for the [RECC Room](#) to find the login for their MNA Region. Questions? Contact education@rupertsland.org.

Curious about Indigenous-focused events and programs planned for our area?

- Visit [Strathcona County's Indigenous Connections](#) page for information and upcoming events.
- The City of Fort Saskatchewan has a [Truth and Reconciliation initiatives page](#) and an active [Indigenous Society of Fort Saskatchewan](#).
- The [Edmonton Indigenous Relations Community Bulletin](#) shares events and initiatives in the Edmonton area.

Interested in learning more about the Cree 13 Moon calendar?

[Cree Literacy Network](#) has a [printable 2024 calendar](#) around the Cree th- and y-dialects. The website is also full of excellent information and resources on Cree language and culture. The names of the 13 Moons can vary, depending on one's teachings, dialect, place and culture. For example, Métis scholar [Elmer Ghostkeeper outlines the 13 Moons](#) from his teachings—compared to Solomon Ratt's printable calendar, above. You can read more in Elmer Ghostkeeper's book, *Spirit Gifting: The Concept of Spiritual Exchange*.

[When the Trees Crackle with the Cold](#) by Bernice Johnson-Laxdal and Miriam Korner is an excellent book and activity pack that can be used by families to learn more about the 13 Moons.

For inquiries about First Nations, Métis and Inuit education happening in your school, please reach out to the designated lead teacher, [Kim Zapesocki](#), 780-998-7771.