



# THE GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE COMMUNICATOR



**EMBRACE  
A NEW YEAR  
TOGETHER**

Artist Reception,  
photo by George Gingras

Artist Amanda Fisher-Laframboise  
and her mom, photo by G. Gingras

Archival Image  
Submitted by Amy Briley

The GDI Communicator is an internal newsletter intended to document the achievements of management and staff of the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research

## IN THIS ISSUE

- ∞ *gishchi-iteeyihteenaan ee-kishkamaahk: We Wear Them with Pride*
- ∞ Why Educational Assistants Matter
- ∞ Amended GDI Policies Effective Immediately
- ∞ GDITE Client Success Story: Jasmine Pennington
- ∞ SUNTEP Saskatoon Sewing Club

## LETS GET SOCIAL



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**WWW.GDINS.ORG**

## GISHCHI-ITEEYIHTEENAN EE-KISHKAMAAHK: WE WEAR THEM WITH PRIDE

By Amy Briley, GDI Program Coordinator

On January 20th, over 100 people celebrated the Métis Ribbon Skirt exhibition during the opening reception at the Saskatchewan Craft Council. The exhibition titled *gishchi-iteeyihteenaan ee-kishkamaahk: We Wear Them with Pride*, co-created by the Gabriel Dumont Institute and the Saskatchewan Craft Council, showcases beautiful ribbon skirts made by Métis women. The Métis Ribbon Skirt exhibition celebrates Métis history while embracing the cultural traditions of women who continue to make and wear contemporary-style ribbon skirts. In recent years, ribbon skirts have become a symbol of cultural reclamation for Indigenous women, including Métis women, who wear ribbon skirts to honour their history and demonstrate cultural pride.

The exhibit runs until March 9th and showcases 24 skirts and three ribbon

skirts created by Métis women who've connected to their ancestry through the process of learning about and making ribbon skirts. Each skirt is as unique as its maker, and many hold stories of their cultural identity as Métis women. The ribbon skirts are referred to by some as "story skirts" because the ribbons and fabrics can represent a story that is significant to the maker. Some skirts pay tribute to family members, while others represent important cultural movements like Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women or Every Child Matters.

When asked if Métis women traditionally wore ribbon skirts, we need only look at historical images to see that ribbon skirts were a common piece of clothing worn by Métis women.

**Story continues on Page 3...**





# APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR GDI UNIVERSITY BASED PROGRAMS



## Northern Saskatchewan Teacher Education Program

Earlybird March 15\*

- Four-year Bachelor of Education Degree
- La Ronge
- September 2024 - May 2028



## Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program

Early bird March 15\*

- Four-year Bachelor of Education Degree
- Regina, Saskatoon, or P.A.
- Sept 2024 - May 2028



## Indigenous Education Doctorate Program

Deadline Feb 15

- Three-year Doctorate of Education Degree
- Prince Albert
- July 2024 - April 2027

For a full listing of all current programs and to apply online visit [WWW.GDINS.ORG/PROGRAMS](http://WWW.GDINS.ORG/PROGRAMS)

# MICHIF WORDS OF THE MONTH

**MISHPOON**

Snowing

**LI KOFFII**

Coffee

**LI TOOROO**

Pemmican

**ZHAANVYII**

January

## WHY EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS MATTER

By Daniel Downs, DTI Program Coordinator

Every day, there is a tremendous discourse surrounding the current state of the public education system in Saskatchewan. One could write a Master's Thesis on the complexity of the modern public school system, and it would still only scratch the surface. Everyone, in one form or another, is impacted by public education, regardless of whether they have school-age children, grown children, or no children. Not only do parents have to navigate this system, but similarly, the public has a vested interest in the results of public education.

I have two school-aged children (Grade 11 and Grade 7), I work for an educational institute, I manage educational programming, and there are only two things I know for sure when it comes to the complexities of educating:

1. Children do not learn to read by eating alphabet soup alone at home, and
2. Children (and all learners, for that matter) have a much greater chance of succeeding when ample supports are in place to promote their success.

I may be the exception to the first rule (having learned to read from eating ALPHA-GETTI and Alpha-Bits cereal); I attribute my real success in education to the many supports that were in place throughout my life to help me navigate an often confusing and conflicting classroom setting. While I recognize that everyone in such a monolithic institution as Education played a role in my success, there are those with whom I have a very public and recognizable soft spot. Those are the Educational Assistants (EAs) that work with programs, classes, and individual students to help ensure their success.

Someone could write a second Master's Thesis on the role of the EA in education, so I shall only write what I have witnessed. EAs deal with exceptionalism—in whatever form it is presented. This exceptionalism could come in the form of a learning disability, language support, emotional support, or a child (like I was) who refused to write stories about barn animals when dinosaurs and time travel were so much more exciting. Those who worked 1:1 in the classrooms helped me focus my energies and attention. I am most thankful to them for not letting my eccentricities and idiosyncrasies turn into conformality and commonality. If this were the case, I'm afraid my life would have taken a drastically different path than what transpired to allow me to be writing this article for you today.

I am proud to say that Dumont Technical Institute has continued to support all learners by providing an Educational Assistant Certificate program in La Loche for the 2023-2024 and the 2024-2025 Academic years. The goal of this program is simple: we want to ensure children receive the best educational assistants possible. We want to train EAs that recognize exceptionalism in all their forms, and aid the Saskatchewan education system in keeping its goal of giving every child an equitable chance for success. 🌐

### NEW MÉTIS RESEARCH INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITY

GDI Training and Employment has partnered with the Mitacs Accelerate Internship Program on a Métis career development research project!

More info on our website at: [gdins.org/news](http://gdins.org/news)

\*An earlier issue of the Communicator incorrectly listed the deadline for SUNTEP and NSITEP as February 15th instead of March 15th, 2024. We apologize for the error.



## UPCOMING DTI PROGRAM DEADLINES



**Chainsaw & Brush Saw Safety Program**  
Buffalo Narrows  
Feb 15th




**Industrial Mechanic (Millwright)**  
Île-à-la-Crosse  
Feb 29th




**Educational Assistant**  
La Loche  
Feb 29th




**Mobile Crane Operator Program**  
Regina  
Mar 15th



For a full listing of all current programs and to apply online visit [WWW.GDINS.ORG/PROGRAMS](http://WWW.GDINS.ORG/PROGRAMS)

## GISHCHI-ITEEYIHTENAAN EE-KISHKAMAAHK: WE WEAR THEM WITH PRIDE

*Story Continued from Page 1.*

From the 1780s, the Métis had primary access to trade cloth, ribbons, and beads. Due to their durability, washability, and availability, cotton and wool became the preferred fabrics for making clothing. The ribbons added a pleasing aesthetic to their clothes, which was fashionable for the time. As times change, so do the trends and the availability of different materials. What does not change is the ownership and pride of the maker, particularly for the clothing that expresses one's culture. We cannot say how long Métis women have been wearing ribbon skirts, but thanks to old photographs and the art that preceded photography, as well as travelers' accounts, we know they have been worn for more than two hundred years.



Amy Britey and family  
Photo by George Gingras

We hope you will take the time to visit the exhibit, learn about the historical significance of Métis style ribbon skirts, and get some inspiration from the beautiful works on display.

*gishchi-iteeyihtenaan ee-kishkamaahk: We Wear Them* is up until March 9th at the Saskatchewan Craft Council, 813 Broadway Avenue in Saskatoon, and is free to attend. 🌐

## AMENDED GDI POLICIES EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

**By Bethani Groat, GDI Communications Coordinator**

In December 2023, the Board of Governors approved amendments to GDI policies that came into effect on December 15, 2023. Every employee is responsible for being familiar with the new policies, and highlights of the significant changes are outlined below. Please note that all staff are responsible for reviewing all policy amendments and implementing as related to their roles within the Institute.

Gabriel Dumont College (GDC) has evolved and now offers programs ranging from certificate to graduate studies, including the new Indigenous Education Doctorate Program. GDC will no longer pay tuition for students in undergraduate studies because these students now have access to

the MNU Sponsorship program, making the GDC sponsorship unnecessary.

A new Short-Term Employment classification has been added to policy 3.2 on Recruitment, Selection and Appointments. This new classification allows the Institute to enter into 30 days or less contract to cover an emergency staff shortage while typical hiring procedures continue to attempt to fill the role on an on-going basis. Emergency situations would require the Executive Director and Program Head of Human Resources to approve.

**Story continues on page 5...**

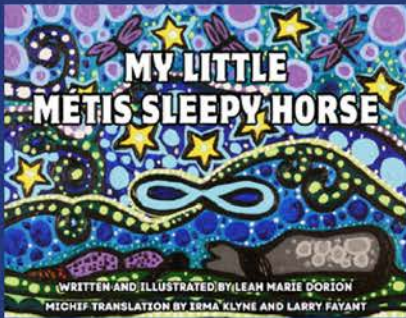


Artist Kristin Kalk and her skirt  
Photo by April ChiefCalf





## GDI PRESS SHARE NEW RELEASE FOR CHILDREN



*My Little Métis Sleepy Horse* is a bedtime story in a board book format that is best read aloud by adult caregivers to small children. Horse stories are an important theme in Métis oral history and telling horse-themed stories can help reconnect children to their Métis cultural roots on the high plains.

Award-winning, bestselling author, and artist, Leah Marie Dorion captures our connection to horses through her vivid paintings.

**AVAILABLE NOW AT  
GDINS.ORG/SHOP-GDI**



Cassidy McDonald

Brandi Tourand

## GDITE CLIENT SUCCESS STORY: JASMINE PENNINGTON

By Bethani Groat, GDI Communications Coordinator



Meet Jasmine Pennington, a new mom, recent graduate, and Métis healthcare worker. In April 2023, she completed an online two-year college diploma in Health Information Management through CHA Learning, a division of HealthCareCan. Jasmine is interested in data management and curious about how data is managed in healthcare. Her path to success was challenging, but with the encouragement of her Gabriel Dumont Institute Training & Employment (GDITE) counsellor, Gerry, she persevered.

Jasmine encountered financial obstacles during her studies, but with the help of Ruppertsland Institute and GDITE, she secured the support needed to complete her diploma. Jasmine said, "It is organizations like [GDI] that help people follow their passions and greatly aid in successfully doing so."

Looking ahead, Jasmine anticipates joining the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) in October 2024 as a Health Information Management Practitioner after her maternity leave. She is eager to tackle the technical aspects of her role, including coding and data analysis. Understanding the significance of her work, she recognizes that the data she analyzes contributes to statistical reports by the Canadian Institute for Health Information, influencing healthcare funding allocation.

Jasmine aspires to advance within the SHA, aiming to become a manager and mentor for others interested in Health Information. She emphasizes the importance of pursuing one's passions and giving one's best effort. 🌟

## SUNTEP SASKATOON SEWING CLUB A SUCCESS!

By Bethani Groat, GDI Com. Coordinator, and April ChiefCalf, SUNTEP Faculty

SUNTEP Saskatoon students formed a Sewing Club lead by Kristin Kalk, Culture Rep. with the Saskatoon SUNTEP SRC, and April ChiefCalf, SUNTEP Faculty. A few students had expressed interest in learning to make ribbon skirts, and quickly, more students joined in. "I think everyone should know how to sew for both practical and creative purposes." says April ChiefCalf, "Sewing can also be a great stress reliever."

Students get to make special projects they can take home at the end of the year to remember their time with SUNTEP and the connections they made along the way. Brandi Tourand is a fourth-year SUNTEP student, and she says "SUNTEP's sewing club has given

me an opportunity to connect with my culture and express my creativity." Brandi is working towards completing her first ribbon skirt in the club currently.

So far, students have been learning to make ribbon skirts and dog bandanas, but in the new year, they have plans to start some throw cushions and men's ribbon shirts and vests, too. ChiefCalf has been providing some materials from her mother's sewing stash which she inherited last year. "She taught me to sew" says ChiefCalf "now she's part of me teaching my students to sew!" The Sewing Club is open to everyone and meets every Thursday afternoon on campus to learn basic sewing skills and connect with peers. 🌟





# AMENDED GDI POLICIES EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

Story Continued from Page 3.

New sections were added to policy 3.3.4 Other Positions for Sessional Lecturers and Tutors. The key change is that now decisions for hiring these positions will be made by a committee consisting of the immediate supervisor, applicable Director or designate, and no longer require the involvement of a GDI Board Member. This change was made to reflect the reality that the number of sessional lecturers vetted by their affiliated university is very limited and is very specific to each course. For tutors, these contracts are generally very short, for only a few hours per week, so there are limited risks in hiring these two positions.

Significant changes to policy 4.1.2 Signing Authority include updated signing thresholds in the Annual Operating budgets that align with the upcoming ERP implementation. Additional changes may occur after

ERP system implementation this spring.

There have been significant changes to policy 4.1.9 Purchasing, whereas a purchase order will be required for all purchases, with limited exceptions. An exception list has been added to the policy.

Other policies that were amended include 1.4.3 SUNTEP, 1.4.4 Gabriel Dumont College, 3.1 Employment Classifications, 3.2 Recruitment, Selection and Appointments, 3.3 Hiring, 3.3.1b Executive Director Travel Expenses, 3.3.2 Director/Assistant Executive Director, 3.3.3 Program Head, 3.3.4. Other Positions, 4.1.2 Signing Authority, 4.1.9 Purchasing Policy, and 4.1.4 Service Contracts. All policy changes can be viewed online at [gdins.org/overview/policy-procedures](http://gdins.org/overview/policy-procedures)

## SUNTEP Regina had a great snow day testing the laws of physics!



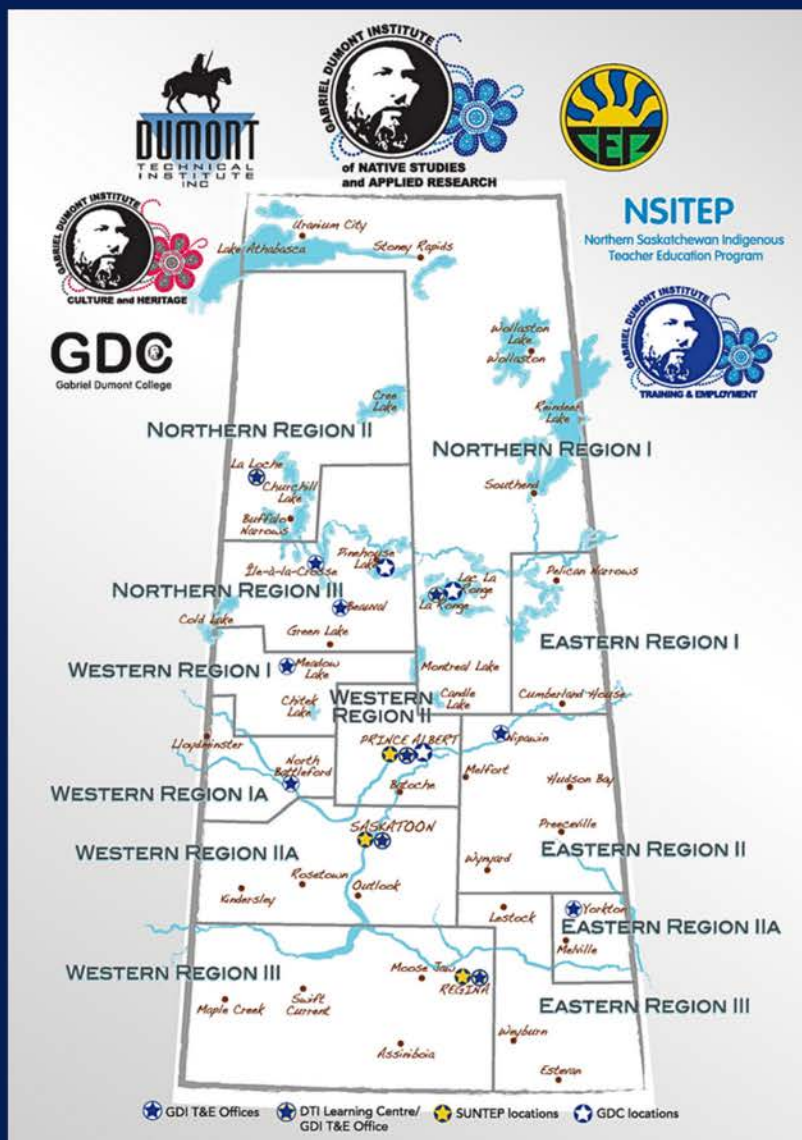
## FEBRUARY 2024 FINANCE & PAYROLL CUTOFF CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
				Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
		Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on Student Feb 9 Direct Deposits		A/P Cheque/EFT Run Cutoff @ 4:30 for Timesheets & Payroll Revisions for Feb 15 Payday	Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
				Staff Payday Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run	Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
	Family Day Stat Holiday	Cutoff @ 3 pm for Stop Payments on Student Feb 23 Direct Deposits		A/P Cheque/EFT Run Cutoff @ 4:30 for Timesheets & Payroll Revisions for Feb 29 Payday	Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Accounts Payable Invoices	
25	26	27	28	29		
				Staff Payday Accounts Payable Cheque/EFT Run		

EMPLOYEE CONTRACTS DUE AT PAYROLL UPON JOB ACCEPTANCE. PAYROLL MUST RECEIVE CONTRACTS PRIOR TO PAYROLL CUTOFF DATE IF RECEIVED AFTER THE CUTOFF DATE, THE EMPLOYEE WILL BE PAID ON THE FOLLOWING PAY PERIOD MRTS DUE BY THE 15TH OF EVERY MONTH



# CONTACT US



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Previous issues of the *Communicator* can be found online at [www.metismuseum.ca](http://www.metismuseum.ca)

If you would like to submit an article for the *Communicator* please contact Bethani Groat [bethani.groat@gdins.org](mailto:bethani.groat@gdins.org)

