

R.B. Russell Vocational High School

Community Report 2024-2025

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Our Purpose

Winnipeg School Division provides a learning environment that fosters the growth of every learner's potential and provides equitable opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills, and ways of being necessary for nurturing a just, sustainable, and democratic society where everyone belongs, thrives, and is included.

Our Vision

Is for current and future students learning and working within the Winnipeg School Division to be:

Engaged, Confident,
Inspired, and Successful
Learners.

About Our School

At R.B. Russell Vocational High School, nestled in the heart of the Winnipeg School Division, we are committed to providing a learning environment that fosters the growth of every learner's potential and provides equitable opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills, and ways of being necessary for nurturing a just, sustainable, and democratic society where everyone belongs, thrives, and is included. With a focus on excellence, we are dedicated to preparing our students for the future and providing a rich learning experience. R.B. Russell prepares students to begin a career in trades, continue trades education or pursue university or college education when they graduate. We offer 9 vocational programs with 6 providing the opportunity to work towards level 1 apprenticeship standing. Work experience and career education are prioritized to support our students in transitioning to employment and post-secondary education. RB Russell is committed to Truth and Reconciliation through answering the Calls to Action related to the cultivation of culture, community, language, and land in our schools. Cultural experiences are infused into the daily routines and classroom settings as we work on a path to an Indigenous-inclusive education system that is grounded in Indigenous histories, cultures, languages, traditional values and knowledge, and contemporary lifestyles. We have an incredible staff with a passion for teaching, enthusiasm for working with learners of all ages and commitment to building a sense of belonging and community. We are proud of our learners, staff and families who make R.B. Russell the incredible community that it is. Thank you for allowing our school to be a part of your students' journey as they grow as a person and learner. Miigwetch.



Cultural Highlights

- Smudging
- Eagle's Nest Beading
- Sweat Lodge Ceremony
 - Pipe Ceremony
 - Medicine Picking
- Full Moon Ceremonies
- Letting Go Ceremony
- Land Based Education
 - Sacred Fire
- Lodge Room Teaching
- Traditional Ribbon Skirt/Shirt Making
- Grandfather Harvesting & Returning to Mother Earth
- Indigenous Knowledge Keeper / Elder



My name is Elaine Mayham and I am the WSD Divisional Indigenous Knowledge Keeper. I facilitate healing through cultural practices, education, and community connections. I support the healing process by conducting sacred ceremonies such as the Pipe Ceremony, Full Moon Ceremony, Letting Go Ceremony and serve as a Sweat Lodge Keeper. In the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation, I share the Indigenous perspective on the Treaties of Canada. Additionally, I teach the art of Ribbon Shirt and Ribbon Skirt making, sharing the teachings about their significance and purpose. I also provide education on traditional medicinal plants and their practical uses for daily well-being.

Land-based Learning Experiences:

R.B. Russell students have been busy all year deepening their cultural knowledge and skills with Land-based learning experiences. Led and taught by our divisional Knowledge Keeper, Elaine Mayham, our Metis Way of Life teacher, Teresa Byre, our Scaabe Erica Sherk and supported by classroom teachers, Andrew Crawford and Will Jones, students have been taking part in many seasonal activities that support both learning from the Land and preparing important Ceremonies.

In autumn, we harvested both sage for our Morning Smudge Ceremonies and Grandfather Stones for our monthly Sweat Lodge Ceremonies. These harvesting activities took students out of the classroom and deep into natural settings where the learning is physical, creative and memorable. Students also learned from our Knowledge Keeper about the fundamentals of Ceremony, especially Fire keeping for Sweat Lodge Ceremonies and other Sacred Fires. Throughout the year, students continued caring for the outdoor learning space and Ceremony Ground by moving firewood, maintaining tools, and keeping the area clean and ready for use. In Spring, we returned Grandfather Stones to the land, celebrated Indigenous Excellence, and look forward to a new year of learning and community.

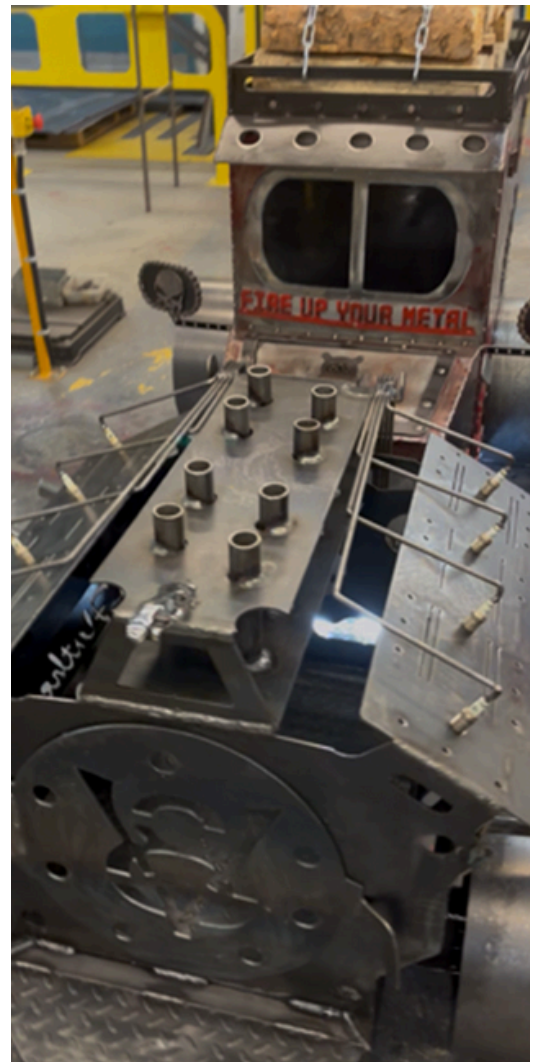
R.B Russell continues to open its doors wide for both students and our school community by offering the traditional skills of Ribbon Shirt and Skirt making, along with Metis Beading, and hosting a Full Moon Ceremony each month. These are opportunities for our community and students to come together to share a meal, some laughter and stories, and learn.



Student Highlights



R.B. Russell Vocational High School is excited and proud of our two grade 12 Welding students, Ocean Beck and Larry Roulette. These two students spent 2 1/2 months designing and fabricating a rat rod fire pit. The rat rod fire pit was entered in the Canadian Welding Bureau associations fire pit challenge competition. Larry and Ocean's design beat out nine other school entries and took first place.



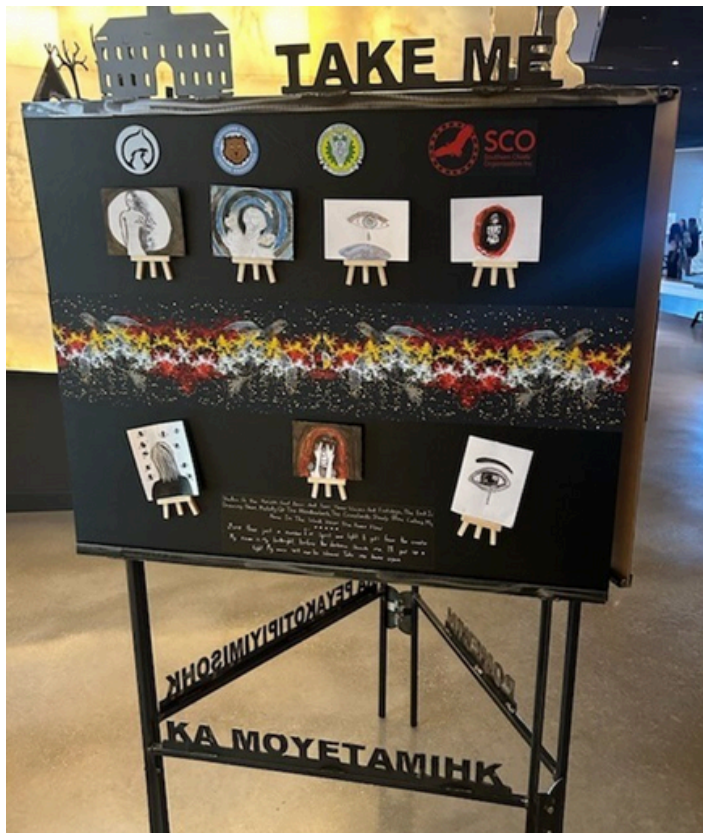


From September 2024 to June 2025, a group of RB Russell students have been walking out every second Tuesday with the North End Bear Clan. The Room 8 class and a few other willing volunteers have made 50 lunch bags, containing a sandwich, a granola bar and a box drink, which are taken round the neighbourhood with bottles of water in a wagon donated by the Bear Clan. The students talk to the people they meet on the street, ask what they need and offer them food and water, for which they are very grateful. On one occasion, in the depth of winter, the Health Care Aide class came with us and handed out toques, gloves, socks and underwear which they had brought. One of our school group, Kaylan Westwood, joined Bear Clan on their evening walks and has since become a fully-fledged member, trained in sharps removal and the use of Naloxone for overdoses. Kaylan graduated this year, and we will miss his leadership within our school group.

The Bear Clan finished with a whole school walk along Dufferin, McGregor, Selkirk, Stella Walk and back to RB Russell. We made 100 lunches and handed them all out along with 120 bottles of water. We had intended to walk further, but the needs were so great that we ran out of food before we reached Main Street. Such is the immensity of the problems the Bear Clan encounter on a day-to-day basis.

We have plans to continue our walks next year, with the possibility of joining some evening walks with the full Bear Clan.





Strathcona School's project-based learning initiative on residential schools and reconciliation known as 'Universal Human Rights, Residential Schools, and Reconciliation'. This cross-divisional collaboration included our Welding and Graphic Design programs. Two welding students constructed a frame for students to place their artwork. Two graphic design students taught the students from Strathcona how to digitally illustrate the design and print the shirts used for the event. The work that our students accomplished were displayed at an event at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights on May 22, 2025.





Graphic Design students created the design of the flag, our students proudly carried, during the walk for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.



R.B. Russell Culinary Students Shine at the 13th Annual Stone Soup Competition

For the first time ever, R.B. Russell Culinary students Cody Dunik and Hayden Boulanger proudly represented their school in the prestigious Stone Soup Competition, hosted by the Canadian Culinary Federation and the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba.

The Stone Soup Fundraiser, now in its 13th year, is an annual March event that brings the community together through the retelling of the beloved Stone Soup folktale. Participants and attendees enjoy a warm bowl of soup while raising vital funds and awareness for school meal programs across Manitoba.

Graduation Celebrations



Annual North End Grad Walk June 12, 2025



**High School Graduates
2025**

**Pre-Industry Training
Graduates
2025**



Other Student Activities

- North End Connect / Computers for Schools Manitoba**
 - RB Student-Led E-Waste Recycle Drive**
 - Morning Star Network of Student Support**
 - Mount Carmel Teen Clinic**
 - Student Visit to the Manitoba Museum**
 - Student Visit to the Human Rights Museum**
- Community Referral Partnership with Assiniboine and Median Credit Unions**
 - Skills Canada Manitoba 2025**
- Tackle Your Finances with Access Credit Union and the Blue Bombers**
 - Drivers Z**
- Canadian Welding Bureau Fire Pit Challenge Competition**
- Strathcona School's Project-Based Learning Initiative**
 - Píhtikwé Skatepark Logo Competition**
 - Student Helping Student Group**
 - Lunchtime Clubs**
 - Workout / Sport Clubs**
 - Festival Du Voyageur**
 - Mind Over Metal Welding Camp**
 - Running Club**
 - Mount Carmel Young Parent Group**
 - Partnership with CEDA Pathways**

Community Highlights

- Bear Clan Walk
- MMIWG Walk
- North End Grad Walk
- Community Garden
- RB Russell Welcome Back BBQ
- Community Schools Career Expo
- Community Feast
- National Day of Truth and Reconciliation Day
- Louis Riel Day



During the school year many students and their families participate in activities that are important to our families. These activities show our students that our RB family is in large part, out reaching, into the community that we live in.



The executive director from Pihtikwé Skatepark came to the graphic design program and asked students if they can design the new logo for the skatepark. The logo is based on inclusion from people of all backgrounds, provide a sense of community and energy and appeal those who skateboard, BMX, and ride scooters. Students drafted their designs and were submitted to the board, and one was chosen. The chosen design was then posted on the skatepark's Instagram page for the skateboard community to vote for their favorite colour combination of the logo. As a result, this is the finished design. In addition, the graphic design program will be creating promotional items and providing print and design services for the skatepark.

These are the blinds that were designed by Jason Fleury for the family room. They were installed on December 12, 2024.



Parent Highlights



- Celebrations of Learning
 - Feast of generosity
 - Holiday Market
 - Children's Holiday Party
 - North End Grad Walk
 - Bear Clan Walk
 - MMIWG Walk
 - Community Celebration
 - Graduation Feast
- Community Resource and ID Event
 - Grandparent Group
 - Parent Room
 - Eagle's Nest Beading
- Traditional Ribbon Skirt Making
 - Nutrition Bingo
 - Zumba
 - First Aid Training
- Food Handlers Certificate
- Ojibwe Language Classes
 - Open Gym – Basketball
- Monthly Family Breakfast
 - Full Moon Ceremonies
- Community Support Worker
- Grade 9 Parent Welcome Dinner
 - Food Security



R.B. Russell Career Lab

Vision

To cultivate meaningful relationships with the school community, gain valuable insights into the community's needs and use community feedback to inform decision-making for R.B. Russell programming and partnerships. Our goal is to amplify community voices and recognizing the wisdom that guides the significance of living "The Good Life" - Mino Bimaadiziwin.

Our vision includes the development of programs that build essential skills, nurture passions, and create clear career pathways for all community members. This is a transformative opportunity to construct a robust network of support, linking individuals to the resources and people who sustain and uplift the community.

To realize this vision, we recognize the importance of forging partnerships that prioritize collaboration and value community input. By reaching out to potential partners who share these values, we can ensure that the voices of our community are heard and incorporated into our collective journey forward.

2024–2025 Highlights: Meaningful Learning, New Partnerships, and Expanded Opportunities at R.B. Russell

The 2024–25 school year was an exciting time of growth at R.B. Russell, marked by new partnerships and innovative programming that created rich learning experiences for our

School and Community Partnerships

- **Culinary Connections**

Students participated in after-school cooking sessions with a professional chef, building culinary skills and confidence.

They brought home ingredients and recipes to prepare meals for their families, extending the learning experience into their homes and fostering family connections.



Indigenous Youth Mentorship Program

Students engaged in a variety of leadership development

- **CWB Welding Workshops / Women of Steel Camps**

Several welding camps offered hands-on training to women from the community, many of whom have since taken steps toward new careers in the trades.



- **New Media Manitoba Partnership**
Grade 9 and 12 students learned to create virtual worlds using Unreal Editor, showcasing their work at an exhibit hosted at StudioLabXR downtown – building both technical skills and creative confidence.



- **North End Connect Partnership with Computers for Schools**

Students participated in workshops on hardware, networking, and mentorship. The partnership also organized a successful E-Waste Week, collecting and recycling donated electronics to support sustainability.

Collaborated with an interior designer to create detailed plans for the new lab space. Installed and began using 3D printers for workshops with students, programs, and staff.

Consulted with the Indigenous Advisory Committee to ensure the lab design reflects Indigenous perspectives.

Phase 1 construction (3D printing and textile labs) will begin summer 2025!



- **Indigenous Youth Mentorship Program**

Students engaged in a variety of leadership development activities, building confidence, cultural pride, and essential skills that will serve them throughout their academic and personal lives.

- **Ojibwe Language Family Workshops**

Families gathered over shared meals to learn Ojibwe language through games, conversations, and interactive activities—strengthening cultural knowledge and community bonds.



- **Fall Career Expo**

Over 1,000 students from R.B. Russell and 14 other divisional schools explored a wide range of career pathways, connecting directly with professionals and discovering future possibilities.

- **Career Trek – Wonder of Work Program**

Grade 5 and 6 students from across the division participated in eight hands-on Saturday workshops, exploring programs at R.B. Russell and discovering diverse career options.

- **Divisional Electrical Technology Program Returns to RB**

Students from across the division came together to study in the Electrical Technology program, contributing to a vibrant and diverse learning community.



DriverZ Program Returns to RB

Students participated in driver training, helping them take important steps toward obtaining their licenses and increasing their independence.



Upcoming Bus Driver Training Program (Fall 2025)

In partnership with the division, R.B. Russell will offer bus driver training for community members, supporting career development and meeting division needs.

Post-Secondary Partnerships with Red River College Polytechnic (RRC Polytech)



- **Administrative Assistant Program**
Community members completed coursework from November to May, followed by practicums at WSD schools, helping many begin new careers in school administration.

- **Library Technician Program Expansion**
A second cohort was added, with two full classes now supporting the ongoing transformation of library commons across the division.

- **5th Class Power Engineering Program**
Continued partnership allowed students to complete coursework at R.B. Russell and utilize the lab at RRC Polytech.

Inspiration Lab – Innovation in Progress

- **Hired Marney Stapley, Director of North Forge, to consult on the final lab design.**
- **Collaborated with an interior designer to create detailed plans for the new lab space.**
- **Installed and began using 3D printers for workshops with students, programs, and staff.**
- **Consulted with the Indigenous Advisory Committee to ensure the lab design reflects Indigenous perspectives.**
- **Phase 1 construction (3D printing and textile labs) will begin summer 2025!**

