



A Spirit of Gratitude, Respect, and Love

**LeaderinMe**

DEVELOPING  
LIFE-READY LEADERS

# ***2019 Annual Report***

***Fort McMurray Public School Division  
School Year 2018-2019***



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## Fort McMurray Then and Now

The Horse River Wildfire started on May 1, 2016 and burned for nearly 15 months resulting in one of the largest evacuations in Alberta's history. Flames surrounded the single highway leading out of the city as nearly 90,000 people escaped the fire. Roughly, 2,400 homes and buildings were destroyed as the wildfire consumed approximately 1.5 million acres. The estimated damage was \$9.9 billion, which is the costliest disaster in Canadian history.

As with any natural disaster, the aftermath does not just go away. Four years later, Fort McMurray continues to rebuild their community to be stronger and better for the future in the face of many challenges. The financial disaster expected after a natural disaster has taken a toll on many small businesses, home rebuilding, and job loss which has effected the entire community. Currently, high insurance costs have impacted the value of homes, apartments and condominiums, resulting in many families filing for bankruptcy. The financial toll has also impacted families resulting in high divorce rates, high mental health referrals and high rates of children displaying anxiety, depression and challenging behavior.

In reflection, the community recovery has taken longer than expected by leaders. Many families will continue to need support for up to six additional years, a total of 7-10 years, as they adjust to the past financial and emotional challenges. This recovery period has been impacted by the provincial economic downturn. The economic downturn in conjunction with the natural disaster have compounded the impact of recovery. And while there is still a ways to go for a full recovery, most families are returning to a normal life and the community is progressing.



### Fort McMurray Today

Left: Aerial View By Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

Top: Looking north on Highway 63. New growth with burnt remains on the mountainside in the background.

# TZU CHI RELIEF

Seeing the need for recovery assistance and wanting to show compassion towards schools and students affected, the Tzu Chi Foundation provided relief to the community by allocating funds to schools to start the implementation of the *Leader in Me*. Funding was distributed equally to both the Public School Division and Catholic School District, to a mix of schools new to the process as well as some schools that were already implementing the *Leader in Me*.

Funding from the Tzu Chi Foundation has supported these schools for the past three years through a journey of building a new foundation and setting up to be stronger for moving forward. Their assistance has been effective in helping students, staff and families in their recovery. This universal approach to supporting mental health includes every child, Kindergarten – grades 1 - 6, and has been effective in helping students, staff and families in supporting their recovery by helping students focus on their strengths and developing life-long 7 Habits skills. The goal is to support students to have the necessary skills to deal with future life challenges.



9 schools



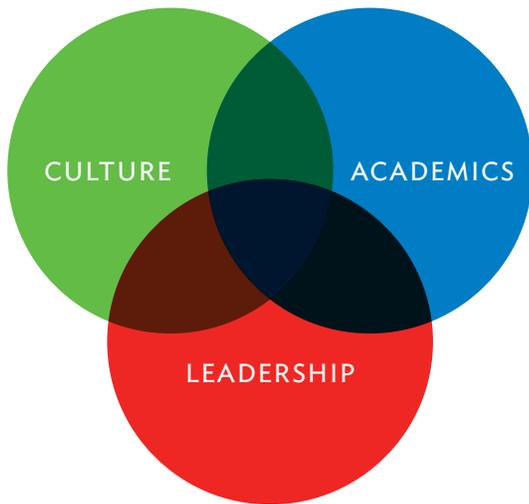
187+ teachers



3627+ students



# Leader in Me Process



## Whole School Improvement

*Leader in Me* is a K-12 whole-school improvement model and process being implemented by thousands of schools in over 50 countries worldwide. The *Leader in Me* model empowers educators with core paradigms and effective practices that drive measurable results in leadership, culture, and academics.



**Leader in Me is a comprehensive school improvement model to support current initiatives.**

*Leader in Me* has served as the comprehensive school improvement model for nine schools in the Fort McMurray Public School Division by creating an environment where existing programs and initiatives can thrive. Schoolwide transformation has not happened overnight and has not been easy, but it has been manageable with the *Leader in Me* implementation process thanks to the support from the Tzu Chi Foundation.

# Year in Review

Empowering students with Leadership has been a priority since 2016 when we were evacuated due to the Wildfire. We were fortunate to be gifted with funds, from the Tzu Chi Foundation of Canada, to implement *The Leader in Me* throughout our school Division. Our students, staff and their families continue to struggle with high levels of stress post 2016 due to the trauma of the fire and the economic downturn. We continue to work on resiliency and *The Leader in Me* helps our students develop a sense of belonging with meaningful roles in their school, homes and community.

Students are developing a positive self esteem by accessing mental wellness activities and contributing to a positive school culture through leadership. During the wildfire evacuation of 2016, students saw first hand the outpouring of generosity from everywhere. One of the many benefits of growing leaders through this program is the humanitarian projects that they initiate as leaders, which mirrors that of the Tzu Chi.

An example of such a leader is Michael (of Michael's Hope), who was a Kindergarten student at Walter and Gladys Hill Public School when he decided he wanted to help the homeless via The Centre of Hope. He has raised more than \$3000 selling \$5 pins that he designed. When we shared his leadership success, many other students sought similar leadership opportunities for themselves. In Grade 2, Nealah sold recess snacks to have a buddy bench installed at the school while Riya in grade 1 made soaps and bath balls raising money for the local Women's Shelter. Layan and Isabella held a used clothing sale where all funds raised went to The Centre of Hope. The Grade 4 class beaded bracelets with sales going to an orphanage in South Africa while another grade 4 class sold bracelets they made to raise money to help shelter and feed dogs at the local SPCA. Even Michael was further inspired by everyone and held a pancake breakfast to build a water well for people in Cambodia!



Through the support of the Tzu Chi and their gift of the *Leader in Me*, students have been empowered. They have demonstrated that everyone can be a leader, everyone has genius, and change starts with "me"! When students have this self esteem and a well lived life that is balanced, it helps families and a community build resiliency. This is a true win-win!

Looking ahead we know we still have many students who require further supports to cope with stress levels within our families and community. We will continue to use the *Leader in Me* Program to equip them with the skills they need to be successful and resilient in the future.

**Annalee Nutter**  
**Assistant Superintendent**  
**Education and Administration**  
**Fort McMurray Public School Division**

# Phases of Trauma

In last year's annual report we introduced and spoke to the *Phases of Trauma* from Rothschild, 2010 and Dr. Judith Herman's *Phased Framework of Trauma Recovery*, 1992. Through this recovery process, research and first hand experience have taught the Fort McMurray community the duration of recovery time is longer than initially expected and can last upwards to 7-10 years for a full recovery.

## PHASE 1 | SAFETY AND STABILIZATION

People affected by trauma tend to feel unsafe in their bodies and in their relationships with others. Regaining a sense of safety may take days to weeks with acutely traumatized individuals or months to years with individuals who have experienced ongoing/chronic abuse. Figuring out what areas of life need to be stabilized and how that will be accomplished, will be helpful in moving toward recovery.

**Fort McMurray Experience:** Although many families have moved back into their homes and have begun to create new memories that will be integrated into a new norm, some families are still feeling the lingering effects of being displaced from their homes or the disillusionment that can accompany an individual when they realize their new norm. For example, a new home does not necessarily equate to feeling safe and secure. These individuals may be those with more complex traumas that have not been processed yet due to avoidance behaviors that give us a temporary false sense of relief. For some, a home rebuild was a great distraction from acknowledging their own grief and trauma. Therefore they are still in the stabilization phase. Integration of memories for some may have been occurred organically with time and space to move past, having nothing to hold you back in the memory. For others, they were not as fortunate and still feel frozen or trapped in that memory without having the ability to work through it.

## PHASE 2 | REMEMBRANCE AND MOURNING

This task shifts to processing the trauma, putting words and emotions to it and making meaning of it. This process is usually undertaken with a counselor or therapist in group and/or individual therapy. It is necessary to be continuing to attend to safety and stability during this phase. Attending to safety allows the persona affected by trauma to move through this phase in a way that integrates the story of the trauma rather than reacts to it in a fight, flight or freeze response.

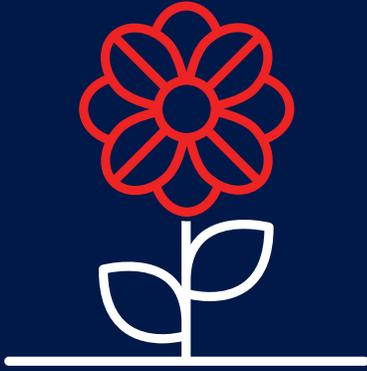
**Fort McMurray Experience:** Those who have had the ability to move into phase two may have a new norm but may still hold the trauma and grief in their body. Which means, they are still significantly impacted by just talking about their experiences or others talking about theirs. In order for individuals to grieve, they need to allow themselves to feel the emotion and recognize the effects it has on them. We at Public School District have put many supports in place to help individuals process their grief and work through the trauma, like extra mental health therapists in the High schools, having a Play Therapist work with families, as well as a Family Therapist. However, because the wildfire was not a stand-alone stressor/trauma, what often happens is that more stressors compound it and make it difficult to sit in that discomfort. Therefore they never give themselves permission to grieve.

### PHASE 3 | RECONNECTION AND INTEGRATION

In this phase there must now be a creation a new sense of self and a new future. This final task involves redefining oneself in the context of meaningful relationships. Through this process, the trauma no longer is a defining and organizing principle is someone's life. The trauma becomes integrated into their life story but is not the only story that defines them.

**Fort McMurray Experience:** Although there are a significant amount of families in our community that now feel safe, they have grieved and processed their traumas and have found a way to accept it as part of their life story, there are others who are still stuck in phase one and two that do not understand why they are still “not over it”. Redefining a new sense of self from your previous experiences can only be done if you work through phase one and two. Some families in Fort McMurray Public Schools have not reached Phase three due to the complexities that are attached to phase one. Namely, the economic downturn our community has endured since the wildfires. One may even question if individuals could have already worked through and processed their grief and trauma in phase Two if they didn't have to worry about stabilization financially, which puts them back in Phase one. Although we as a District have provided Family therapy and Play therapy to address these compounding stressors and traumas, the continuing downward momentum of loss of jobs, loss of businesses, and loss of financial stability keeps them in a constant state of attempting stabilization. Until our economy can stabilize, I question whether our community can truly begin to heal.





# But There Is **HOPE** Through **RESILIENCE**

Resilience does not eliminate risks and stress, but allows an individual to deal with them effectively.

## What Is Resilience?

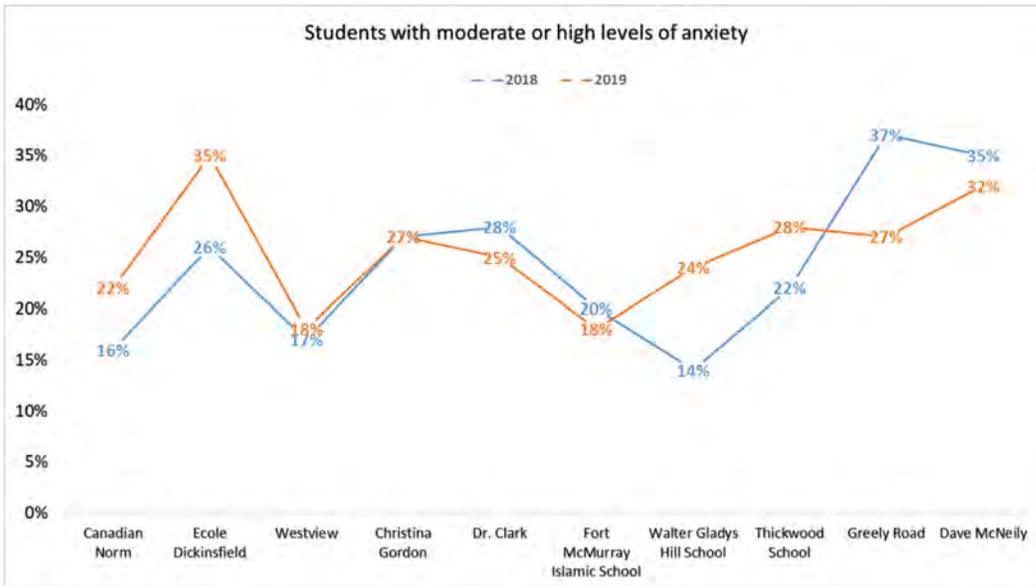
“Resilience is really the counter balancing of difficult things **-** that may exist in the child’s life with positive things **+** that occur within the family/community.

When **positive experiences** accumulate and children learn **copng skills** that help them to manage stress, the fulcrum can slide so the scale tilts towards positive outcomes more easily. **That’s what resilience is all about.”**

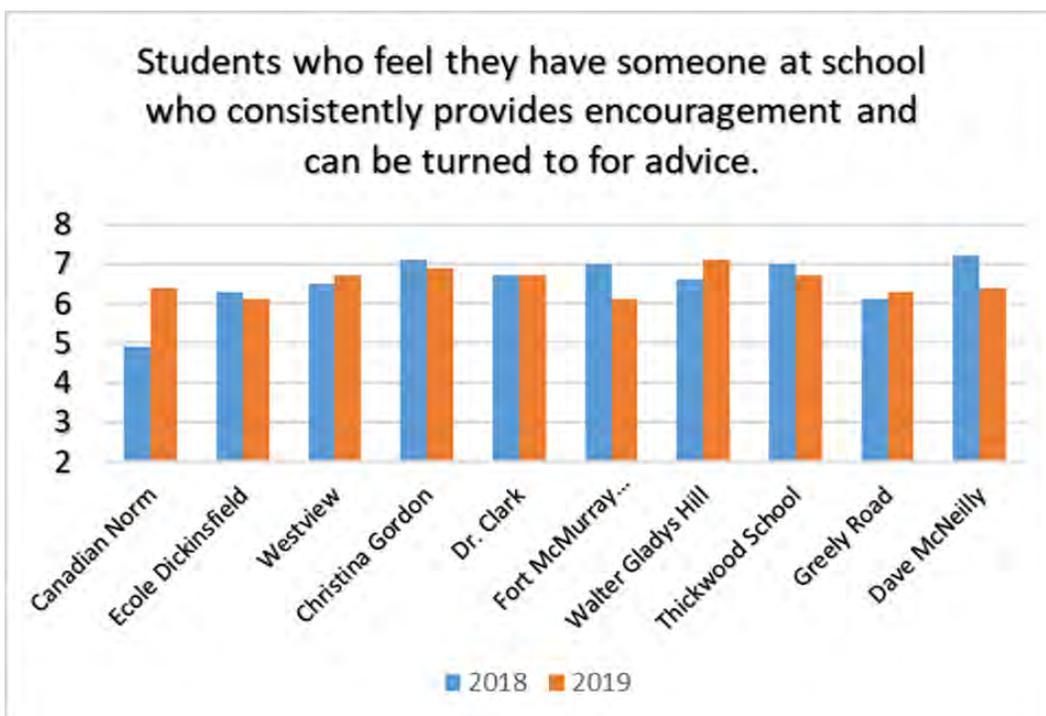


# Our School Survey Analysis

“Our School” is an evaluation tool used at Fort McMurray Public Schools to inform around school improvements. A variety of questions are asked to students in order to provide a holistic view of the school. The survey is conducted and data controlled by the Province of Alberta. One of the questions evaluated is, “Students with moderate or high levels of anxiety”. Last year we showed the results and this year we are able to show the comparison from then to now.



The anxiety levels for Fort McMurray Public Schools range above and below the Canadian Norm. Some schools saw the anxiety levels rise while other schools saw a decline. Anxiety levels can vary depending on the effects of the trauma on each family unit. Evidence also shows that Fort McMurray Public Schools are building a nurturing environment, where students feel encouraged and cared for. This environment has been necessary to build resiliency in students who continue to cope with trauma.



(Students were asked to rate on a scale of 1-10)



## PERCEPTION OF WILDFIRE IMPACT SURVEY

For the second year in a row, school counselors at each of the 13 Leader in Me Schools in Fort McMurray were asked to anonymously respond to a brief, 12 question, survey to better understand the impact of the wildfire from their perspective on their individual school communities. This year, we also invited the Principals to take the survey. Each question, with the exception of two open-ended questions, asked respondents to score the questions on a scale of 1 (poor) – 10 (excellent) at three distinct times: the three months before the wildfire, the three months after the wildfire, and in the last three months.

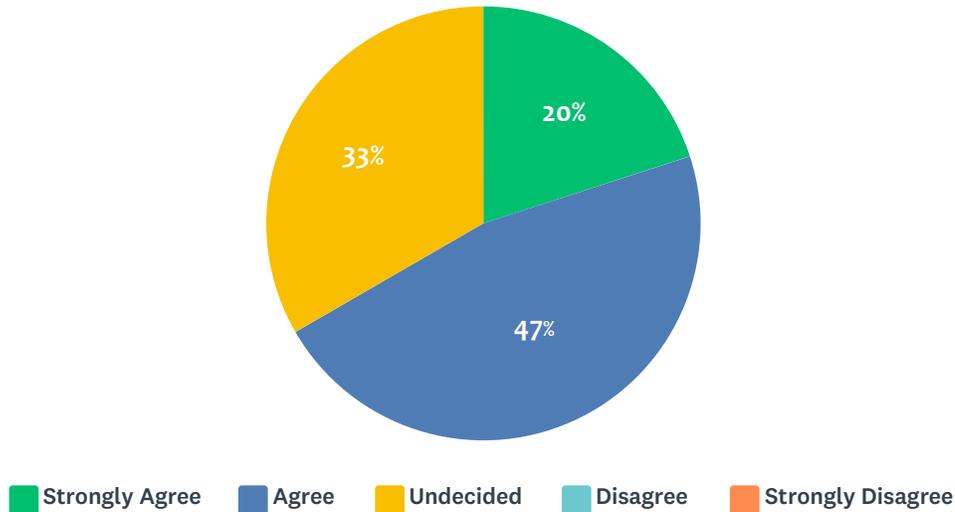
**Q4 In regards to social skills, (i.e., things like their ability to communicate and work together and the ability to have positive peer relationships), how would you rate the overall skill level of most students in your school?**



30 Principals and Counselors responded to the survey.

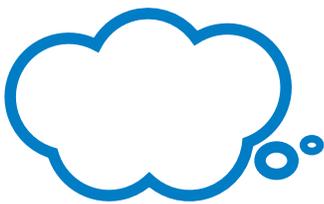
Social skills continue to rise getting closer to where they were before the fire.

Q5 Rate your level of agreement with the following statement: “*Leader in Me* is having a positive impact on the recovery of our students”.



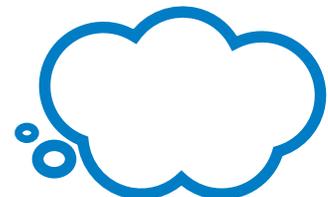
67% of Principals and Counselors agree or strongly agree *The Leader in Me* is having a positive impact on the recovery of their students.

You responded that you “strongly agree” with the statement “*Leader in Me* is having a positive impact on the recovery of our students”. Would you be willing to briefly share a couple of sentences about that positive impact?



*"The Leader in Me allows students to positively direct their energy and their power toward initiatives that they feel will better the school. The Leader in Me mentality means that adults listen to the ideas and the suggestions that students bring forth, and that self-agency is empowering."*

*"The Leader in Me teaches students how to be proactive and how to prioritize. These effective habits keep students away from anxiety and stress and improve their mental health."*



# Trauma-Informed Principles and *Leader in Me* Alignment

The transformational changes that come through implementation of the *Leader in Me* process, among them student self-advocacy and student and staff empowerment, create the foundation necessary to effectively care for students facing trauma and its consequences.

In fact, *Leader in Me* practices support application of the six principles identified by The National Center for Trauma-Informed Care (NCTIC) as necessary to address Adverse Childhood Events (ACEs) and facilitate healing and resilience.

During the school year 2018-2019, schools in Fort McMurray reported seeing positive changes in students and school community tied to the NCTIC principles:

1. Safety
2. Trustworthiness and Transparency
3. Peer Support
4. Collaboration and Mutuality
5. Empowerment, Voice, and Choice
6. Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

Every fall, school authorities review their Accountability Pillar results. These results show how well they are achieving the goals and outcomes of their Three-Year Education Plans (3YEPs). This progress is then reported in their Annual Education Results Report (AERR).

The October Accountability Pillar Overall Summary included in the AERR provides the jurisdiction's performance. This enables parents and the public to see, at a glance, the progress the jurisdiction is making. It is important to consider the local practices, strategies and context of the jurisdiction when interpreting the results.

AERRs and 3YEPs are public documents meant to inform parents and communities. School jurisdictions must post their plans and reports on the school board websites by November 30 each year. Provincial results on the Accountability measures are reported on Alberta Education's website.

The results below are from the Alberta Education Accountability Pillar Survey of Fort McMurray Schools' Parents, Students, and Staff comparing their results to those of Alberta's.

The AERR's positive results for Fort McMurray Schools in:

1. Safe and Caring
2. Citizenship
3. Work Preparation

support that LiM practices increased areas tied to NCTIC principles in Fort McMurray schools for 2019.

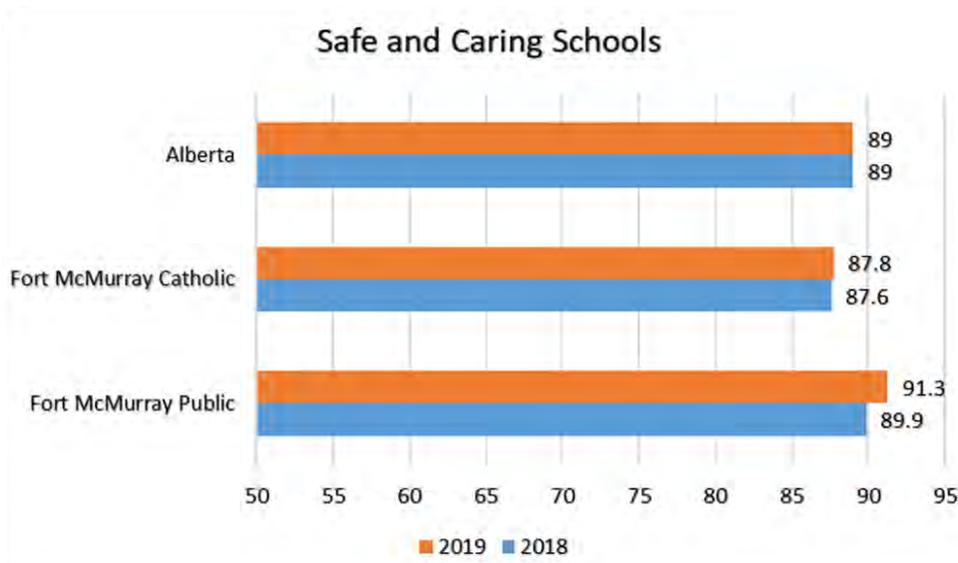
For the second year in a row, Fort McMurray LiM schools outperformed Alberta schools in the AERR category of Safe and Caring, which can be tied to two of NCTI’s principles – Safety and Trustworthiness and Transparency. AERR defines Safe and Caring as:

### SAFE AND CARING

Percentages of teachers, parents and students who agree that students are safe at school, are learning the importance of caring for others, are learning respect for others and are treated fairly in school.

Definition: Teachers, parents and students are asked whether:

- Students feel safe at school
- Students feel safe on the way to and from school
- Students treat each other well at school
- Teachers care about their students
- Students are treated fairly by adults at school



Note: Both districts saw an increase in Safe and Caring this past year while the province remained the same.

Both Public and Catholic are in the acceptable to excellent range.

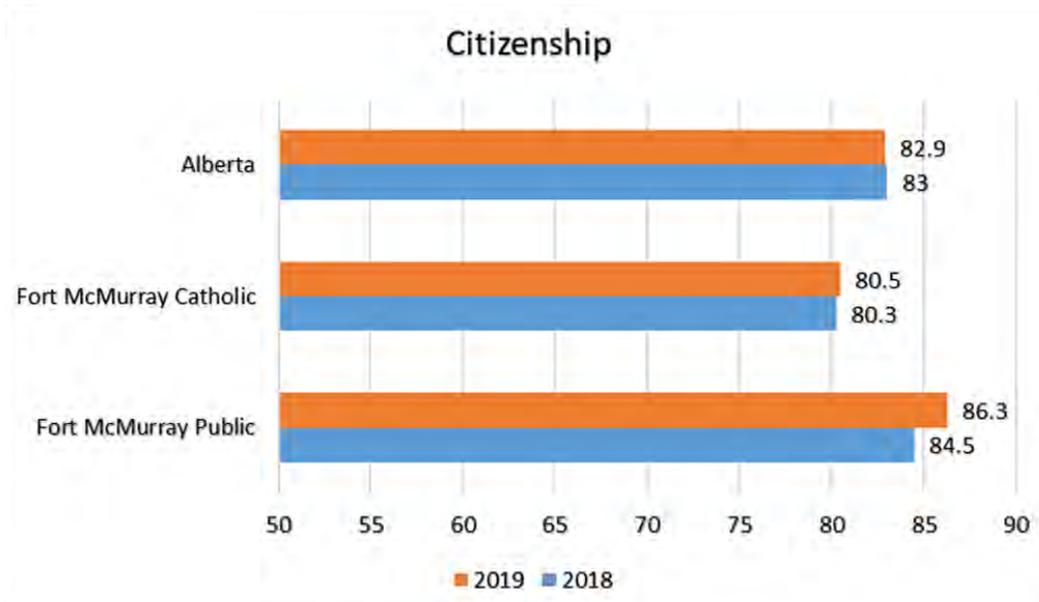
LiM Practices, as defined below, in Safety and Trustworthiness and Transparency influence school culture and feeling of belonging, attributes that increase Safe and Caring scores in schools.

NCTIC Principle	LiM Practices	LiM Research Evidence
Safety	LiM empowers educators with paradigms and practices necessary in identifying and improving dimensions of their school’s physical, social, and emotional culture that most directly impact feelings of safety.	LiM “helps to build a positive school climate... it creates conditions in which teachers relate and communicate more effectively to students, work more collaboratively with one another in planning and coordinating lessons, and spend less instructional time dealing with behavior issues.” - <b>Corcoran, Reily, &amp; Ross. John Hopkins University, 2014</b>
Trustworthiness and Transparency	LiM professional learning helps teachers develop productive learning environments by proactively building trusting relationships with students and fostering trust among students.	“At least <b>85%</b> of the [LiM] students indicated agreement that their teacher cared about them, they liked going to school, and they are learning a lot.” - <b>ROI Institute, 2014</b>



For the second year in a row, Fort McMurray LiM schools outperformed Alberta schools in the AERR category of Citizenship, which is tied to NCTI’s Peer Support and Collaboration and Mutuality principles.

Citizenship: Emphasize service and social justice opportunities to develop global citizenship.



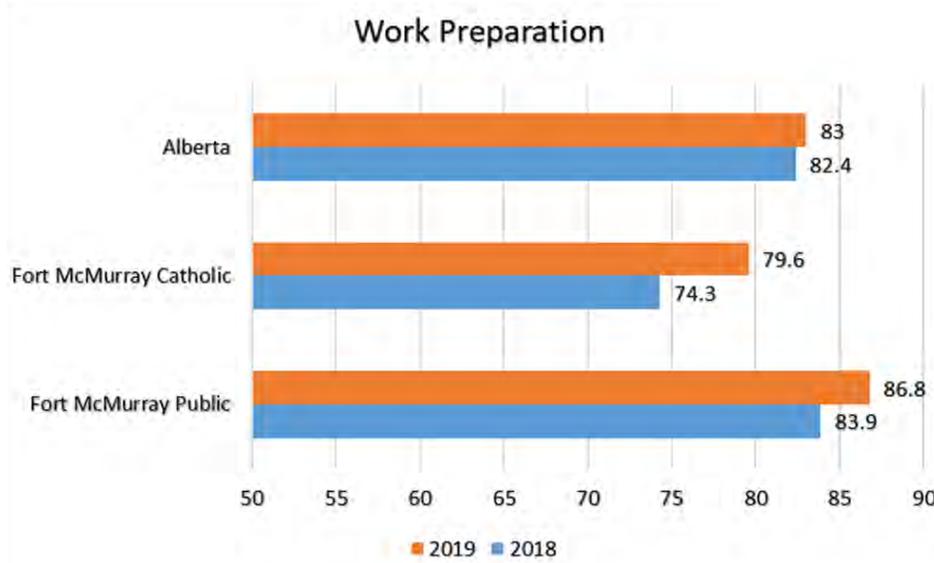
NOTE: Both districts increased their scores this year while the province's score slightly decreased.

Both Public and Catholic results are considered acceptable to excellent.

LiM Practices, as defined below, in Peer Support and Collaboration and Mutuality help create a safe environment in which students feel comfortable pursuing goals whether they are academic or service oriented.

NCTIC Principle	LiM Practices	LiM Research Evidence
Peer Support	Adults in LiM Schools teach and model positive social behaviors to students. Students apply these behaviors to their peer relationships in ways that promote mutual support and develop high-trust.	“LiM has positively impacted peer relationships.” - Dr. C. Tidd. Walden University, 2016
Collaboration and Mutuality	Adults in LiM Schools teach and model positive social behaviors to students. Students apply these behaviors to their peer relationships in ways that promote mutual support and develop high-trust.	Teachers and students reported that after implementing LiM, the “classroom became a safe environment where all students felt comfortable pursuing goals.” -Baldwin, et al. The College of Saint Rose, 2012

For the second year in a row, Fort McMurray LiM schools outperformed Alberta schools in the AERR category of Work Preparation, which is tied to NCTI’s Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues and Empowerment, Voice, and Choice principles.



NOTE: Both districts saw a significant increase in their scores this year compared to the Province who only had a slight increase.

LiM Practices, as defined below, in the Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues provide LiM teachers with the professional development tools to prepare students to be responsible individuals in charge of their own learning and school and community cultures.

NCTIC Principle	LiM Practices	LiM Research Evidence
Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues	The habits of peinterpersonal effectiveness practiced in LiM Schools help students and adults develop awareness, respect, and openness to others, especially for those who may be different, and in times of conflict	LiM professional learning “help educators in better preparing students to be responsible individuals who use their leadership skills to positively impact their own learning, school, and community cultures.” - <b>Caracelo. Walden University, 2012</b>
Empowerment, Voice, and Choice	LiM helps educators create environments where student voice and choice are a part of the learning culture and empowering instructional techniques aid in academic achievement as well as self-advocacy and problem solving.	Teachers working with low-income students indicated a hope that their students would “have [their leadership skills] be what defines them and not the circumstances in their lives.” Similarly, for some students, “the leadership skills being taught became a source of possible empowerment and the ability to perhaps improve their lives.” - <b>Evans. Virginia Commonwealth University, 2014</b>



We see the power of the *Leader in Me's* process as students are empowered to use their voice in many leadership roles throughout the day. Demonstrating NCTIC's sixth and final principle of Empowerment, Voice, and Choice.



**STUDENTS  
FIND THEIR  
VOICE**

Students have leadership roles within the school including daily announcements, leading school assemblies, greeting guests and providing school tours.



# The Pillars of Positive Mental Health

The **Canadian Comprehensive School Health Framework** outlines a foundation for building positive mental health with four pillars.



## Pillar 1

### Social and Physical Environment

- Quality relationships among staff and students
- Emotional well-being of students
- Condition of buildings and surrounding grounds



## Pillar 2

### Teaching and Learning

Resources, activities, and curriculum that provide students with:

- Age-appropriate knowledge
- Experiences that build their skills
- Improvement to their health and well-being



## Pillar 3

### Partnerships and Services

Collaborations that support and advance positive mental health among:

- A school
- Students' families
- Surrounding community organizations



## Pillar 4

### Healthy School Policy

School procedures and policies that:

- Promote health and well-being
- Shape a respectful, welcoming, and caring school environment

# With support from the *Tzu Chi Foundation*,

Fort McMurray schools have implemented the *Leader in Me* process as one of the foundations for positive mental health development in their community. We have aligned the *Leader in Me* process to each of the four pillars and have shared instances that connect the pillars to the work the districts are undertaking in their respective schools.



## Pillar 1: Social and Physical Environment

*Leader in Me* Schools use **key leadership practices** to build a feeling of community, establish a common vision, and build trust and unity through regular routines and activities.



"Implementing the *Leader in Me* program enables **everyone to share a common purpose** of simultaneously working towards bettering ourselves as individuals and our school as a whole."

-Terri Josey, Fort McMurray Islamic School

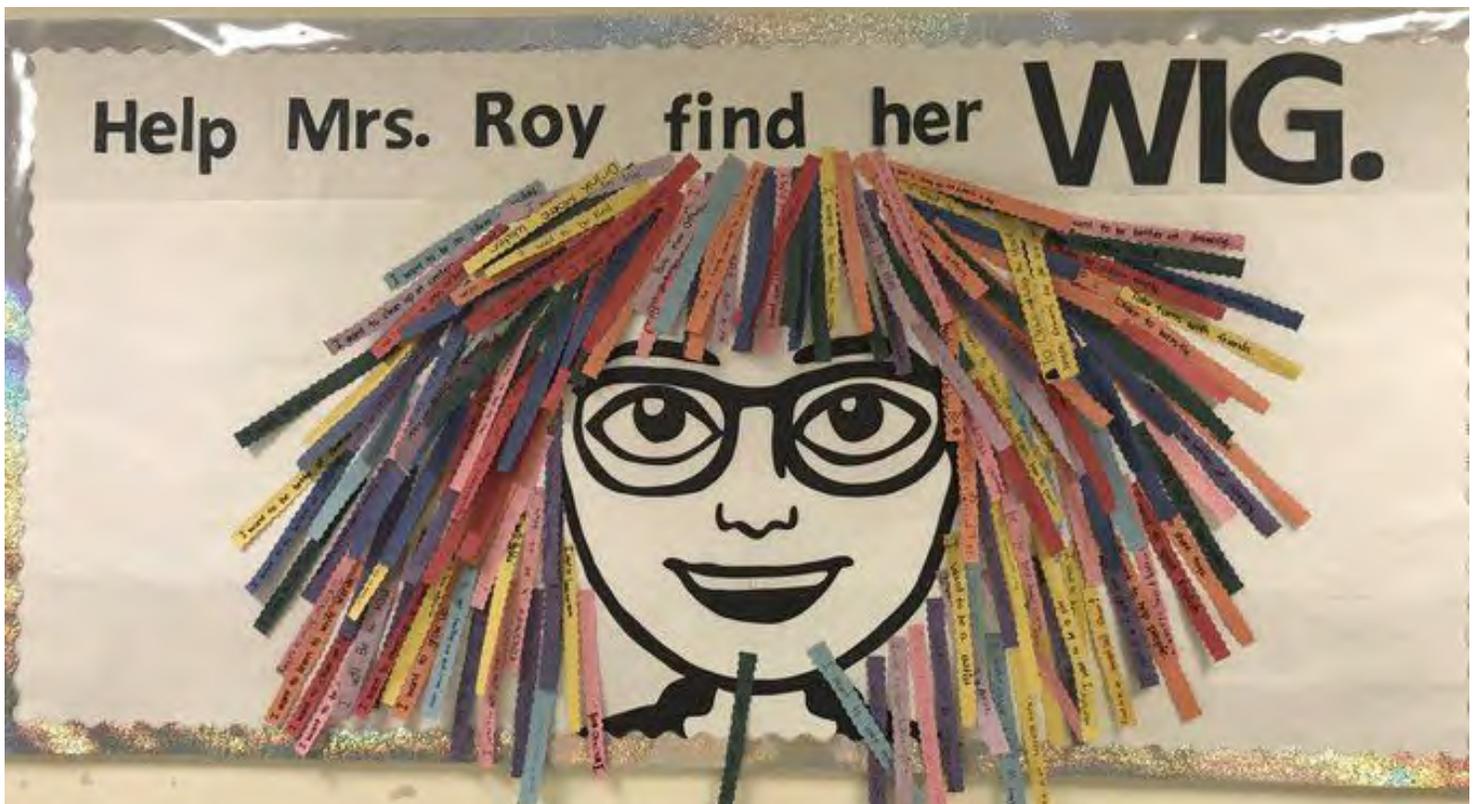
*École Dickensfield staff, students and families synergize for their Lighthouse Team-School Beautification project.*



## PILLAR 1: SOCIAL AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

A huge component of good mental health is possessing a sense of belonging. At Fort McMurray Islamic School, we have seen the *Leader in Me* program cultivate this feeling of togetherness, and of belonging to something bigger than oneself. All staff and students take pride and ownership in our school culture through putting the 7 habits into practice daily, taking on leadership roles, and having a voice that matters. Implementing the LiM program enables everyone to share a common purpose of simultaneously working towards bettering ourselves as individuals and our school as a whole. Being engaged in the Leader in Me program fosters positive self esteem, healthy relationships amongst students and staff, and the achievement of a myriad of goals. Thanks largely in part to LiM, belonging to the Fort McMurray Islamic School is being a part of a family that cares about you wholeheartedly, encourages you to be your best, and celebrates your accomplishments - all of which contributes to an overall healthy well being.

Terri Josey, BSc, BEd, MEd  
Fort McMurray Islamic School  
Kindergarten Teacher, FMIS Social Media Curator



*Dr. Clark Kindergarten has added their Wildy Important Goals to Mrs. Roy's WIG!*

Grade six is a time of sorting out our own identities, as well as who our friends are. Change happens as sometimes the friends we've had no longer share our interests.

**Habit 1: Be proactive**, and **Habit 5: Seek first to understand, then to be understood**, are crucial to maintaining positive relationships and conflict management.

Social groupings revolve around communication, and being proactive means not believing everything that we hear about others, but to approach them first with an open mind. Habit 5 stops students from approaching others aggressively or defensively, and instead start a conversation from a place of curiosity and a willingness to understand through listening. There are a lot of untrue things that get said, and a lot of misunderstandings that can be mitigated with proactive conversation that is seeking understanding.

With a climate of accountability and open communication that comes from being proactive and understanding, the class is able to foster a supportive community of students who feel connected and supportive of each other.

Michelle Bechtel, Counselor, Christina Gordon Elementary





## Pillar 2: Teaching and Learning

*Leader in Me* integrates **Social and Emotional Learning** schoolwide, from the classroom to the playground, and to families and home. As students learn valuable social-emotional skills they also apply these skills through public speaking, service learning, goal achievement, and Student Leadership Roles, where they plan, organize, and lead classroom or schoolwide activities, routines, and special events.



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*"With a climate of accountability and open communication that comes from being proactive and understanding, the class is able to **foster a supportive community of students** who feel connected and supportive of each other."*

-Michelle Bechtel, Counselor, Christina Gordon Elementary



Being a perfectionist can be a paralyzing and anxious place to be. Student A was fearful of making mistakes, which was making her avoid tasks at school. She was very reluctant to begin a task, and often quit near the beginning in frustration. She could list off the names of classmates that she felt were the best at math, and the best at reading, but she could not put herself anywhere in that list as she was focused on the mistakes she knew she would make. This lack of self-esteem was a skewed perception.

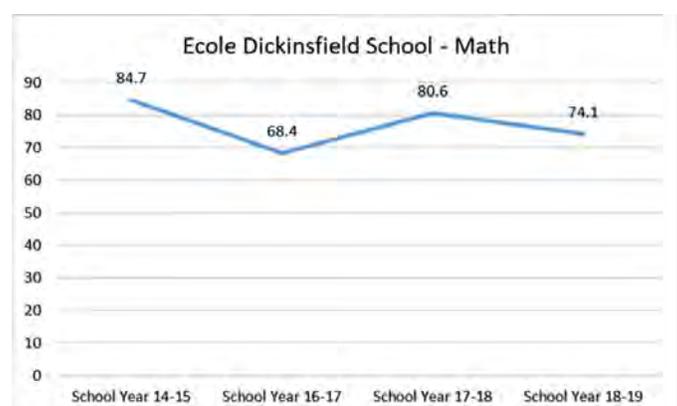
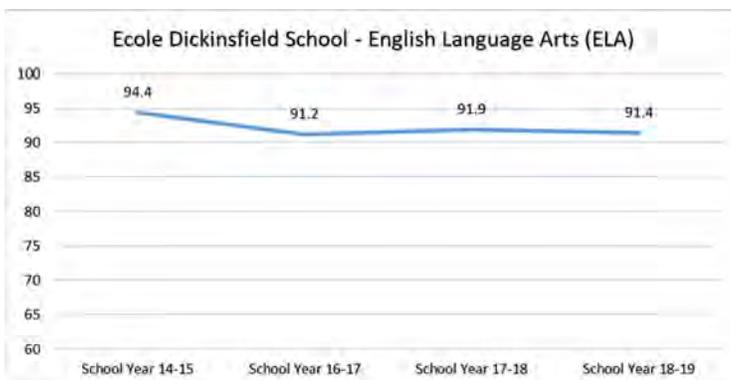
*She and I discussed the purpose of school. We talked of how learning is a process of “mistakes”.*

Babies make mistakes when learning to walk. She had made mistakes when learning to ride a bike. Mistakes are part of the process. We looked at **Habit 2: Begin with the end in mind**, and **Habit 3: Put first things first**.

Together we clarified that the purpose of school is to learn. That means putting learning first, and the end in mind is increased knowledge and ability through practice. With a culture of Leader In Me in the school, she was encouraged and properly supported to “fail” at new subjects and new activities because the goal is trying, and the priority is learning. Accepting and allowing herself to be less than perfect, made a place where she could value her attempts at things. Her self-esteem reflected a boost when she gave credit to herself for the new things she experienced, and stopped comparing herself to others.

## PILLAR 2: TEACHING AND LEARNING (Continued)

We have been tracking École Dickinsfield School’s English Language Arts (ELA) and Math scores over the last couple of years. Their scores took a dip between school years 15-16 and 16-17. As can be expected, the wildfire occurred in the middle of this academic dip. Goal achievement and focus on learning led to improvements in 17-18, demonstrating positive recovery in students. Scores in both English Language Arts (ELA) and Math saw improvements and significantly in Math for school year 17-18.





*Top: Announcement leaders at Beacon Hill School share the message that everyone needs to be kind and to be a friend who listens!*

*Middle: École Dickinsfield Flyers ATB Grand opening - this is a student run bank, held weekly where students can come and deposit money in their ATB account.*

*Bottom: News leaders film and deliver the daily news message at École Dickinsfield Elementary.*



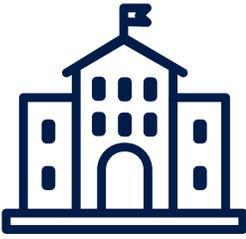


### Pillar 3: Partnerships and Services

Because a student's positive mental health is impacted largely by how well his or her needs are met, the **Leader in Me** focuses on creating empowering support systems schoolwide, and through training and partnerships with families and the larger community.



Student Lighthouse team collected items for the local food bank to help restock their shelves.



“By utilizing a **‘whole-school initiative’** such as the *Leader in Me*, the administrators were also able to include parents and community members in the initiative.”

DR. N. BRYANT (2016) CAPELLA UNIVERSITY



*École Dickinsfield School parent leaders and students create painted games outside.*

*"What you do has far greater impact than what you say."*

-Stephen Covey

# Students put Compassion into Action

## Michael's Hope

Michael was only six years old, a Kindergarten student, when he decided he wanted to help those that were homeless. He established a fund-raiser where he designs pins that he sells for \$5. He has raised more than \$3000 with all proceeds going to the **Centre of Hope** which is a daytime homeless drop in center in the heart of downtown Fort McMurray.

Michael also has a well project in Cambodia. He has raised money to help build a well to bring water to those in Cambodia that did not have access to water before.



## What Leadership Means to Michael

"When I started **Michael's Hope** I did it to help people who didn't have things like food, a house, or in some countries clean drinking water. Until now, I have never thought or looked at myself as a leader. **What leadership means to me is helping people when they need help.** It means working with others as a team. Encouraging them by listening to their ideas and not being bossy. When you're a good leader it inspires other people to do good things. When I see others doing good things, it inspires me to keep helping other people." -Michael

*"A person with a generous heart and compassion for all beings leads the most blessed life."*

- Master Cheng Yen

# Selfless Giving Inspires Others



Riya made and sold beauty products to raise money for the local women's shelter.



Students collected donations of second hand clothing as a fundraiser for the Centre of Hope.



Bracelets the students made out of paper beads were sold to raise funds for Herberg Children's Home in Robinson, South Africa.

Michael's creation of **Michael's Hope** inspired other students to find different ways to help people.



*"When you're a good leader it inspires other people to do good things."*

- Michael of Michael's Hope



## Pillar 4: Healthy School Policy

*Leader in Me* is a whole-school improvement process that begins by building the professional and personal capacity of the adults in the school. The adults then lay the foundation of a socially, emotionally, and academically supportive school environment by modeling healthy attitudes and behaviors, and collaboratively creating systems that reinforce the development of students' personal and interpersonal leadership.



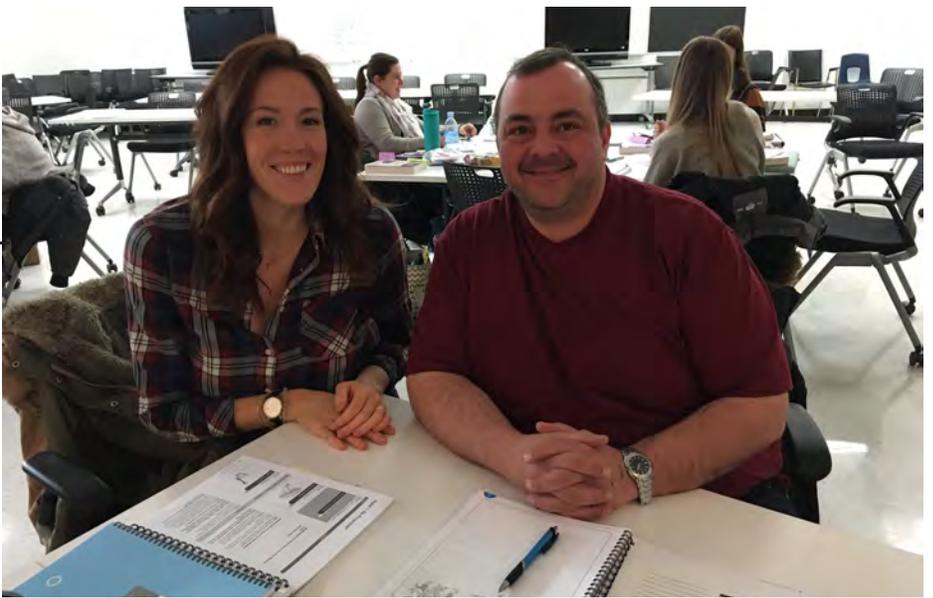
*École Dickinsfield Elementary gardening leaders harvesting for a healthy taste test.*

Sense of Connection  
and Purpose



Empathy and  
Respect for Others

Life Satisfaction



Right: FranklinCovey Coach and Consultant Kelly Johnson, spent the day teaching how to facilitate the 7 Habits for Families for the Fort McMurray Public School Division.

Below: Breakfast program leaders prepare and share a nutritious morning snack with other students each morning at Christina Gordon Elementary.



Below: Student wormologist leaders feed the worms veggie and fruit waste from students' healthy snacks. Healthy food, less waste, student empowerment. Win-win-win.



# Coaching Spotlight

Each school has received expert support to help their staff apply *Leader in Me* to the unique challenges at their school, and to achieve measurable results each academic year. Coaches have been integral partners to each of the schools during their implementation over the last 3+ years.

*I can remember clearly, the exact date that I first came to Ft. McMurray. It was Oct. 15th, 2001. The day my dad died. I was scheduled to do a series of 7 Habits workshops for students, invited by Amgad Rushdy who was the principal of Greely Road Elementary. I had arrived the night before but was awoken at 4:00am by a call from my older brother Doug. "Mike, I didn't know what to do. Can you come home. Dad just died." I called Amgad, grief stricken, and shared my bad news. I can't remember the words he said, but I do remember, clearly, the feeling of love, compassion and caring he shared with me, a relative stranger, on that saddest of sad days. This love and caring for strangers in their most difficult times of need is what I love about the people of Ft. McMurray. It is the same love, compassion and caring I love about the Tzu Chi Canada Foundation.*



*In the process of deciding how to help the citizens deal with the post-traumatic stress caused by the fire, Tzu Chi listened to presentations about many worthy endeavors. Jodine Wells described the benefits of the Leader In Me she had witnessed and experienced in her role as assistant principal at École Dickinsfield and Christina Gordon elementary schools. Tzu Chi quickly recognized that the Leader in Me and the 7 Habits aligned well with their own core principals from the Jin Si Aphorisms and would also be a great way to help people heal their suffering.*

*The incredibly generous \$690,000 donation to support the Leader In Me was the first time Tzu Chi had chosen to provide disaster relief by funding a program. I was told that prior to this, their mission of disaster relief usually came in the form of support that was more tangible and concrete such as warm blankets and food. When the donation was made to fund the Leader In Me Ft. McMurray, I am guessing some may have wondered how could the donors see concrete results from the money they had generously donated? I hope the following stories, make clear, the way the Leader In Me has helped the citizens of Ft. McMurray.*

While it is critical to provide immediate relief after a disaster, it is my strong belief that prevention is the best disaster relief. By providing support for the Leader In Me, Tzu Chi has provided the students and citizens of Ft. McMurray:

1. immediate relief from the fire.
2. enabled an attitude that is the key to preventing future disasters.
3. given the students resilience and leadership skills for life.

### *Immediate Relief*

*In Habit 1: Be Proactive, we teach the concept of Circle of Concern, Circle of Influence. Proactive leaders focus their thoughts and energy on their Circle of Influence; those things which they can control directly. Karina Webb, a counselor at one of the Leader In Me schools utilized this concept to help students deal with the stress their families were suffering from after the fire. One young girl was upset and concerned about the stress she saw her parents suffer from because of issues with the insurance company after the fire. Karina asked the girl if she could do anything directly about the insurance company. The girl answered no. Then Karina asked if there was anything the girl could do directly to help reduce her parents stress. After thinking about it, she answered, "I could clean up my room before my mother gets mad at me so she doesn't get stressed."*

*Prevention is the best disaster relief.*

*After the fire, I was working with the student light house team at St. Anne school. I asked the students to share ways they were being leaders in helping their school and community. One student in grade 6 shyly shared that his winning science fair project was a prototype for a fire detection mechanism. When placed in a forest, it detects changes in the air that indicate the conditions that typically occur before a wildfire starts. An early detection monitoring system created by an eleven year old to help prevent future fires! In Habit 2: Begin with the End In Mind, students explore their mission in life. This young man has certainly found his mission. The local fire fighters were so impressed with his idea of an early detection system to prevent fires and are now looking at ways they could develop and use it in the future.*

### *Leadership Skills for Life*

*Ft. McMurray and its' citizens are often criticized for the environmental damage caused by the oil sands development. Kitty Cochrane and her student leaders respond to the criticism by living Habit 1: Be Proactive. They have instituted an environmental leadership culture at École Dickinsfield. They accomplish this through initiatives such as composting all the organic waste from student and staff lunches. The compost is then used to grow worms, nurtured and raised by the students called "wormologists." In turn, the worms are sold to local sports fisherman to raise money for different charitable projects such as donations to help build a school in an impoverished area of Cambodia. In the spirit of Habit 4, a true Win/Win for everyone.*

*In hindsight, it is ironic to me that the sad day of my father's passing was the same day of my introduction to the wonderful, warm, loving people of Ft. McMurray. As a child I would often see my dad approach friends, neighbours and people he did not know and simply ask, "need a hand?" I would like to thank the Tzu Chi Canada Foundation for "lending a hand" in Ft. McMurray's time of need. The example of Tzu Chi "lending a hand" selflessly, with love and compassion is a leadership lesson the students have learned well. They in turn will go out into the world and when they see someone in need, in turn, like my dad and Tzu Chi, simply ask, "need a hand?"*

Written by Mike Suto, FranklinCovey Coach + Consultant

Mike has presented *The 7 Habits* to thousands of students and educators all across North America. His enthusiasm and energy are complimented by his wide-ranging life experience. From his involvement in international development and exchange in places like Cuba, Thailand, and Japan; to his work as a high school teacher and coach; and his role as a Canadian businessman in Japan, he has been given a unique perspective on life, its priorities, and what success means. His mission in life is to help others reach their potential for living a well-balanced life of meaning and contribution by striving to live his own life with purpose and equanimity.

Currently Mike is responsible for delivering and developing training programs related to *The 7 Habits* in Canada and the US. Born and raised in Richmond, British Columbia and the proud son of a fisherman and a farmer's daughter, Tojiro and Michiko Suto, Mike now resides in Vancouver with his wonderful wife and son.

*"The example of Tzu Chi "lending a hand" selflessly, with love and compassion is a leadership lesson the students have learned well."*

-Mike Suto, FranklinCovey Coach + Consultant

# Coaching Spotlight



*Serving as an educator in Alberta since 1997, I can attest to the tenacity of the Alberta educator. Rarely, however, have I seen an entire community so united in their dedication to the health and wellbeing of its children and families as Fort McMurray, especially in the wake of a disaster like the wildfire. In the fall of 2017 I was called to serve, support, honour and stretch the schools implementing Leader in Me in Fort McMurray. I can echo Mike Suto's emphasis on the positive impact the Tzu Chi Foundation has had on community members - especially the children - through their support of Leader in Me implementation. Despite the challenges involved in developing the skills and competencies around resilience through personal and interpersonal leadership while in the midst of life's challenges, the high degree of support, resources, time and commitment to this work has yielded both heartwarming, tangible and, I believe, sustainable results.*

*Leadership is not an end in and of itself. It serves the results we are most compelled to reach for and Fort McMurray schools needed to heal first in order to build strength and forward momentum as they progressed. This means a significant amount of attention needed to be on the health and wellbeing of members of the entire school community. Each school identifies the results they most want to address for their students, staff, parents and even the surrounding community. Then, in learning about principles of effectiveness, they practice applying new skills and building personal and interpersonal competencies that release the gifts and greatness in each and every student, staff member and families. Seeing the greatness and potential in each and every one is key to persisting with facilitating the learning of principles of effectiveness no matter what challenges life will offer up to you, or the challenges it already has. This is the essence of all of the habits which, when consistently applied in our lives, creates the foundation for Habit 8: find your voice and help others find theirs.*

**“Leadership is communicating the worth and potential of people so clearly that they are inspired to see it in themselves.”**

**Dr. Stephen R. Covey.**

*This is no small feat while in recovery mode. I clearly recall walking into a class and taking a moment to locate the teacher as she sat amongst the children on the carpet in what turned out to be a lesson in Habit 1 skills of personal responsibility taught by a small child. The students were listening carefully to a little grade 1 boy standing at an easel as he read out two sentences on it. He had patiently written out the sentences himself and you could see the pride on his face as he taught his peers what it said. He then calmly called on three different peers to hear their curious questions and respond to each clearly. Hanging from his collar is a lanyard that read “Teacher Leader” and he grinned the entire time. Later, he handed me a picture he drew of himself as a leader that read “I get to lead the class”. When talking with the teacher after this lesson concluded, and asking her what was important about this scene she commented on how this child had big challenges in his young life. “He often has a really rough time with his emotions. But he’s learning how to pause before responding, to be proactive, not reactive and to choose his own weather. Mastering himself and his emotions is hard, but learning about and applying the habits is working. He could not have handled being up front before. And none of the other children would have listened to him either. Now he’s beginning to see himself as capable and calm, valued and important. And he’s so proud of what he can do now.” This was the power of the leadership and potential paradigms that teach us that everyone can be a leader and everyone has potential.*

*In another school, students on a newly formed Student Lighthouse Team seek to positively influence their school. After a Community Coaching Day attended by school Lighthouse Coordinators guiding school wide implementation of Leader in Me, one of the teachers taught the Student Lighthouse Team the basic elements of forming a plan so they could propose and run a school event of their own creation. She made it clear that this was “their” plan and they would “own” every step along the path. She would help but only if asked. She stepped back while they brainstormed ideas and, when they’d settled on an event day that they wanted to accomplish in the school, off they went to book a meeting with the principal. During the meeting with the principal, a student with significant reading challenges read out the proposal to the principal. She had rarely talked in class before and the principal was amazed. Even when the young student mixed up her words – as often happens for her given her reading challenges – she quickly corrected herself when asked and was unconcerned about her mixup. This was a change for her. The Student Lighthouse Team had their plan approved and were well on their way to shaping the schoolwide student experience themselves and thrilled to be empowered in their school experience.*

*Still another school has noted how student engagement and ownership of their school environment has emerged from tapping into student passions, talents, sense of social conscience and connecting these to community needs. This school has integrated curricular outcomes with leadership and empowered students to identify needs in their school community that they can influence and take action upon given their learning principles of personal and interpersonal effectiveness through the 7Habits. I recall the energy of a student as she walked me through the school pointing out all of the recycling practices*

throughout the building. When I asked her why recycling was so important to her, she told me it was her portfolio. Environmental protection was her passion. She expressed concern that the city did not yet provide curbside pickup for blue bins but was confident that she and her adult supporters could influence city council once they got on their agenda. She was the Minister of the Environment at the school, you see, and it was her responsibility to find ways to care for both the school and community environment and to speak up to others for the same.

These are the stories of social-emotional stability, healing and voice. There is resilience in the evidence of these and other emerging voices in Fort McMurray: voices of strength and focus, community care and future vision. It is an honour and a gift to be of this amazing journey as it moves past pain, into personal mastery and on to each student offering their gifts to the larger community.

Written by Kelly Johnson, FranklinCovey Coach + Consultant

Kelly Johnson, is an Alberta educator, former school administrator, instructional coach, organizational development facilitator and Professional Certified Coach (International Coach Federation). To date, she has applied her coaching and educational expertise to partnering with senior and system leaders in the public and private sectors, government, public and post-secondary education, non-profit, health, communication/publishing and business entrepreneurial areas. As a full-time leadership coach in government and now a full-time Alberta-based Leader in Me Coach with FranklinCovey Education, Kelly supports schools, administrators and central office leaders in school community transformation in both Canada and the U.S.A. Her primary role includes facilitating The 7Habits of Highly Effective People, providing team coaching, executive coaching and developing professional learning related to student empowerment, leadership and goal execution.

Kelly brings inspiration, curiosity, strategy and a keen sense of passion to her personal mission to change the world alongside of other educators, system leaders, community members and families. Kelly and her husband James are voracious readers with a flair for downtime that involves a full schedule of personal development, spectating volleyball, music and stage plays while learning the joys of parenting three adult children.

*"We should use our time and our abilities to help all living beings. When we give unselfishly to others, we will feel that our lives are real and meaningful. We will not feel that our lives have been wasted. We will thus lead a happy life."*

*Jing Si Aphorism by Dharma Master Cheng Yen*



## LIGHTHOUSE CERTIFICATION

Lighthouse Certification recognizes high-performing *Leader in Me* Schools that serve as exemplars to the community and other schools while achieving excellent results in teaching leadership principles, creating a leadership culture, and aligning academic systems.



École Dickensfield was initially scheduled for their Lighthouse review in May of 2016, prior to the outbreak of the fire. The fire started May 1 and due to it jumping the Athabasca River and surrounding the immediate grounds of the school, École Dickensfield had to cancel their review.



In June of 2018, École Dickensfield Elementary School was awarded a Lighthouse School of distinction.

Following an extensive day of observations, interviews, and data analysis, along with a thorough review of the school's Leader In Me Evidence Binder, the review team found École Dickensfield Elementary demonstrated a strong understanding of key leadership concepts, an environment that communicates the importance of the students and their worth and potential, and students understanding of key leadership principles.



## Financials

Year	Date	Total
2019	January 1 - December 31	\$89,551.20
2018	January 1 - December 31	\$89,551.20
2017	<u>January 1 - December 31</u>	<u>\$119,447.51</u>
	Total	\$298,549.91

Remaining funds from the Tzu Chi Foundation will continue to provide Leader in Me services to both of the districts through the end of year 3.

# Leader in Me School Process Map

Leader in Me is a process of continuous growth and improvement for students, staff, and families. Through ongoing professional learning, coaching, and online resources, *Leader in Me* aligns to the most important initiatives.

All schools have completed the centerline *Leader in Me* process. Going forward they will maintain a membership and can choose deeper trainings on numerous topics.

School	Level 1			Level 2	Level 3
	7H	LL	CC	AA	EI
Christina Gordon Elementary	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
Dave McNeilly School	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
Dr. KA Clark School	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
Ecole Dickinsfield School*	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
Fort McMurray Islamic School	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
Greely Road	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
Thickwood Heights School	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
Walter and Gladys Hill School	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered
Westview Public School*	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered	Delivered

**COMPLETED**

\*Ecole Dickinsfield School and Westview Public School went through Leader in Me in a previous version

 - Delivered       - Not Scheduled

7H: 7 Habits Signature  
AA: Aligning Academics

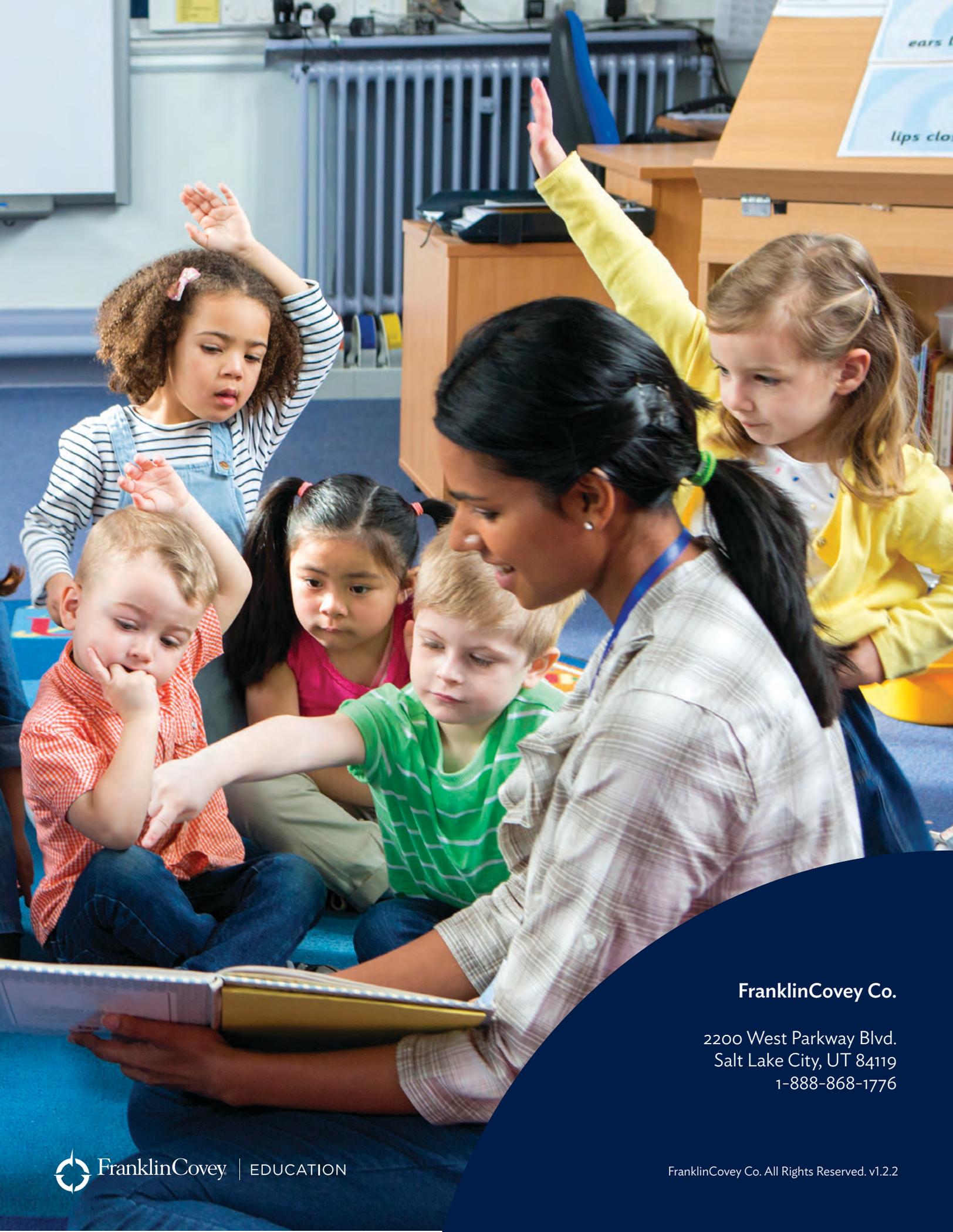
LL: Launching Leadership  
EI: Empowering Instruction

CC: Creating Culture



*FranklinCovey and the Fort McMurray Public School Division would like to thank the Tzu Chi Foundation for their partnership these past three years in assisting the community members of Fort McMurray after the wildfire. We are extremely humbled and grateful for your contributions in bringing the *Leader in Me* into the Fort McMurray area.*

***Thank You***



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