Elmwood High School Student Success Initiative

July 2015

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NURTURING CAPACITY
FOUNDING SPONSOR

SUNCOR ENERGY FOUNDATION
Preface

Nurturing Capacity

The K-12 Indspire Institute is focused on dramatically increasing high school completion rates among Indigenous students by building strong foundations in their K-12 education. Through various programs, resources and events, the Institute fosters collaboration between educators, communities, and others to improve educational outcomes for Indigenous students. Indspire conducts research to identify and document educational best practices from across Canada and shares these successful practices through the K-12 Indspire Institute. Indspire also champions Indigenous approaches to education, those that honour Indigenous culture, values, and world views. Through the Nurturing Capacity program, Indspire supports communities to improve educational outcomes through the documentation and evaluation of their successful practices. This community-led process is supported by an Indspire-funded Indigenous scholar, who works with programs on the ground to provide training on data collection and evaluation methodology.

Abstract

Elmwood High School initiated a student success initiative in 2010 through the support of the Province of Manitoba. The primary goal was to provide a framework for improving student engagement for successful transition to graduation. Indigenous students make up 34.5% of the overall student body and they receive supports in innovative and proactive ways to ensure they succeed toward graduation. The Student Success Initiative at Elmwood High School team go above and beyond to provide the space for Indigenous student success.
Acknowledgements

The researcher wishes to thank the support of Indspire for funding this research project. Many thanks go to the Elmwood High School Student Success Initiative team for their generosity in providing the documents, interviews, and conversations needed for mapping and articulating their program achievements and to understand their future plans for effective strategizing. Thanks for the research support from the research assistant for the work in developing this report.

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Executive Summary

The Elmwood High School Student Success Centre Initiative is funded through Manitoba provincial grants to support an in-school program focused on at-risk students who attend their school. Although the funding they receive is clearly earmarked for ‘all’ at-risk students, many Indigenous students find their way to the centre. The project leader is an Indigenous teacher who receives much support from her administration to run the program. The school principal oversees the project and collaborates extensively with staff, parents, community supporters and funders to focus on Indigenous pedagogies and perspectives, academic supports, cultural practices, and community needs and aspirations. They strive to engage the staff in alternative programming to support their students through proactive and culturally-relevant participation for satisfactory high school experiences and leads towards graduation. Student retention, pro-active student engagement, increased graduation rates reflect the success of this small program within a high school. Hallmarks of this small project are the creative, innovative, caring staff who go beyond the call of duty, and the strategic programming focused on increasing Indigenous student graduation rates.
Context

The Elmwood High School Student Success Initiative (SSI) is housed and operated out of the Student Success Centre, Elmwood High School, located in Winnipeg, Manitoba. It is a school that hosts over 571 senior high school students and 239 middle years students (SSI Report, 2014, 2015). The report notes: “Many families have socio-economic challenges – 35.4% of our families are below the Low Income Cut-Off (LICO), 43% are single parent families and 7.6% of our students do not live with parents. Our make-up is 34.7% self-declared (SSI 2015 Report) Aboriginal students, 5.7%, EAL [English as an Additional Language] students and we have many new students come our way at all times throughout the year” (P. 2). What is implied here is that socio-economic challenges ought to be addressed as they could likely impact how students fare in schools.

The 2015 SSI report indicates that students who took advantage of SSI supports increased their credit acquisition rates from 55% to 82% between the years 2011-2015. The SSI targets all students who attend the Elmwood High School as noted in their mission statement that reads, “To meet the educational, social and emotional needs of all students while striving to develop their potential by providing quality, wide-ranging programming within a safe and inclusive environment,” (The Elmwood Student Success Initiative Year 4 Final Report – 2013-2014, and Year 5 Final report, 2014-2015). Since the school is located in a high poverty area, it was invited to participate in a provincial project to address challenges to student success. The research data indicated that the SSI reflected both Western and Indigenous practices in working with the youth so the documentation process demonstrated that ‘Western knowledge and Indigenous knowledge’ was integrated and articulated toward their safe and inclusive environment.

The SSI reports (2014, 2015) stated that the “province suggested a three-prong approach: diagnostic identification, targeted intervention, and strengthening school-wide engagement.” Each approach involves a subset of priorities.

A. Diagnostic Identification:
   a. Develop an early warning system that identifies students at risk of leaving school;
   b. Use expanded capabilities of the MAYET student record system; and
   c. Develop a team that acts on the information.

B. Targeted Intervention:
   a. Student Success Teachers to work with the students
      - Elmwood chose to use a new delivery model in the form of a Student Success Centre
   b. Support of the Success Leaders in the form of
      - Consultant support from the Province
      - Support from the Inner City’s Machray Professional Learning and Leadership Centre
      - Administrative support/guidance/direction
Elmwood High School, in their participation in the provincial sponsored SSI, selected an approach for the “provision of academic and/or social-emotional supports with the Whole Child Philosophy as a guiding North Star the program has helped...students to get on track and stay on the path to graduation” (P. 1, SSI Year 4 Final Report – 2013-2014). The 2014-2015 report reflected these same guidelines. According to the report, The Whole Child Philosophy is guided by five tenets: students are engaged, supported, challenged, healthy and safe. This philosophy enables SSI “… to establish a solid base from which to build strong trusting, caring relationships, ultimately the essential element to help struggling students move forward” (P. 3, SSI Report 2015). The 2014 & 2015 Report outlined the positive impacts of the supports as being the reason that the students such as those who were at risk of leaving school and/or required additional supports benefited from the SSI model.

Students access and use the SSI Centre are presented as a recommendation/voluntary participation rather than implementing a mandatory use of the supports. This same sentiment was reflected both in the 2014-2015 final report and in many of the discussions we had with research participants:

- I also believe that it be voluntary for the kids to take part and choosing to go (Staff).
- We strongly suggest and sometimes teachers walk a student to the Centre (Staff).
- Sometimes I help students with their schedule, I ask where they’re from and I take them upstairs to the Centre, I tell them there’s someone I want them to go meet...Mr. A or Ms. S. This is a place for them to go, there’s food there (Staff).
- The year after I started coming here...I failed. Then one of the teachers told me to go to check out SSI (Student).
- Yes, there was Mr. A. who kind of informed me about the place and said it would be a good place. A good place for me to come and study (Student).
- We will make presentations in classes and invite students to make use of SSI (Staff).

The SSI 2014-15 Report outlined that the students who accessed the supports increased their “credit acquisition” by working with the SSI Centre staff to ensure that they gained the legitimate credits they needed in creative and practical ways to graduate. In one case, an Indigenous student reported that she was able to take up Indigenous literature content to gain an English credit acquisition to make her study more Indigenous focused. Her teacher instructed her to try out these books and she learned a lot from them. She expressed her gratitude for taking the course that had Indigenous content.

The initial phase of the SSI program was implemented as a three-year fully funded program to a ½ funding in the fourth year to where it now stands at its fifth year as a provincially recognized model program (SSI Final Report, 2014-2015).

According to the 2014, 2015 reports, the SSI model reflect the following elements:
1. The ‘Whole Child Philosophy’ guides the SSI program.
2. Participation in the SSI is voluntary although students at risk or off-track are encouraged to use the supports.
3. The implementation of a variety of innovative and outreach strategies (within the school and outside of the school) aim to engage and advance students socially, emotionally, and academically.
4. A provincially suggested three-pronged approach that addresses: a diagnostic identification system to determine which students might require the model; a targeted intervention of who would work with the students and the type of intervention model that is appropriate to use; and a strengthening school-wide engagement.

5. Data collection of numbers of students who use the SSI program outlined (SSI Year 4 Final Report) showed an increase in the number of students who used the Centre.

6. The staff adapted a model from an Ontario SSI that was located at Beaver Brae School in Kenora, Ontario where four pillars of approaches were considered. According to the 2014-2015 Final report, it indicated that the Beaver Brae School was one of the sites where the model was tested and where the staff could learn about it. Staff visited the Beaver Brae School to learn about the model details and took it back to adapt to their context.

An online search with the hopes of gathering more pertinent information on SSI revealed that while there is much information on the Elmwood High School website – there is no information on the Student Success Centre. It is highly recommended that the information linked to the SSI be listed on the website in some way.

**Indigenous Language Group**

The initial meeting with SSI staff and the review of documents provided to the researcher for review identified Indigenous language groups reflective of the Manitoba region. The Aboriginal (inclusive of First Nations, Inuit, Métis, and non-Status Indians) students who might access the SSI Centre are reflective of a diverse background representative of the Indigenous groups in Manitoba. Manitoba’s language/cultural Indigenous groups are: Anishinaabe, Cree, Dakota, Dene, Inuit, Métis, and Oji-Cree (Aboriginal People in Manitoba, 2014). Also, many Indigenous students must leave their First Nation communities to attend high school (since their home communities had either no high schools or the high school credits have limited choices); therefore they attend schools selected by their First Nation families and/or community school counsellors. In addition there are many other Indigenous students who live in the city (some going back many generations while others are recent residents) because their families may have moved for economic, education, health, security, and social issues. In addition, it is important to note that due to people moving across provinces and relocating to Winnipeg that other language/cultural students would reflect that move so any other Indigenous individuals could be present.

There are Indigenous people from the West and Eastern Canada who live in Winnipeg and, chances are, they would at the least ally and connect themselves with the Indigenous issues and Indigenous engagement in Winnipeg. I point this out because it might be that the children of these cross-provincial migrations might emerge in schools and might needs to access supports needed to be successful, or they may connect for culturally welcoming reasons. For the purposes of establishing the Indigenous population criteria required by Indspire’s Nurturing Capacity Project, the Indigenous students’ background information collected from the staff of SSI indicated that the ethnic make-up is 34.7% Indigenous students (SSI report, 2014 & 2015). In conversations with staff, it is apparent that some students originating from Northern Anishinaabe and/or Cree communities come to study during their high school years, some are individuals in-care of Child and Family Services, some are transient
according to families moving from one area to another, and others are students whose families have lived in the area for some time.

**History of Project Initiative**

On June 8, 2010, the Province of Manitoba launched a new pilot project adding supports to keep students in school with the aim of graduating. Minister Allan stated: “Finishing school gives students the tools they need to become contributing members of society, whether they are starting a job, learning a trade or continuing on to post-secondary education….This program will encourage and support students on their journey to complete their high-school educations” (News Release page, 2010). At that time, they invested $600,000 pilot projects toward selected divisions/schools and Winnipeg School Division’s Elmwood High School was one of those selected. The idea was that “Student success coaches in these schools will lead teams designed to provide additional academic and social supports to students that result in personalized adult relationships that are crucial to the success of struggling students” (News Release page).

The announcement stated:

This pilot project is part of the educational component of ALL Aboard, the Manitoba government’s poverty reduction initiative, and will identify students at risk of leaving school. At the middle-years level, the focus will be on student engagement, academic success and helping students with a successful transition into high school. At the high-school level the focus will be on student engagement, completing credits, graduation and transitioning into employment or post-secondary education” (News Release page).

What is interesting to note is that there is no mention of Indigenous students so it leaves us to guess that they might be part of this mix since the graduation rates of Indigenous students is far less than those of non-Indigenous students and may likely be considered at-risk students (Aboriginal Peoples in Manitoba, 2014). The provincial documentation is void of mentioning the particular needs of Indigenous students within this strategy. It would seem that schools like Elmwood High School would then have to take it upon themselves to best articulate how they could work with improving Indigenous student graduation rates. The Student Success Initiative at Elmwood High School have made some inroads in ensuring overall student success and noting the number of Indigenous students that used the SSI Centre since it opened to the point of having a graduation rate of 71% (SSI Report, 2015).
In 2010, Elmwood High School came on board to participate in the Provincial strategy and with the goal to improve graduation rates through the provision of additional school-based supports it the Student Success Initiative was designed to:

- Provide a framework for working in high poverty contexts;
- Identify core strategies to support schools in systematically identifying students at risk of dropping out;
- Identify core strategies to support students academically and socially; and
- Provide personnel to support implementation of the project.

The focus for middle years...“was to improve student engagement and assist with the transition to high school. The focus for senior high...was credit acquisition, graduation and successful transition to post-secondary education or employment” (P. 3).

**Development Focus**

Elmwood High School hosts both middle and senior years student body. The SSI report (2014, 2015) noted that the focus for middle years...“was to improve student engagement and assist with the transition to high school, while the focus for senior high...was credit acquisition, graduation and successful transition to post-secondary education or employment.” It noted that the SSI approach applied toward working with the middle years group was also beneficial for the senior high school students who needed that approach.

**Narrative Voices Lend Integrity to Logic Model**

As a researcher who is oriented toward qualitative research and sharing knowledges through human voices, I share some research findings with some narrative quotes. I contend that these voices/narratives lend integrity to the written point form mode of the Logic Model. In this section, I select a few quotes that are shared to hear ‘glimpses’ of what the interviews produced. I selected quotes that seemed pertinent to the main points shared and I selected from each of the sectors of individuals interviewed: staff, students, and community members.

“I think the name with success in it really informs people what the [SSI] Centre is about, so people are really focused on helping these students succeed and how they help them out of the pits and stumbles, the struggles they have and how do we help them through that? There is always a way to recover...One of the powerful things that came from [our work] was that this group was set up to help students coming in from the north and rural settings to become comfortable in an urban setting and then a student from Wasagamack [First Nation] said ‘It feels like home’(MB), “(Staff).

“For me, it’s been having Mr. A. support for some of my students who have attendance issues or other issues happening at home. Ms. S. has been a great liaison to try and bridge relations between family and school to get these students attending school regularly,” (Staff).
“Sometimes, I help students with their schedule, I ask them where they’re from and I take them...to the Centre. I tell them there’s someone I want them to meet...there is a place for them to go, there is food there,” (Staff).

“Another piece in terms of relating to Aboriginal students is that Joanne runs [an Aboriginal] leadership group with the junior high so they get a sense of [the Centre] before they’re in their senior high. If only we could expand it more for the Grade 7 and 8’s, the junior high would get access time in the SSI and the leadership to there and have fun” (Staff).

“When I first went to [the Centre], it was just a nice place to work and I would go mainly to have a nice table to work at instead of being crouched down in the hallways....Now I go for help on all my subjects and sometimes supports to get things done,” (non-Student).

“I used to skip [classes] and I came across the room and Mr. A. informed me about the CENTRE...[teachers] were patient with me and gave me lots of examples. I went to Aboriginal leadership meetings for groups and studying...food [is available] that is healthy for us..Ms. S. is a role model..she tells us about scholarships and future studies...I applied for university and I applied for treaty funding [with Ms. S’s help],” (Aboriginal Student).

“Ms. S. is a strong role model [for Aboriginal youth], she knows a lot...she is guiding me about [Aboriginal] family genealogy....I have a 14 month old that I need to care for and I have gone to the infant lab with my child so I can continue school” (Aboriginal Student).

“We will sit with student and call parents and look at history and ask them what their goals are. My thought is I ask them “What are your goals?”...and I will contact the parent with my student in front of me and hear the conversation...I will try hard to ensure that there is trust factor and the parent plays a significant role in their child’s education...we know through history that our Indigenous families have very little trust in the system..[I tell them] what my role is and what we are trying to do in the school and if needed I will go to the home and sit with them...and I will send a written plan...parents have an opportunity to respond,” (Staff).

“In our Aboriginal leaders group...I will find resources for families to connect with Indigenous supports such as the Manitoba Métis Federation, Urban Eagles Nest to support students in transition,” (Staff).

“If we have a student who needs to get a school credit we find a way to do this. For example, there was an Aboriginal student at-risk of not graduating and he grew up in a Northern First Nation community – we got him a school credit in an Aboriginal course toward his life cultural/linguistic community life knowledge: trapping, fishing, living in harmony with the land so then that student was able to graduate. We have to figure out a way our kids are honoured with that knowledge. How is it then when we lose a student who is overwhelmed and they go back home? The Aboriginal leaders group helps as we would help them share their knowledge and find ways to break their shyness of sharing. If we lose a student and their family went back home we try to find out why and work with them. We are now
supporting 340 students; we are looking at Indigenous students 127 students with over a 70% success rate!” (Staff).

“Ms. S. was on our advisory group and when we would talk about supporting students she would talk about how they are engaging parents from reserves because our program was about this. [Ms. S.] would make herself available to communicate with families” (Community Contact).

“My main role with Elmwood is supporting the teachers with any Métis specific and Aboriginal resources I can get for them and being a community resource that can support their students,” (Community Contact)

Two graduates (one Métis and one First Nation) met with me to talk about their time at Elmwood High School. Both credited the Aboriginal Leadership group as bringing them home to their identities as Aboriginal women. “Ms. S was very supportive in the Aboriginal Leadership group...I learned about opportunities from Ms. S. I think it is sad about how language is not passed – [I have] become a cultural teacher to my parents and friends [from what I learned at SSI],” (Elmwood SSI Graduate).

“We [now, as friends] have discussions about being Aboriginal...Ms. S. shared her own heritage and identity, learning from our mistakes when we look at how people act entitled. We need to speak up about racism and oppression, and Mr. B. was always about encouraging goal setting – get summer jobs, and references to jobs,” (Elmwood SSI Graduate).
Logic Model:

In this section, the logic model with its various headings followed by bullets, demonstrate what the school achieved during their work in the Building Success with Aboriginal Parents program.

**Inputs: Resources Human & Financial**

- Provincial strategy – All Aboard Poverty Reduction Strategy Funding agreement between Manitoba and Winnipeg School Division to provide a framework for working in high poverty contexts, identify core strategies to support schools in systematically identifying students at risk of dropping out, identify core strategies to support students academically and socially, and provide personnel to support implementation of the project.
- Staff willingness to continue to support the Centre when funding was reduced because of the end of the provincial pilot project: ensuring positions available to maintain SSI Centre.
- Elmwood High School Student Success Initiative Team (School Division Superintendent, School Principal, Vice-Principals, Lead Teacher, Support Teachers, Researcher-in-Residence, Teacher Mentor, students).
- Provincial and School Division Consultants.
- Community members and parents.
- An extensive community support network (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous sites) that reciprocates information, program sharing, volunteer opportunities etc.
- Students willing to use the SSI Centre since it is accessed on a ‘voluntary basis’.
- Providing a physical space, and a ‘home away from home’ that has computers, tables/chairs, academic resources, relaxing atmosphere and support teachers available.
- Healthy food strategy, such as fruits are available – one of the teachers, Mr. Andruhuk submitted a proposal to a grocery store for donated fruit in 2014-2015. This will continue into 2015-2016. Many students and staff commented on how this was a positive drawing source that ensure good healthy snacks. It was noted in their reports that some of the students come to school hungry.
- Infant Lab Centre interconnected to SSI available so students could continue school if they are pregnant.

**Activities**

- Cultural field trips to various Indigenous organizations (Indigenous led programs and projects – educational focus, cultural focus etc.).
- Arrange and accompany students to numerous events/organizations, and to various educational and social sites to encourage academic and social engagement (sites visited include pow-wows, human rights museum, Indigenous cultural events etc.).
- Provide day or longer field trips to Heritage sites within the city and in national parks (E.g. Bannock Point Petroforms (Anishinaabe and other First Nation cultural/spiritual impressions of Turtles, Snakes, Human form etc.), White Shell, Ontario, and other sites.
- Provide information sessions to Indigenous organizations, parents, educational sites etc.
- Improving the success rates of all students and ensuring that Indigenous students are aware of the Centre.
Provide support to students: emotionally, academically, and socially as needed.
Provide tutoring supports – in all areas; and help students with scheduling and staying on schedule.
Provide literacy and numeracy supports.
Provide credit recovery opportunities to students by ensuring culturally relevant content for Indigenous students.
Provide supports to students transitioning from middle school to high school.
Provide Indigenous group leadership meetings – Indigenous speakers are invited to speak on various topic areas. There is an extensive reciprocated communication network with Indigenous organizations. Everyone is welcomed to attend the Indigenous group leadership meetings – both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students/staff.
Provide opportunities for students to attend information sessions.
Provide a math teacher support for the Centre.
Provide support to Indigenous students to obtain their Status cards, Métis cards and genealogy documents.
Provide volunteer opportunities for students.
Provide opportunities for students to get involved in art projects – such as mural creating in the school of an Indigenous and multi-cultural theme.
Support Indigenous youth to attend post-secondary programs or employment by helping them with applications and application requirements.
Provide an Indigenous teacher as Lead Teacher of the SSI Centre. Many individuals repeated the importance of Ms. Sabourin, who is Métis, as a role model whom the Indigenous students can relate on many levels. This was a theme that many shared and students shared how much Ms. Sabourin helped them connect to their own identity as First Nation, Inuit, or Métis by connecting them to the Indigenous community as well as talking about history of Indigenous people, highlighting the diversity and distinct groups to help students find out who they are and help them define their own success.
Provide communication opportunities through telephones, home sent notes, and home visits to parents with follow-up. Particular emphasis was made with First Nation students from reserve communities whose parents really appreciated the contacts from Ms. Sabourin who would make the calls in presence of the students so this became a three-way meeting. This way Ms. Sabourin ensured that parents play a role in the education of their children.
Provide a communication link with First Nation communities where calls are made to help students with problem solving, identification cards, funding supports etc.
Provide parents with their children’s educational plans and ongoing progress.
Provide caring and supportive staff that go out of their way to help students succeed without taking their responsibility away from them.
Providing liaison leadership between teachers-students and/or between school and home/community.

**Outputs Performance Indicators**

Literacy resources – a program that grew out of SSI was instituted to increase the literacy of all students.
School success assessment tracking of all students and breakdown of demographics to show the success rate of Indigenous students over the five-year tenure of the SSI Centre.

Teachers learning from their participation with the SSI Centre and Indigenous activities that begin to bring this content/perspective to their teaching.

Students are attending post-secondary institutions or employment as graduates of their school and they ‘give back’ by speaking to younger groups.

Valuing of Indigenous perspectives/knowledges.

Teachers/students/community learning to bridge Western and Indigenous perspectives.

**Short Term Outcomes**

- Increase in students graduating whom the SSI Centre has supported.
- Improved literacy, math’s skills, academic performance.
- Improved lifestyle and healthy living.
- Needs met for struggling students (physically, emotionally, academically and socially).
- Improved links to community supports, community organizations within city and First Nation/Métis communities.
- Improved outreach to Indigenous students and communities.
- More parents involved in their children’s learning journey.
- Improved outreach to various Indigenous organizations that can assist Indigenous students success.
- More teachers knowledgeable about the SSI Centre and willing to lend their support.
- More learning about Indigenous perspectives.
- Building trust in the school system.

**Intermediate Outcomes**

- Students continue their engagement with Indigenous-related activities because of their exposure to them while they were at the school.
- Increase in students’ use of the SSI Centre over the past five years since it opened.
- More Indigenous perspectives are infused into the general teaching of teachers. Teacher reported noticing things they have not paid attention to before because of their involvement in the SSI Centre.
- More Indigenous cultural activities are infused into the general culture of the school. For example, an Indigenous themed graduation celebration took place that was led by the Vice-Principal and with supports from the SSI Centre staff and students. Other students who were not a part of this ceremony questioned why they were not invited and they were informed that, because the school did not know they were Indigenous as they did not self-declare, they were not on the list. They wanted to then be identified as Indigenous.
- The SSI staff invited to attend community events and vice versa.
**Ultimate Goal/Impact**

- Greater success of all at-risk students, and in particular Indigenous students (the success rate of the Indigenous students who utilized the SSI Centre over the past five years is 71%, which surpasses the current general rate of about 65%).
- Reduce poverty by successfully graduating at-risk students and moving toward gainful employment and/or post-secondary education.
- Improved quality of life, health, social and cultural wellbeing
- Greater living successfully in two worlds, without having to give up Indigenous identity

**Evaluation of Project Success**

Although the Elmwood High School Students Success Program is a small aspect of the high school programming, its success with the subset number of Indigenous students is remarkable. In the chart below, we highlighted the success data for self-identified Indigenous students to measure the impact on Indigenous student success.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SSI’s Student Success Centre</th>
<th>2014-15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of Indigenous Students*</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Credits Earned by Indigenous Students with SSI Support*</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Math Credits earned by Indigenous students with SSI Support*</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass Rate of Indigenous Students *</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Success of Indigenous Students

In addition, as shown in the table below, the pass rate for all students (including the Indigenous students who make up 34.7% of the student population) has increased from 55.5% in year one to 82% in its fifth year (Elmwood High School SSI 2014-2015 report):
### SSI’s Student Success Centre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Year 1 2010-11</th>
<th>Year 2 2011-12</th>
<th>Year 3 2012-13</th>
<th>Year 4 2013-14</th>
<th>Year 5 2014-15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of Students Supported</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Credits Earned with SSI Academic Support</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Connections</td>
<td>Expanded</td>
<td>Expanded</td>
<td>Deepened</td>
<td>Deepened</td>
<td>Maintained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Graduates with SSI Support</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>69/102</td>
<td>48/83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Math Credits Earned with SSI Support</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peers Working With Peers</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>Maintained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use at Noon Hour</td>
<td>Frequent</td>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>High Level of Use</td>
<td>High level of use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass Rate</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>73.2%</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: SSI Data over five years

### Concluding Comments

This final report outlined the research results, research activities, and the human voices of those involved at different levels of the project: staff; students; community members; parents etc. This program was successful due to a number of important components. It is focused and institutionally funded, with resourced strategic programming that is culturally relevant/responsive, innovative, access-oriented, social justice-oriented as well as welcoming climate-oriented, creative, and resourceful. In addition, it is led by individuals who are out-reach oriented, leaders/coaches for student at-risk, student success, caring, loving, supportive, and cross-culturally aware. This is a potent combination that addresses Indigenous needs and aspirations and, in turn, is a ‘precious gem’ resource for successful students.

This kind of programming can revitalize hope and cultural connections while fostering a student’s academic success. Clearly, there is much to be done to ensure that Indigenous students are successful in their provincial learning outcomes but not at the risk of continuing to feel alienated from themselves, their worldviews, their experiences and their perspectives. It is suggested in this research that programs like SSI can increase the quality of student experiences (and in the case of Indigenous students reconnecting and/or valuing the traditional knowledges of their communities) and increase their learning outcomes. In this research project we looked into documenting the practices, strategies, program mechanisms through an evaluation research process that provide the opportunities Indigenous student success, while helping the SSI team realize their activities.
One of the outcomes of this research process is that the authors of the 2014-2015 Final report indicated their recognition of the importance of working to improve the success of Indigenous students albeit within the reality of the space of an urban school for all students from diverse groups. A suggested recommendation to the SSI team would be to showcase their work on their own school website, and to find more strategic ways to track their Indigenous student success rates such as tracking their graduation rates, attendance rates, and retentions rates along with the critical work that they are doing.
Addendums (For Information Only)

The following pages, as addendums to the report, represent the research process that transpired. This includes a literature review that was conducted to help shape the research focus and to understand the depths of the themes, issues, and models for sustainability of the programs and aspirations for the future. In addition, a discussion on the logic model that guided the research process is included.

Literature Review: Indigenous issues, poverty, and education: Can programs like SSI help?

It is important to show a glimpse of what the issues are for Indigenous youth living in Manitoba and in particular Winnipeg for the purpose of understanding the larger context of issues, poverty and education. The SSI is located in Winnipeg and in order to provide some background information on Indigenous people (Manitoba and Winnipeg context) and to show that programs like SSI could be helpful to ameliorate academic lower achievements rate of Indigenous youth. Although, this background information is not requested in the Indspire Nurturing Capacity Information Guide for Researcher, it is useful to understand some of the continuing issues that need attention and where programs like SSI might be needed. In this section, I highlight contextual background information, themes, issues, and recommendations taken from selected research reports, and literature that addresses Indigenous youth, poverty challenges and opportunities for changes, and suggestions for relevant education strategies that can improve high school attainment rates.

The Manitoba Department of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs published an online 2014 report called “Aboriginal People in Manitoba”. The highlights of this report lays the groundwork of this research for understanding the larger issues of Indigenous people that reflect social factors, educational challenges, health factors, and poverty. The report points to the importance of high educational attainment to improve quality of life, therefore it is critical that Indigenous youth stay in school and strive to attain high school certificates. The report (P. 18) stated “Family income levels are strong and reliable indicators of health and well-being of individuals, families and communities. Income levels, sources and adequacy determine choices in housing, food, recreation and preventative healthcare.” The following announcement is of particular relevance for the Nurturing Capacity Project on the evaluative research of the Elmwood Student Success Initiative:

“On May 21, 2009, Manitoba introduced a poverty reduction strategy called ALL Aboard. This strategy brings together under one plan all of the initiatives that presently work to reduce poverty and improve social inclusion and creating new initiatives that address four identified pillars for social inclusion: safe, affordable housing in supportive communities; education, jobs and income support; strong, healthy families; and, accessible, coordinated services. Through the strategy, a number of programs and initiatives are targeted towards certain key groups that are at a higher risk of remaining in deep poverty. Women, newcomers, persons with disabilities, and Aboriginal Manitobans face complex, multiple risk factors that requires more supports to enable them to participate fully in society” (P. 21).
Since Indigenous students supported under the Elmwood Student Success Initiative represent 37% of the students who access the SSI Centre, it is important to acknowledge the program does support Indigenous students; even though the SSI description does not declare specific targets for Indigenous students. As the Aboriginal People in Manitoba (P. 28) report stated:

Extensive research shows that income is a very strong predictor of health and social well-being. In turn, household and individual income is determined largely by the presence/absence of employment and the level of education and skills that the individual or members of a household have acquired. People with little education or few skills typically do not participate in the labour market. If they do, they are often unemployed or under-employed. As a result, they depend on transfer payments that are set at levels that meet basic needs. Low incomes [poverty] make it more difficult to afford appropriate housing, provide enriched learning opportunities for children in the household and to live a healthy, well-balanced lifestyle. Education and skills training are critical factors in breaking the cycle of poverty that affects many Indigenous families.

It is important to understand the issues for implementing culturally appropriate solutions that can increase high school completion rates, as these are critical for the next stages for meaningful employment, further training or higher education. It is clear that there is a need for programs like the SSI that will assist in furthering the current “attainment level of Indigenous students from 2006 census [as] it is reported at 27.5%” (P. 45) to much higher success rates.

One of the points that the Aboriginal People in Manitoba report (2014) made regarding the All Aboard strategy is that populations with high risk factors will be served by the programming. Indigenous children are identified as having higher risk factors than in non-Indigenous populations. So it stands to reason that the Elmwood Student Success Initiative could play an important role in increasing the high school success rates of Indigenous students.

In 2004, an environmental scan of the Indigenous community in Winnipeg was conducted by an Aboriginal Task Force of United Way of Winnipeg that produced a report called: Eagle’s Eye View. The ‘scan’ reported on factors that noted a listing of existing resources that serve the Indigenous community. It also noted that “Winnipeg is home to the largest Urban Indigenous population in Canada. The Aboriginal population includes First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, three separate peoples with unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs” (P. 8). The Eagle’s Eye View report sought to determine if there could be “value in a community involvement initiative within the Aboriginal community similar to the Journey Forward process that United Way had previously used to engage all Winnipeggers” (P. 6). The Aboriginal Task Force worked from a premise of a “holistic, comprehensive, and integrated body of knowledge on the urban Aboriginal community...[that] could provide...benefits: to build knowledge, understanding, trust, connections, and relationships within and between the Aboriginal community, United Way and the broader community, and inform and influence policy in the public, private, and voluntary sectors” (P. 6).

The relevance is bringing this report into the focus of this research is that it demonstrates that there are efforts made to acknowledge the Indigenous community by highlighting the themes, issues and facts that the readers could then determine what this information means for their particular circumstances.
For the purposes of this study, if one were to do a brief analysis on the state of Aboriginal affairs and involvement in the city of Winnipeg, one would determine that there are challenges and achievements. It seems that while there are notable achievements toward cultural, social, economic and political well-being, there are still many challenges that raise the concern of overall well-being related to poverty, lower educational levels, racism, and other factors. It stands to reason to note that these factors could influence the success or failure of Indigenous student engagement.

Richards (2001) outlined grave points of concern in a report titled ‘Neighbors Matter: Poor Neighborhoods and Urban Aboriginal Policy’ where he notes that past studies on Indigenous peoples tended to focus heavily on rural and reserve-based issues and that urban settings need attention too. He noted that Indigenous peoples are becoming more urbanized and that Indigenous peoples “live disproportionately in the poorest of urban neighborhoods...” and that these areas need strategic attention to develop positive growth outcomes for Aboriginal peoples. One of the recommendations he made to provincial governments is to create separate school systems for specific focus on Indigenous student needs. It is debatable as to when and/if this could or might happen and they note that it will likely be contested by the status quo. One intermediate option, in the researcher’s opinion, is to ensure strategic programming that can be built into school plans such as the one implemented by Elmwood High School on Student Success Initiative.

Another angle of how historic issues impact current conditions was presented in a notable study by Silver, Mallett, Greene and Simard (2002) titled ‘Aboriginal Education in Winnipeg Inner City High Schools. The researchers investigated the “…educational circumstances of Aboriginal students...” (P. 4). They sought to understand the “…current circumstances of Aboriginal people in high schools in Winnipeg’s inner city—an area with the highest concentration of Indigenous people in any Canadian city—to determine what problems exist and what changes are warranted” (P. 4). The study highlighted that many issues exist related to factors such as cultural/class/experiential divides. Schools are run primarily by non-Aboriginal people and the curriculum is still predominantly Eurocentric. ‘Drop-out’ rates are double the rate of non-Aboriginal students. Racism with stereotyping and prejudice is far too common and there is an unwelcoming climate of schools with few Aboriginal teachers, and with little Aboriginal content in the curriculum, etc.

It is no wonder that Indigenous students feel so disconnected to schools. Silver et al reported that Indigenous students’ negative experiences are more present than not and that Aboriginal students “…resist and...reject this form of education” (P. 3). In addition, they acknowledged how historical issues of residential schools and oppressive government policies played a role on current social conditions. I would argue this view is supported by Dei’s perspective that scholars [and teachers] must recognize the social, political, cultural, and personal implications of academic [school] colonization (Dei, 2002). In my view, this ‘historic trauma’ impacts the current state of affairs where Indigenous students feel (for the most part) alienated from a system that is (whether conscious or not) perceived and experienced as disconnected and oppressive. It is important to note that not all Indigenous students may be conscious of the impacts of the socio-political history on current situations even though they experience a system that is still practices predominantly Eurocentric norms.

Silver et al indicated that schools must change to address the situation and offered recommendations that could positively impact Aboriginal student engagement in schools. It is likely then that programs like The Elmwood Student Success Initiative could play a role in addressing the major issues that Indigenous
students encounter to the extent it is possible through their programs to revitalize hope and cultural connections – and therefore increase educational outcomes of their students. I suggest that the comments by Dei (2002), who stated: “The cultural revitalization taking place today in many marginalized and Indigenous communities is an affirmation and a reclaiming of the past (its cultures and traditions) which has been historically demonized by colonizers....[and] Indigenous knowledges have generally been excluded from Western academy [schools]” (P. 16). Although Dei’s discussion was related to post-secondary institutions, I would argue that they also relate to schooling programs. Therefore, programs that strive to legitimate Indigenous student success and that includes valuing the knowledges that Indigenous students bring to schools is critical to their success and engagement through actions that are culturally relevant/responsive (Egbo, 2009), procedural, strategic, and might influence incremental change to the systems while advancing student success.

There is a growing support from policy development, commission recommendations, public and international conventions for educational institutions to develop culturally relevant and Indigenous focused programming. One of these documents is from The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2008), Article 14 that states the following:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.

2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.

3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language [and at least within their experiences].

School program developers for at-risk students (such as the case of Elmwood High School Student Success Initiative) can draw from these documents in drafting out program goals and objectives to support their efforts in developing innovative, creative, culturally responsive Indigenous education initiatives to the degree that their institutional climate allows and resources are found. Along with cultural revitalization, it is important to point out that “schools must help students to deal with problems such as hunger, addictions, and abuse that are the by-products of past policies, poverty and isolation” (Anderson, Bell, Raham, Simard, & Ottman; 2004, P. 21) while trying to balance the learning outcomes and provincial guidelines for student success.

Clearly, there is much to be done to ensure that Indigenous students are successful in their provincial learning outcomes but not at the risk of continuing to feel alienated from themselves, their worldviews, their experiences and their perspectives. Can programs like SSI increase the quality of student experiences (and in the case of Indigenous students reconnecting and/or valuing the traditional knowledges of their communities) and increase their learning outcomes? In this research project, we looked into documenting the practices, strategies, and program mechanisms through an evaluation research process that provide the opportunities Indigenous student success, while helping the SSI team realize their activities. One of the outcomes of this research process is that the authors of the 2014-2015 Final report indicated their recognition of this importance of working to improve the success of
Indigenous students albeit within the reality of the space of an urban school for all students from diverse groups.

References for the Literature Review


Research Process

In this evaluation research project the aim was to document and evaluate innovative practices through a co-led process supported by an Indspire-funded Indigenous scholar. The research process included a model suggested by Indspire that included the following elements: a logic model reflecting performance indicators and measures, and outcomes, and demonstrating how these pieces connected to the Indspire’s Indigenous foundational guiding principles. The researcher worked with the Elmwood High School SSI contacts to understand the elements of this process through gathering information (reports, public documents and interviews), documenting their work, and evaluating the project success. Inspire supports Indigenous focused research with a view to assist community, in this case a school, to improve educational outcomes through the documentation process. In this section, I outline the research process (activities, people interviewed, and documents gleaned for information). I attempt to highlight SSI research results against the Logic Model and Indspire’s Indigenous guiding principles. In addition, I include a brief narrative of voices of the staff, students, community members, etc., that reflect what we learned.

An SSI project reference group made up of the school representatives and community and/or provincial contacts as deemed necessary for the SSI was composed with a focus (in this case it was primarily the SSI Lead Teacher - Ms. Joanne Sabourin, Principal - Mr. Michael Babb, and Support Teacher - Mr. Grant Andruçhuk) to look at various aspects of the research project to identify elements that reflect Indspire’s criteria for reporting and sharing positive outcomes of the project. With the collaboration of Elmwood High School Student Initiative staff, the individuals were identified to meet with the researcher(s) for interviews.

At an initial meeting, Laara Fitznor, Lead Researcher, met with Winnipeg School Division, Superintendent for Winnipeg Centre Ms. Celia Caetano-Gomes, SSI staff – Principal Mr. Babb, and SSI Lead Teacher Joanne Sabourin to discuss the project and research process, and to determine who was appropriately suited to participate in this project. Furthermore, we discussed the plan to examine the aspects of their SSI project that have clear supports for Indigenous students, have a strong cultural basis that honours local knowledge systems, Aboriginal connections, and communities. The data collection for this project took place over April, May and June, 2015.

Interviews and Interview Instruments

In order to get our research plan in motion, pragmatic approaches were used to connect with people through emails, telephone calls and conversations, cell phone texting, school-site meetings, meetings in restaurants and other mutually convenient times and places. Ms. Sabourin, SSI Lead Teacher was constantly on-call to receive calls (through emails, telephone calls, and text messaging) and follow through on reaching people on behalf of the lead researcher. In addition, Celia Caetano-Gomes moved things along for the ethics process approval and the principal ensured that our requests for public documents were met.

In this research project, twenty-one individuals were interviewed in group interviews, individual face-to-face interviews, and one follow-up telephone conversation. In addition, a number of documents were reviewed for information: SSI reports 2013/2014 and 2014/2015, and a PowerPoint presentation to an
Aboriginal Education conference. All of the students interviewed by the researcher(s) were ages 18 and over (although attempts were made to recruit students under the age of 18 for interviews we were not able to get any forms signed). Our SSI lead contact, Joanne Sabourin gave the students under the age of 18 consent forms for their parents/guardian to sign. The students took these forms to their parent/guardian but none were returned. Joanne Sabourin made attempts to recruit both male and female students, however only one male student responded – the rest were female.

Providing research project information and consent information became an integral part of the interviews so that everyone was well informed, had opportunities to ask questions and to decide on their consent method. This took up time in the interviews, particularly the group interview with the teachers who were in a time limit to get back to their classes. We found that pragmatic approaches became critical to encourage the flow of the interview conversations. Also, in order to honour Indigenous protocols, tobacco bundles were made (loose tobacco tied into a cloth) as a gift offering in addition to the consent information to express our gratitude for their willingness to help us with the data gathering through their words. Each person who received the tobacco bundles expressed their gratitude for this practice.

Project information and consent forms were reviewed with the group and tobacco bundles offered before interview began (refer to Appendix I for more detailed information on what was provided to participants – research consent information, consent forms, and interview prompts). The interviews were treated more as a conversation about what the SSI is about, and in some cases we used interview prompts to get people into conversation. It became apparent that the Indigenous foundational guiding principles development by Indspire should guide the interviews. Therefore, these became a critical part of the project information sharing. Depending on the situation (noise level, privacy setting etc.) either audio-taping or field/summary notes were taken as appropriate.

A Learning Outcome of the Research Project

It was the intention, that by examining the SSI project as an action and/or applied research, we could help to articulate their innovations to demonstrate outcomes to the wider Indigenous community. It was our hope that as the process transpired community and individual building capacity will ensue. In my opinion, I suggest that at the least people learned as we went along. They learned about Indspire and their overall goals and about the research agenda. They learned about the research consenting process. They learned about Indigenous research protocols. They learned how to articulate what it is that they do within the SSI Centre for their students. They learned about Indigenous foundational principles and how their activities reflect or not reflect these principles, and more.

Description of Materials Developed During the Project

The following information (logic model, performance indicators and measures, and outcomes, evaluation of success) is taken from the Nurturing Capacity’s information guide for researchers. It is included in this report with the view that it guided us with clear pathway to doing this evaluation research project.
Logic Model - Definition

Planning for projects can be done in a group using a logic model, which allows for a process of brainstorming. A logic model defines the scope and ambition of an initiative or project—its goals and objectives, activities and measurable indicators of success, and what will be different as a result of the initiative undertaken.

A logic model:
- Provides a forum for everyone’s perspectives and views (whether similar or opposing) to be identified and considered (In the research process it helps us with getting people to share their ideas, understandings, information, activities to support the Centre, communication patterns etc.)
- Promotes ownership and encourages “buy-in” from everyone (It was evident from peoples responses that they felt engaged in supporting the SSI Centre).
- Gives access to a broad range of knowledge, perspectives, and resources from the stakeholders that bring their own expertise to the planning table.
- Encourages action on the project results and recommendations.

In planning, the logic model is filled in using a reverse direction, starting with defining the ultimate goals, and then continuing backwards by asking the question: “if we want this, then how can we achieve it...?” for each component. Once developed, the logic model can then be used for evaluating progress on the project. This is done by reading the Model in a forward direction, asking the question “Did we accomplish...?” for each section. As a research process, the logic model gave us a guideline for asking questions related to the SSI Centre. We did not follow the logic model exactly because pragmatic reasons allowed for more of a free flowing discussion based on general questions to keep the conversation flowing. After reviewing the transcripts and summary/field notes that was primarily when the logic model was applied, since we got so much data, to articulate the SSI Centre goals, objectives, activities etc. along with Indspire’s Indigenous Foundational guiding principles. This proved to be a bit of a juggling of models and principles but in the final analysis, the information and knowledge gained synthesized accordingly.
Appendix I: Project Information, Consent Information and Forms, Interview Prompts

Indspire - Informed Consent Form (Should be on Indspire letterhead)
Elmwood High School Student Success Initiative (SSI)
Indspire (Lead Researcher Dr. Laara Fitznor)
50 Generations Drive, Ohsweken, Ontario, N0A 1M0
P: 519-445-3003

Letter of Invitation to participate in the Evaluation Research Project of Indspire-Elmwood High School Student Success Initiative and consent form (Script).

To
Mike Babb, Principal  mbabb@wsd1.org
Joanne Sabourin, SSI Lead Teacher  jsabourin@wsd1.org
Grant Andruchuk, SSI Academic Support Teacher
Elmwood High School SSI personnel
505 Chalmers Avenue,
Winnipeg, MB
R2L 0G4

Dear ________________________________

My name is Laara Fitznor and I am the Lead Researcher for the evaluation research project wherein I will be researching, with you, on your SSI project using a Logic Model and Evaluation Framework planned for this project. Along with this model, is the application of the Indigenous foundational principles developed by Indspire. Upon our first meeting, I will lead a session on what the research model entails and how we could best identify the unique, innovative, and defined features of the SSI program.

I am inviting you and your SSI personnel to participate in this evaluation research project (either in an individual or group setting). The purpose of the study is to evaluate the Elmwood High School Student Success Initiative for determining its suitability for Indspire’s Successful Programs award. Participation is completely voluntary and your decision to participate or not participate will in no way affect your existing relationships, work situation or provision of services.

This study is part of a joint research project between Elmwood High School Student Success Initiative and Indspire. This research may also involve graduate students (or student researchers) who will work on the project in their fulfilment of their degree requirements and may be funded by the Research Contractor, Dr. Laara Fitznor. This opportunity helps build student’s research capacity.

WHAT IS INVOLVED?
Depending on the stage of the evaluation research process, the following will take place:

- At the discussion/brainstorming sessions individuals who could be interviewed will be identified and names provided to the researcher for interviewing purposes
- Collection of relevant demographic data
- Observation of SSI program and activities
• Meeting One: Ensure that the research team is informed about the Logic Model that Indspire is recommending for use in the research process – which points to a process of the team reading this proposal, reading the logic model, preparing their questions for points of clarity, then meeting with the researcher(s) to discuss the logic model and frame the research process with this model. In addition, the research team will be informed about Indspire’s goals and guiding principles. I would determine a good half day meeting for this to occur.

• At least between two to four meetings between (Researcher(s) and at least two or more of the SSI lasting approximately 1-2 hours each time for the purpose of site visits, discussions with relevant staff, community members, family members and children as deemed relevant to the research. As noted in the previous bullet, the Logic Model and Evaluation Framework that Indspire has endorsed to assess school projects that support Indigenous students will be used as a guide for our discussions and brainstorming sessions to collect the relevant data needed for the evaluation. These sessions will be audiotaped to provide a clear record of what transpired in each session. All of the sessions will be held in an SSI staff selected site. All sessions will be attended by one or two research personnel and as many as the SSI program can enlist – at least a minimum of two individuals.

• Meeting Two: Meetings with SSI staff to determine the research procedures and time frames with a commitment to complete data collection before school is finished so the writer can complete the research by July 31, 2015. Define the research activities during this time.

• Interviews with SSI staff, students (former and present) to document their experience and hear their perceptions of SSI model.

• Determine the types of collection of various data related to student use of the Centre.

• Collection of data that shows the ethnic breakdown and in particular those who identified as Indigenous/Indigenous and accessed SSI supports.

• Documentation of specific strategies used for student supports.

• Collect data that shows increase in attendance due to the use of the Centre.

• Document how, if any, the SSI reflects the seven foundational guiding principles Indigenous for educational practice.

There will be no remuneration for participating in this research.

A few weeks after your session, one of the researchers will contact you to offer you the opportunity to review your transcript from the session. If you choose to review your transcription, you will be provided with a hard copy of your comments and asked to review it and add any comments that you would like to make on the sheet provided. You will also have an opportunity to withdraw any comments that you wish not to have included in the research.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS
The direct benefits of participating in this study include:

• The ability to voice concerns and hopes about the SSI program and the learning that may come from gaining new insights and perspectives;

• The sharing of resources on challenges, solutions and positive outcomes; and

• The opportunity to have your voice heard, your opinions valued and respected.

For the larger scientific community and the community at large, this research may offer insights into the types of programming needed to address the needs of Indigenous students.
MINIMAL RISKS
There also may be minimal risks associated with participation as some individuals could experience psychological risks or social risks related to voicing their opinion in a group setting. Care will be exercised if there are issues that need follow up. If deemed necessary, individuals will be provided with names of people who could most appropriately sort through any issues.

CONFIDENTIALITY
In the research gathering session, all the information you provide will be considered confidential. Prior to starting the session you will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement to indicate that you will respect the confidentiality of the interviewed discussion.
In written reports of this research and oral presentations, excerpts from the research may be discussed but no names will be associated with any quotes. This helps us to represent your voice and opinion without compromising your confidentiality. The audiotapes will only be used for the purpose of creating written records and will not be associated with your name. These audiotapes/computer video files will be kept in locked filing cabinets/ secure password protected computers and will only be viewed by the researchers and research assistants who have signed confidentiality agreements.
Data collected during this study will be kept for five years and stored in locked filing cabinets. All data will be confidentially shredded or destroyed after seven years unless phases of the research are still occurring. Only the researchers and research assistants will have access to the data. All individuals who have access to the data will sign confidentiality agreements.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish, you may decline to answer any questions or participate in any component of the study. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time and may do so without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. It is very important to us that you decide whether or not you would like to share your thoughts with us.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS
Results of this study may be published in professional journals, presented at conferences and on Indspire’s website. Feedback about this study will be mailed to you if you choose to provide your address. The results will be available September 30, 2015. If you have any questions at any point during the study, of after the study please contact (Angie Krenn at Indspire by phone (519) 445-3003 or via email akrenn@indspire.ca

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE
If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Laara Fitznor at 204-951-0990 or lfitznor@shaw.ca or laara.fitznor@umanitoba.ca. This proposal for the planned study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through Indspire Ethics Committee and the Winnipeg School Division. If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office (contact: Celia Caetano-Gomes, Superintendent of Schools Central, Winnipeg School Division, 204-775-0231).
Thank you for your valuable insight in this research.
SECTION B: INDIVIDUAL CONSENT FORM - sample
(Please print or write legibly)

Name, and role in the SSI program of the individual____________________________________________________________
Personnel
Student
Community Member

☐ INDIVIDUAL CONSENT
I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the aforementioned information.
I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted regarding the research and understand I may ask questions in the future.
NAME: __________________
SIGNATURE: _____________ DATE: _________________________

SECTION C: GROUP CONSENT - sample
(Please print or write legibly)

☐ GROUP CONSENT

I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the aforementioned information.
I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted regarding the research and understand I may ask questions in the future.
NAME: __________________
SIGNATURE: _____________ DATE: _________________________

SECTION D: CONTACT INFORMATION
Please provide your contact information if you would like to be contacted to review your transcript and/or receive a copy of the research results.
EMAIL ADDRESS: ________________________________
PHONE NUMBER: ________________________________
Project Information and Consent Information and Consent Methods, Scripts Provided and Reviewed with Interviewees

This section shows the detailed Project Information, Ethics and Consent Information that were shared with all interviewees. The process we used for the Group Sessions was as follows: Firstly, an expression of gratitude for their willingness to read, and listen to the information or presentation on the research project goals and research ethics information was announced (including thanking the school administration and the school division for their willingness to participate in this project, thanking for example the Elmwood High School Student Success Initiative staff for providing lunch so that it was possible for teachers/staff to attend the Staff Group interview).

Although the research project and consent information was sent in advance, we reviewed the details of the project information, research ethics and consent information with all interviewees. We did not leave to chance that anyone might not have had a chance to read in advance. Once we reviewed the information, we talked about an Indigenous protocol of offering a tobacco bundle as a small gift of our appreciation for their participation. This practice was well received with head nods and smiles – the invitation was offered to pass on this protocol, however everyone took a tobacco bundle. The explanation of what it is about and how the bundle can be treated was shared – more will be written up in the final phase of this project. Once it was determined that enough details and explanations offered and questions answered, individuals opted to proceed with the consent methods. Finally, we opened up with opening questions to get the conversation started. As appropriate, we moved the conversation along with prompts and interview questions. With regards to the staff meeting, the time had to be well managed with due regard to the fact that the teachers needed to go to their classrooms – we offered that if people needed to leave they should feel free to go and if others could stay and continue conversing with us this would be appreciated. Some left after the hour was finished and others stayed behind for another ½ hour.

Any individual session followed this process of explaining, gifting, consent information etc.

Research Project Information, Consent Information and Forms: Indspire: Indigenous Education Canada’s Future – Elmwood High School Student Success

The following scripted information was shared with each of the individuals who attended our sessions and/or who were interviewed. We ensured that this background information was well understood before proceeding toward the interviews. It is interesting to note that this in itself created a bit of a dialogue about individual rights and responsibilities in the research process for both the researcher and the participants. In my opinion, this was a good learning process for us.

Since Indspire has criteria for examining what is Indigenous reflected, we invited participants to look at ways that their project reflects:

...the foundational Indigenous global principles established by Indspire and meet criteria adopted and validated through a community-defined process and set out to accomplish one of the following:

- demonstrate reliably that objectives have been achieved through formal/quantitative evaluations or assessments;
• offers a different approach to achieve its objectives effectively and efficiently on a more sustainable basis;
• deemed to have potential to achieve objectives successfully based on informal and qualitative assessments.

Innovative, effective, and successful practices can be captured in a variety of forms including video, narratives, and links hosted by government, community and/or organizational websites (national and international) or a combination thereof. Successful practices will be shared through Indspire’s virtual Inspire Institute [https://indspire.ca/for-educators/nurturing-capacity/] for the purposes of generating insight into the delivery of education that will lead to improved learning outcomes for Indigenous students and improved social, economic and political conditions for their families and communities” (Nurturing Capacity, 2014).

For the purpose of guiding the discussions in this research endeavour, the researchers made it clear within the participant project research and consent information documentation the Nurturing Capacity of Indspire’s foundational guiding principles for Indigenous educational practice (Nurturing Capacity, 2014), which states as follows:

**Principle 1**: Indigenous peoples have the right to retain shared responsibility for the education and well-being of their children.

**Principle 2**: As an expression of respect, reciprocity and reconciliation, strengthened partnerships between Indigenous peoples, governments (federal, provincial and territorial) and public institutions are the basis of working relationships, implicit in treaties, agreements and other constructive agreements with Indigenous peoples.

**Principle 3**: Indigenous knowledges (ways of being, knowing, valuing and doing), which convey our responsibilities and relationships to all life in a valued and foundational aspect of the learning program for all children and youth.

**Principle 4**: Cultural/language communities have the right to define success for their own well-being.

**Principle 5**: Learning is viewed as lifelong, holistic, and experiential, which is rooted in language and culture, is place-based, spiritually oriented, communal and open to multiple ways of knowing the world.

**Principle 6**: Programs, schools and systems are responsive to both the aspirations and needs of Indigenous peoples.

**Principle 7**: Recognizing the legacy of the colonial histories of Indigenous peoples, education is also a process of decolonization, which seeks to strengthen, enhance & strengthen and embrace Indigenous knowledge and experience through various strategies including but not limited to anti-racist, anti-oppressive pedagogies and Indigenous pedagogies.

Ongoing meetings took place that reflected as close as possible the research plan (that was submitted in the research proposal and that was submitted to Winnipeg School Division appropriate staff and Elmwood High School Student Success Initiative Participants and also appears in the project information and consent information section of this document) as follows:

A note of encouragement was written into the project, ethics and consenting information that read “Researchers’ note to Elmwood High School Student Support Initiative (EHSSSI): We co-produce --You
(staff/contacts) talk, share, work with researchers, provide information – we (Researchers Laara and Marlene) ask questions, share relevant information, take notes, record, draft up the research, refine the document, send it to EHSSSI team for comments, refine and submit to Indspire for posting on Indspire website. Together we work to understand the research process for capacity building and to learn how to articulate your work. I understand that the following plan dependents on availability of individuals and time.”

1. Meeting One: Occurred in February 25, 2015 with EHSSSI staff Celia Caetano-Gomes, Mr. Mike Babb, Principal, Joanne Sabourin, met with Researcher Laara Fitznor. The purpose was to meet and get to know each other and to gather some initial EHSSSI program information, discuss research process, and determine an action plan. Laara Fitznor, then develop a defined evaluation proposal that pulls together the Indspire Nurturing Capacity Project criteria and initial information from ESSI staff/documents for further meetings, data collections, and developing the research reports. The proposal was developed and sent to Indspire and Winnipeg School Division for their approval. Approval granted, June 1, 2015.

2. Meetings, and communication processes with EHSSSI staff to be determine:
   a. Ensure that the research team is informed about the Logic Model (Research process) that Indspire is recommending for use in the research process that researchers will explain as meetings occur.
   b. The research team will be informed about Indspire’s goals and guiding principles. Participants may identify other individuals (students, guardians, community contacts) if needed, and who could be interviewed for their input to this process.
   c. Outline research procedures according to the Indspire applied research process.
   d. Agree to timeframes and commitments for collecting data. Meetings/Data collection will occur in June, 2015.

3. Interviews with EHSSSI staff, students (former and present), and supporters to document their experience and hear their perceptions of the EHSSSI model. It is expected that at least two to four meetings between Researcher(s) and the ESSI team lasting approximately 1-2 hours each time for the purpose of site visits/observations, discussions with previously identified individuals (community members, staff, guardian/family members, and students). Most of the sessions will be held at the EHSSSI staff selected site. All sessions will be attended by one or two research personnel and as many as EHSSSI staff can enlist. Off-campus meetings may occur in community settings and/or by telephone meetings (consenting ethics guidelines will be honoured).

4. Determine the types of collection data related to student use of the Centre. Document ways that students know about the Centre and how they choose to access the Centre. The initial documents show that this program has high calibre – why is it not featured in the Elmwood high school website? What promotional materials are evident? Online? In student-teacher meetings? Counsellor-student meetings? On bulletin boards? The purpose for these questions is to guide EHSSSI in articulating their work.

5. Collection of data that shows student demographics and in particular those who identified as Indigenous/Indigenous and accessed EHSSSI supports.
6. Documentation of specific strategies used for student supports, and collect data that shows increase in attendance due to the use of the Centre.

7. Determine and document how the EHSSSI model reflects the Indspire’s Indigenous Foundational guiding principles for educational practice. A consideration in the documentation process is the ways that ‘Western knowledge and Indigenous knowledge’ might be integrated, and to articulate what processes are Indigenous reflected.

8. Other data collection pieces to be determined through the discussion with staff and drawing from questions that arose in the research process.

**Interview Prompts**

The following interview prompts were used with those interviewed along with the questions from the logic model and the Indspire Indigenous Foundational principles. As we wanted to have a conversation flow, we referred any of the above points for discussion.

**Interview prompts for Students**

1. When did you first learn about the Centre (ESSI)?
2. When did you start coming to the Centre?
3. What do you know about how the Centre runs?
4. How do your teachers or other school staff support your learning?
5. What do you look forward to most about coming to school?
6. Tell me about some of the different activities you were involved in with the Centre?
7. How important is the Centre for you to complete school?
8. If you could have one wish fulfilled for you? For the Centre? For your school? What would it be?

**Interview prompts for Staff and Community Contacts**

1. Tell me/us about the goals and strengths of the EHSSSI Centre?
2. In terms of the goals of the Centre, what has been accomplished?
   a. Any challenges?
   b. Any unexpected outcomes?
3. How important is the Centre to the success of the students who use the Centre?
4. You have had an opportunity to review Indspire’s Foundational Guiding Principles for education. Tell me/us how these apply to the Centre activities.