

Niji Mahkwa School

Community Report 2024 – 2025



WINNIPEG SCHOOL DIVISION

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Mission Statement

Niji Mahkwa School and Community upholds the belief that all children have an inherent right to the highest quality of holistic education. The integration of traditional, cultural teachings in a supportive learning environment will provide students with strengths and skills to meet the challenges of life.

School Profile

The school ranges from grades N to 8 on site and grades 8 – 12 in the Songide'ewin program.

The staff is structured in the following teams: Cultural/Linguistic, Academic, Support, Songide'ewin, and our Shops program.

We facilitate the Four Directions Program, which consists of blended and integrated programming in the areas Academic, Cultural, Linguistic and Technology. The importance of each area is considered equally significant to a child's learning process. Math and Science will be the focus for teacher and classroom work in professional development and program enhancement.

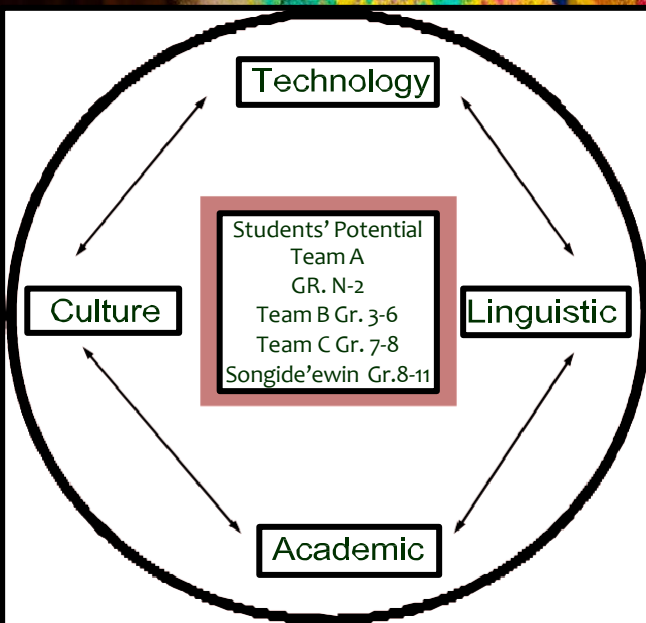
The Cultural/Linguistic team supports the classroom experience by providing children with the linguistic knowledge of a cultural way of life. The students are exposed to both Ininimowin and Anishinabemowin classes. The linguistic program implemented at Niji Mahkwa School was designed by the Ininew and Anishinabe teachers of our school in consultation with staff and parents.

Goals & Objectives

To collectively develop and maintain a safe environment that will nurture a student's self-worth, self-discipline, increased awareness of inner resources and stronger identity.

- ♦ To promote, develop and empower Family, Extended Family, Elders and Community members as equal partners with Rights and Responsibilities who will become Pro-active participants in the education of our children.
- ♦ To nurture respect for spiritual guides and teachers.
- ♦ To promote the seven teachings as adopted by Niji Mahkwa Parents, Community, Staff and Students: Knowledge, Honour, Courage, Honesty, Humility and Truth.
- ♦ To ensure the preservation, appreciation, and utilization of traditional languages by offering Cree and Ojibwe language instruction as compulsory subjects. Other languages may be offered.
- ♦ To promote a balanced lifestyle by incorporating cultural teachings to meet the students spiritual, emotional, physical and mental needs.

Niji Mahkwa School Structure



Working The Circle into the 21st Century

Niji Mahkwa School is guided by the Four Directions curriculum document that has been created in consultation with spiritual guides and teachers, staff, and parents. The diagram below illustrates that the programming is centered around the child's abilities and strengths. The four directions of programming at Niji Mahkwa identified on the circle have been developed into an educational framework based on objectives determined for each of these strands. In this way it is the intention of all involved in the educational process at Niji Mahkwa to maximize the learning opportunities and potential of each of the students.

The Seven

- ♦ To Cherish knowledge is to know wisdom
- ♦ To know love is to find peace
- ♦ To honor all creation is to have
- ♦ respect Courage is to face life with
- ♦ integrity Honesty in facing a situation
- ♦ is to be brave
- ♦ Humility is to know yourself as a sacred part of





Building Student Success with Indigenous Parents

This year at Niji Mahkwa, we focused on in-school programming that brought families together through cultural and fun activities. Our goal, is to see parent/caregivers involved in the school and have the students further engage with our teaching community. The following is a list of activities planned for our families through our BSSIP funding:

- Beading workshops
- Sewing Workshops (ribbon skirts, blanket, applique, dream catcher teachings & creation, and vest making)
- Family Fun night events
- Cultural Workshops
- Afterschool jigging classes
- Family "Make and Take" activities (tradition food and meals activities for families and small creative activities through our Home Economic/Industrial Arts department)
- Further connection to ceremony through our school cultural supports
- Teachings from withing our parent/caregiver community

Our most popular series of events was the Family Fun Nights held throughout the school year. For our Family Fun Nights, we played games like bingo and trivia for household necessities and prizes. Families also come to Family Funs nights for games, activities like gingerbread house making, STEM activities like making Red River Carts, and gym games.

Universal Food and Nutrition

This year, we were fortunate enough to have funding from the province and a generous donation from the **Schroeder Foundation**, to roll out our universal food and nutrition program. Starting in November, we were able to provide Niji Mahkwa students with heathy breakfast, lunch, and snack options. The **Schroeder Foundation** also paid for all the renovations to our kitchen, making it a commercial space which enables our food coordinators to have the ability to cook for our entire school twice a day. We still also have access to the Canadian Food and Nutrition funding, making all 3 layers of funding available for us to feed our students.

Parent programs at Niji Mahkwa 2024/25

September 25th, 2024
October 23rd, 2024
November 27th, 2024
December 4th, 2024

January 15th, 2025
February 26th, 2025
April 9th, 2025

Parent council meetings were held once a month to help parent council members plan and decide what parent programs they would like to have for each school month. Parent council meetings also gave an opportunity for parents to voice any concerns they would like to bring attention to our school administrators. Snacks and refreshments were served during all parent council meetings.

Family Room 108 (Parent Room)

Sewing Program

During the whole school year, parents have been busy making/sewing Indigenous ceremonial regalia like ribbon skirts, ribbon shirts and moccasins. Our home Economics staff have also helped with the instructions with the making of these items. Parents and community members have also helped instruct in the sewing program this school year. Snacks and refreshments were served whenever the program was on.

Crafts Program

The crafts program was instructed solely by the parents. The crafts program encouraged parents to engage parents with other parents, which helped to promote leadership and guiding/teaching skills. This school year, some of the Indigenous crafts items being made were dream catchers. The lead parents who took the initiative, would give a basic Indigenous teaching and meanings behind the dream catcher. Snacks and refreshments were also served throughout the crafts program this school year.

Baking program

Starting in the second half of the new school year, (January 2025), parents wanted to have a weekly baking program in the school. The Home Economics teacher - Sam Duncan - helped parents bake item/items of their choice for the afternoon. Baking ingredients and supplies were supplied with our Ms. Duncan staff and in school as well. A parent would also take the lead with the baking instruction at this time along with our Home Economics teacher.

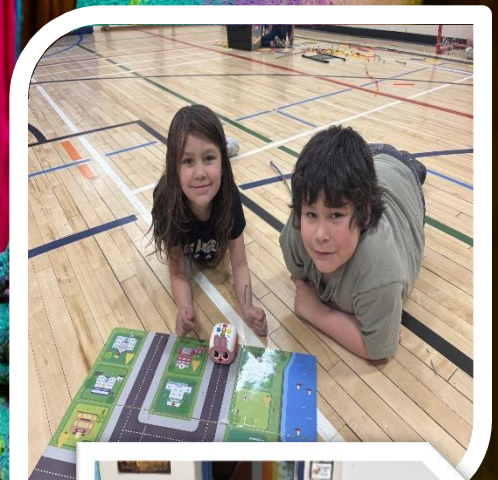
Make and Take 3

Our Home Economics/Industrial Arts staff helped with the *Make and Take* program. This was held once a month in the school for our participating parents. Parents prepared a full meal, along with dessert, for their families to take home with our Home Economics teacher. The woods shops teacher also had fun with parents, instructing on how to make toolboxes to take home when completed.



School Activities and Celebrations

- Gummy Bear Olympics – An exciting June activity where student participate and engage in a series of challenges geared toward
- Winter Concert - Our yearly winter event where each class plans a performance for our parents, caregivers, and grandparents. It's always a heartwarming event as our kids work hard
- STEM Day – One of our exciting annual events for student learning. Student go to the University of Winnipeg to participate in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math learning for the day.
- Book Fair – Our first book fair in years! Our students gathered in the library to peruse and purchase books for both their classroom libraries and their own collections. We are definitely doing again next year!
- Treaty Days – Every year, Niji Mahkwa recognizes the numbered treaties by having winter fun with planned activities in the snow.
- School Swimming Programs – We were very fortunate to have 2 different programs for our Niji students giving kids the opportunity to learn from certified swimming instructors.
- Remembrance Day/Indigenous Veterans Day – Our annual honoring of both Remembrance Day and Indigenous Veteran's Day. Indigenous veteran Doug Harney of the Aboriginal Veterans Association of Manitoba came to our school and spoke to our students about the importance of honoring those who served our country to preserve of freedom.
- Truth and Reconciliation Recognition – We recognize our shared history and the lasting impacts of Indian Residential Schools in Canada.
- Spirit Week – A weeklong celebration in March to get students engaged and excited before spring break.
- Halloween Week – A week of spooky, scary fun!
- Awards Day – In June, we gathered to give our students awards for their achievements for the year.
- Niji's Got Talent – Our 1st annual talent show where we celebrated the gifts and talents of our Niji Mahkwa students. Showcased students performed songs, stories, and dance for our school during a whole-school assembly. This was a highlight of our school year as we look forward to doing it again next year.
- Carnival Day – A celebration for the end of the school year at Niji Mahkwa, we planned a day with the kids with inflatables and games for all the students.



NIJI MAHKWA IN ACTION



School Covenant

- ♦ I have a right to be happy, to be treated with kindness at Niji Mahkwa.
This means that we will agree to live by the Smudge Prayer.
- ♦ I have a right to be myself at Niji Mahkwa.
This means that individual differences must be respected.
- ♦ I have a right to be safe at Niji Mahkwa.
This means that our minds, bodies, spirits and emotions will be protected.
- ♦ I have a right to hear and be heard at Niji Mahkwa.
This means that my opinions and wishes will be
- ♦ I have a right to learn about myself at Niji Mahkwa.
This means that I will be free to express my feelings, thoughts and gifts respectfully.



*The Staff, Students and
Parents of Niji Mahkwa have
committed to honor the
SEVEN TEACHINGS in
their relationship with
each other.*



Niji Mahkwa School
EACH CHILD IS A SACRED BEING

Principal: Mr. R. Boulette
Vice Principal: Ms. L. Dysart



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