



## Looking Back – Honouring our Story

For 13 years (2010–23), the Chief Superintendent’s Elder Advisory Council (EAC) brought together Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers from the Siksikaitsitapi (Blackfoot), Tsuut’ina, Îyârhe Nakoda, Métis, and Cree Nations. The quarterly meetings held each year with school district leaders helped shape foundational work in Indigenous Education, including the [CBE Land Acknowledgement](#) and process, and the [Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework](#).

Over time, relationships deepened beyond the formal EAC structure. Members of the Indigenous Education Team and system leaders began engaging with Elders and Knowledge Keepers in smaller, more personal settings, which the Elders and Knowledge Keepers found more meaningful. This shift led to a new model called Making Relatives Kinship Circle, which focuses on kinship building, making relatives, and working alongside.

Elders and Knowledge Keepers shared powerful insights that guided this transformation:

- *“Instead of collaborating, let’s visit – don’t come with a plan.”*
- *“Don’t just bring a bunch of old people together and ask them questions. This is our lodge. Don’t just bring us out and then put us back in the closet. Sit with us. This is ReconciliACTION.”*
- *“We bring the stories of our ancestors – 1000s of years of teachings. That’s what’s at this table.”*

During the final EAC gathering, Elders and Knowledge Keepers shared that it is a good time for change – “You are moving in the right direction but each 10 years you should be ready to move – like Creators Law – the Natural Law.”

Their words emphasized the importance of relational engagement; a call for sustained, respectful presence and action; and the depth and value of Indigenous knowledge systems. A shift from a question and advisor role, to one that emphasizes oral practices, language, tradition, culture, ceremony, and based in a circle process was identified as a way forward.

## Walking Forward – Making Relatives Kinship Circle

During the 2024-25 school year, the Making Relatives Kinship Circle began to reflect a more holistic, relational approach to engaging and working with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers. This evolution marks a shift from consultation to collaboration, from structure to kinship, and from advice to shared learning and responsibility.

Balanced within the four domains of the [Indigenous Education Holistic Lifelong Learning Framework](#), the Making Relatives Kinship Circle includes the following:

- **Spirit-To Be: Gathering Together** – Invite Elders and Knowledge Keepers to gather with members of CBE leadership to “visit” – this is not about advice – the focus will be on learning about one another to build kinship
- **Heart-To Belong: Knowledge Circle** – Invite individual or small Nation groups (Blackfoot, Tsuut’ina etc.) to share, discuss, learn, and plan relevant to specific topics (e.g., Treaty education, TRC, language learning)
- **Body-To Do: Learning Together** – Holding space for learning from Elders and Knowledge Keepers (e.g., circle processes)
- **Mind-To Know: Working Together** – Collaborating with Elders and Knowledge Keepers on specific projects (e.g., land-based learning)