



MASKWACÎS EDUCATION  
SCHOOLS COMMISSION

## 2019 Annual Report



Tahâkam wîcihtâsoyahk, tatipehitamahk kikway  
tatôtamahk ekwa katipehitamah kaskihtâwinihk isi,  
Tamamihtisiyahk enehiyâwiyahk, ekwa  
kinehiyâwininaw, oma  
Mayo kânistohtâsoyin kahkîyaw kîkway miyopayo.  
Ekwa mîna tasâkitâyin kitaskînaw, ôta ehayâyahk.....  
ota ewîkiyahk, piko kahkiyaw kiyânaw  
tawîcihtasoyahk tamiyonâkwahk.

(Theresa C. Wildcat - Bear Hills Native Voice 1986)

“To strive with our help, to set goals and accomplish  
these goals, to be proud of ourselves as  
[Nehiyawak], and of our culture and heritage; once  
you understand yourself, everything seems to fall  
in place. Also, we must love our community, we are  
here... it is where we live, we must all help to  
improve it.”

(Theresa C. Wildcat - Bear Hills Native Voice 1986)

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## CONTENTS

Chairperson Message	2
Superintendent Message	4
Who we are	6
Vision and Mission	7
MESC Board	8
Stakeholder Engagement Sessions	11
2018-2019 Highlights	12
Board Priorities	14
District Strategies	18
Closing	19
MESC Budget	20
Audit	22
Glossary	28





## Nîkân Apîstamâkew Wîhtamowin

Kanak nimamitonehiten ôma peyak askî ekwa aspin kâkî pasikônamihk Maskwacîs Kiskinwahamâtôwin. Namôya kaketiik ninanâskomon.

Ôma atoskewin kânîkân apîstamân, ninanâskomâwak ôki peci nâway ekwa anohc okimâhkânak, ôki nistam kâkînistam apicik, kâkihci kânistam apit otatoskew kamikohk, Kehtehayak ekwa kahkiyaw peyakohewamak ota MESC.

Kahkiyaw kîkway kâwîcihtaso, kiskehitamâwin eka tasâkistâhk ehisi kitâpahtahkik MESC tahôtisôwak awâsisak ekwa peyakohewamak.

Peyak askî mistahi kîkway kihitôcikâteu ôta kitaskîkaw ekwa tawâpahtamiik ôma ôta masinahikâteu.

Osâm ohci ôma Maskwacîs Kiskinwahamâto Wiyasowewin, Kînasowânâwak nikotwâsik Maskwaciw Îyîniwak ta apîstamawâcik otipahaskâniwâw.

Otapîstamâkewak tepehitamwak ekwa pamihikwak otatoskewiniwâw osâm ohci Wâhkôhtowin.

Tahosîtâhk kihci kiskinwahamâkewin, piko tanîkân astâhk Wâkohtowin ekosi tawîcihtâsowak oskâyak, peykoheiwâwak, onîkânîwak ekwa kehtehayak.

Oma nistam peyak askî, kîmiyo mâmiskôcikânaw anita “Nehiyaw Kîsikâw Mâmawôpiwin”, “Oskâyak Mâmawôpiwin”, “Kehtehayak Nitohtamiwin” ekwa “Onîkânîw Mâmawôpiwin. Kâkike tamâmitonehitamiik tânisisihk tanicimiskâtoyahk, nicîkhehitenân tankiskwâyâhkik peyakohewamak oma kâwî mâmawôpihâyâhkik onîkihkomâwak.

Metoni miyopayo kiyânaw Maskwacîsak tanisîisi tahosîtamawâyahkik kiskinwahamâkewin kitawâsiminawak ekwa peyakohewamak.

Takecinâhoyahk ôki kiskinwahamâkosôwak tanôkohtmâsocik ekwa takaskihocik pihcayi kiskinwahamâtôkamikohk, ôki apîstamâkewak tâpôwakehtamwak ôma Nehiyaw kiskinwahamâkewin.

Kitawâsiminawak tamiyowâtahkik okiskinwahamâkosônowâw osâm ewakoni ôhi Nehiyaw Ihtâwina: Iyiniw Mamitonehikan, Nehiyaw Pimatisiwin, Nehiyawewin ekw Wâhkohtowin.

Ôki Kehtehayak kâwasakâmepicik nikweyaskomkonânak ôma kâwîâpacihtâyahk Maskwacîs kiskinwahamâkewin ekota ehocîmakahkihk ohi Ihtâwina. Ekoni Ihtâwina ekikahpiteki ita kâkiskinwahamâkehk, ewakoni mîna tapimâcihkoyahk ekosi tamiyo mahcîhonânawô kitaskîkaw.

Tepeyimôwin ekwa kâsâkihâyahkik kitawâsiminawak ewakonihk mîna tahto kîsikâw kâhâhkameyimoyahk.

Namôya kaketiik nimamihcihk MESC otatoskewak, kahkiyaw etepyimocik opimâtisônowâw ôma mîna kâkiskinwahamâkecik kahositahk osâm ohci nâkateyimôwin.

Peci nâway ôma peyak askî nikî pewâpahten mistahi kîkway tamiyo wîcihkocik oskâyak ekwa nîkehcinâhon ekwa nicîkhehiten ôma kotak kiskinwahamâtôaskî.

Awasime is niwî âhkam atoskâtenân ohi kiskinwahamâtô kamikwa ekwa ta miyo pimâtisiwak kahkiyaw peyakohewamak ôta kitaskîkaw.

ay-hay Kinanâskomtinân

Dr. Shauna Bruno  
Nîkân Apîstamâkew

## Tansi

As I pause to reflect on our first inaugural year as Maskwacis Education Schools Commission (MESC), I do so with a full and grateful heart. My work as Chair of the Board of Governors invites me to extend this gratitude to past and current leadership, to the Transition Board, to the Superintendent's Office and to the school staff, Elders, and families of MESC. Every contribution of time, knowledge and love to MESC's vision benefits our children and families. Our MESC community has filled the 2018/2019 year with the activity and growth that is celebrated throughout this report.

Based on a process set out by the Maskwacis Education Law, MESC is governed by a board of six community members who represent each Maskwacis Nation. The Board of Governors is committed to, and driven by, a governance model inspired by Wâhkôhtowin. In order to create an outstanding education system, this foundation of kinship ensures that we emphasize the ongoing participation and engagement of Maskwacis oskayak (youth), families, Nîkânîwin (leadership), and Kehtehayak (Elders).

In 2018/2019, we shared meaningful and inspiring conversations at the Nehiyawatisiwin Kisikaw Conference, Oskayak Conference, Kehtehyak Forum and during our Nîkânîwin Summit. Always mindful of ways to connect, we look forward to meeting our families at the Ohpikinahawasiwin Conference in November of 2019. It is an important and wonderful opportunity for Maskwacis to shape the direction of its education in ways that truly work for our children and families.

To achieve a high degree of kiskinwahamawâkan confidence and success within Maskwacis schools, the Board of Governors believes in a strong Nehiyaw (Cree) education program. Our children deserve a quality educational experience driven by core Cree values: Îyiniw Mâmitonehickan, Nehiyaw Pimâtisiwin, Nehiyawewin and Wâhkôhtowin. Guided by our Circle of Elders, the implementation of a Maskwacis Cree curriculum and pedagogy is indeed rooted in these values. Woven with their significance in our educational spaces, these values also nourish the heart of our community's health and wellness.

Commitment and love for our children compels us to be our very best each and every day. I am deeply proud of MESC's staff, all of whom live this commitment as they provide quality education built firmly upon a strong ethic of care. Throughout 2018/2019, I witnessed a wealth of positive difference-making in our kiskinwahamâkosôwak (students) and I'm confident and excited as we look forward to a new year.

We will continue to raise standards in our schools and to elevate the quality of life for every family in our community.

ay-hay Kinanaskomtinan



Dr. Shauna Bruno  
Chair, MESC Board of Governors



## Tansi Onîkikomâwak ekwa Ohpikinâwasowak

Namôya kaketihk nimîyehiten tamâtinamâtakok ôma Maskwacîsihk peci nâway askî masinahikan(2018-2019). Mihcet kiskehitenâwâw ekwa peyak askî aspin kaki pamihtâmâsoyahk ôma Maskwacîs Kiskinwahmâkewin. “Tânsi ôma kipehispayo aspin ekwa peyak askî”? Ewako mâna nikwecimkawin. Nitâpwehten oma peci nâway askî nimito kwesikaskihtânân osâm kiskinawâchcikewak ôki kahkiyaw peyakosâp kiskinwahamâtôkamikwa ekwa ôma kâkweyaskastâhk anima Kisikinwahamâto Atoskew Kamik mistahi kâkîsihtoskawâcik okiskinwahamâkosowa ekwa otatoskewak. MESC kîpatemawewak kitawâsimsinawak ekwa nicîkehiten ôma ôte nîkân. Ewa koni ôhi kâhatoskâtamâhk peci nâway askî

- ▶ Maskwacîs Kiskinotahiwew Masinahikan
- ▶ Nanâtohk Mîtsôwin
- ▶ Tahâkam wîtahpisômâyâhkik ôki Marten Peyakohewamak Mâcihtâwin ôki ohci kâhapisîsîcîc awâsisak
- ▶ Tahâhkam sîtoskâhcîc okisikinwahamâkosô ekwa otatoskewak ôhi kahkiyaw kiskinwahamâtô kamikwa
- ▶ Ayiwak Nehiyaw Atoskewak ihtakôwak 64% nistam mâka ekwa 70%
- ▶ Kehtehayak Kâwasakâmepîcîc kîmamawôpayihâwak
- ▶ Misatîmwak Kâpamîhîcîc
- ▶ Enânapâcihtahk anima Grace Marie Swampy Kiskinwahamâtô kamik
- ▶ Dr. Shawna Bruno Kânîkan Apit ekwa ôki Apîstamâkewak kînikânîskamwak mamawôpowina ôta Maskwacîsihk
  - ▷ Oskâya Mamawôpowin
  - ▷ Nehiyawâtîsiwin Kîci Mamawôpowin
  - ▷ Kehtehayak Kamâmiskôcîcîcîc
  - ▷ Onîkânîwak Takîsastâcîc Pamînkew Masinahikana ekwa mîna ôki Okîmâhkânak

Ninohte mâmiskômawak ôki kâsôhki atoskecik ekwa esôkehitahkik ôta Kiskinwahamâtô Atoskew Kamik, ekwa ôki nîkân Kâkîhîcî Nistam Apîcîc; Tracy Sylvester, Randy Risto, Sanila Mehal ekwa Trina Vy ôma kâsihtoskâkecik ekwa mistahi tipahikan kâsôhki atoskecik. Otatoskewiniwâw namôya wâpahcîkâtew mâka kîspin ekâya ekota tâhayâcîc namoya mistahi kâhkî kaskihonânaw ôma peci nâway askî.

Kâkîke mâna ninahâpahtenân ôhi kiskinwahamâtô kamikwa ekwa ninohte mâmiskôten ôma osôhki atoskewinwâw ôki kâhokîmâkahtahkîc Kiskinwahmâtô Kamikwa ekwa otatoskahâkanak. Ôma osôhkatoskewinawâw awâsisak ohci ekwa Maskwacîsihk emâmitonehitahkîc ekwa enahâpahtahkîc ôma kânakateyimîhîcîc awâsisak ekwa tancimehtahkîc ôma kakîsîkinwahamâhcîc Nehiyawâtîsiwin takîmamaskâtamîhk.

Ekwa kâkîke mîna kâhkî wîhtamawînân kîkwâya tamiyo payihtâyâhk kiskinwahamâtowin, ekwa kînanâskomtînân kiyawâw onîkîhkomâwak kâsihtoskawîyahk ekwa kânawasônawâyekîc kitawâsimsoawâwak ôhi kiskinwahamâtôkamikwa ôta Maskwacîsihk.

Kînanâskomitînâwâw ekwa mîna kîtatamîhînâwaw ay-hay,

Ekosi Pitama

Brian Wildcat, B.P.E., M.Ed.,  
Ka-Ostikwaniska Kiskinwahamatowin

## Tansi Ohpikinahawasiwin,

It is with great pleasure that I share the 2019 Education Report. As many of you are aware, this was our first full year of operation under the new Maskwacis Education Schools Commission. “How did the first year go?” is a question that I am frequently asked. I believe it was a transformational year marked by collaboration between all 11 Maskwacis Schools and a newly organized central office that offered exceptional support to kiskinwahamâkosôwak and staff. MESC was able to provide a quality Nehiyaw educational experience for our children and I am optimistic about the future. Here are just some of the highlights from the past year:

- ▶ The Maskwacis Curriculum Development Guide
- ▶ The Nanâtohk Mîciwin (Universal School Food Strategy)
- ▶ Continued partnership with Martin Family Initiative on K to Grade 3 literacy and Early Years Initiative
- ▶ Increased services which support kiskinwahamâkosôwak and staff in all Maskwacis schools
- ▶ Increased First Nations staff from 64% to 70%
- ▶ The organization of the Circle of Elders
- ▶ The Misatim Horsemanship Program
- ▶ Renovation and modernization of the Grace Marie Swampy School
- ▶ The Board of Governors led by Dr. Shauna Bruno, conducted another round of successful collaborative engagement with Maskwacisak:
  - ▷ Annual Oskayak Conference
  - ▷ The Nehiyawatsowin Conference for staff
  - ▷ The Kehtehyak Forum
  - ▷ Nîkânîwin Summit with the Maskwacis Chiefs and Councils

I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of our central office, in particular the Associate Superintendents; Tracy Sylvester, Randy Risto, Sanila Mehal and Trina Vy for their countless hours of hard work. Their work often goes unseen but without them MESC would not have achieved, the high degree of success we experienced during our initial year.

Our main focus is always the schools and I would also like to acknowledge the excellent work of our school principals and their staff. Their dedication to the children and the Maskwacisihk, and their focus on safety, academic and Nehiyaw Pimatisiwin (Cree Way of Life) is remarkable.

As always, I welcome your comments and suggestions and I want to say thank you to the ohpikinahawasiwin for your continued support and for choosing one of our Maskwacis schools for your children's education.

Kinanâskomitinâwâw ekwa mina kitatamihinâwaw ay-hay,

Ekosi Pitama



Brian Wildcat, B.P.E., M.Ed.,  
Ka-Ostikwaniska Kiskinwahamatowin (Superintendent)  
MESC

# WHO WE ARE

In 2018, the four Cree Nations in Maskwacis amalgamated 11 schools from four individual authorities to create the Maskwacis Education Schools Commission (MESC). The purpose of the newly formed school system was to provide a balanced education comprised of Nehiyaw and provincial curriculum.

Maskwacis schools nurture the development of well-rounded kiskinwahamâkosôwak by offering an academically challenging curriculum grounded in a strong foundation of traditional Nehiyaw values of Îyiniw Mâmitonehicikan, Nehiyaw Pimâtisiwin, Nehiyawewin, ekwa Wâhkôhtowin. Kiskinwahamâkosôwak have access to learning opportunities in the classroom and through land-based learning in the form of buffalo harvests, ice fishing, hide tanning, and other traditional Maskwacis Cree practices.

MESC is jointly owned and operated by Ermineskin Cree Nation, Louis Bull Tribe, Montana First Nation, Samson Cree Nation, and currently serves more than 2,100 kiskinwahamâkosôwak. We are proud to employ 454 staff of which 317 are from Maskwacis and other First Nations, representing nearly 70% of our entire MESC staff.

Îyiniw Mâmitonehicikan  
Indigenous Thought



# VISION

The vision of MESC is to foster competent, confident and resilient Maskwacis Cree speaking kiskinwahamâkosôwak.

# MISSION

The mission of MESC is to govern an outstanding Maskwacis education system that ensures kiskinwahamâkosôwak attend respectful and inspiring schools.

**Nehiyawewin**  
Cree Language

**Nehiyaw Pimâtisiwin**  
Cree Way of Life

## **Wâhkôhtowin**

All things are related and connected and require us to maintain good relationships





## MESC BOARD OF GOVERNORS

The MESC Board of Governors builds trust, fosters positive working relationships, and promotes the Maskwacis Cree values within Maskwacis.

The MESC Board of Governors consists of twelve (12) Maskwacis First Nation members. The board serves a three (3)-year term as set out in the Maskwacis Education Law, starting in 2018.

Top row left to right:

Randal Potts, Helen Bull (Elder), Alison Adams-Bull,  
Dr. Shauna Bruno, Tamara Wildcat,  
Brian Wildcat (MESC Superintendent)

Bottom row left to right:

Councillor Mario Swampy (proxy for Chief Vernon Saddleback),  
Chief Craig Mackinaw, Chief Leonard Standingontheroad, Chief  
Irvin Bull, John Nepoose (Elder)

Not pictured:

Grand Chief Dr. Wilton Littlechild, Jerry Jr. Saddleback



MESC exists to ensure that the Maskwacis Nehiyawak develop the confidence, competence, capacity, and character to succeed in various fields of education and employment based on Îyiniw Mâmitonehikan.

Board priorities

- ▶ Cree life and identity
- ▶ Rates of graduating students
- ▶ Academic success
- ▶ Healthy lifestyles
- ▶ Parental engagement

**“To guide our actions, we will follow cultural and traditional teachings, in particular, Wâhkôhtowin. Wâhkôhtowin is the belief that all things are related and connected, that all of existence has spirit and that living in a good way requires us to maintain good relationships with each other and other aspects of existence. We recognize that respect for Mother Earth, Elders, youth and the Treaties is paramount to planning ahead and making decisions for future generations.”**

(Maskwacis Cree Declaration on Education, November 29, 2017)



# Stakeholder Engagement Sessions

**Four** significant stakeholder engagement sessions occurred in the 2018-2019 school year with kiskinwahamâkosôwak, kehtehyak and Maskwacîsak members to enhance engagement, input, and feedback on the direction of education in Maskwacîs.

MESC engagement sessions involve considerable thought, time and organization to ensure the Nation continues to play a key role in the development and growth of MESC. To date, 55 engagement sessions have taken place, consulting over 3,570 Maskwacîsak over the last three years.

# 1

## Annual Oskayak Conference

- ▶ Held kiskinwahamawâkan (student)-led conference to build leadership capacity among students from grades 7 to 12.
- ▶ MESC kiskinwahamâkosôwak participated in pre-planning and training to prepare a fun and educational conference for their peers.
- ▶ MESC kiskinwahamâkosôwak from grades 7 to 12 received a survey on Cree language and culture.

# 2

## Annual Kehtehyak Forum

- ▶ Held a forum to engage Maskwacîs kehtehyak to develop a Maskwacîs Curriculum based on natural law and the four core values of Îyiniw Mâmitohnehicikan, Nehiyaw Pimâtisiwin, Nehiyawewin, and Wâhkôhtowin.

# 3

## Nîkânîwin Summit

- ▶ Held a summit to inform Maskwacîs Chiefs and Councils about Board targets and results to maintain transparency and accountability.
- ▶ Nîkânîwin had the opportunity to review Board plans and offer suggestions.

# 4

## Ohpikinahawasiwin Conference

- ▶ Held a Ohpikinahawasiwin Conference to inform parents of Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) selection process for the 2019-2020 school year.
- ▶ Parents/Guardians received a presentation on the Maskwacîs Curriculum Guides

# Respectful and Inspiring Schools

2018-2019 Highlights

2099



National award-winning **Nanâtohk Miciwin** (Universal School Foods Strategy) provides healthy lunch and snack options for **2,099** kiskinwahamâkosôwak every day.

ESA



MESC has enhanced its relationships with surrounding school districts through the management of **Education Service Agreements (ESA)**. Currently, 30% of Maskwacis kiskinwahamâkosôwak attend provincial schools. The ESA's assist in the development of joint education strategies and information sharing to better support Maskwacis kiskinwahamâkosôwak.

BUS APP



MESC is committed to supporting kiskinwahamâkosôwak. In September 2019, Maskwacis Transport launched the Maskwacis Kiskinwahamâto Pôsowin (school bus) app to help parents, grandparents and guardians follow their kiskinwahamawâkan bus route - and stay up-to-date on any school bus delays or cancellations.

UNITY



Between 2015 and 2019, MESC hosted **55** community engagement sessions with oskayak, kehtehyak, ohpikinahawasiwin, nikâniwin, ekwa atoskewak. During these sessions, over **3570** people provided feedback on education priorities in Maskwacis.

# Respectful and Inspiring Schools

2018-2019 Highlights



MESC released the Maskwacis Curriculum Development Guide on **September 27, 2019**, which included the key components of a holistic curriculum for kiskinwahamâkosôwak from Early Learning to Grade 12.



Ermineskin Elementary School Grade 6 Provincial Achievement Test (PAT) shows promising results. English-Language Arts (ELA) Writing Section Results: **92.6%** of kiskinwahamâkosôwak who wrote this section of the test are writing at acceptable or excellent standards. The Martin Family Initiative Partnership (MFI) supported Ermineskin Kindergarten and Elementary (K-Gr. 3) staff with professional development, programming advice and resource support to strengthen internal instructional capacity in the school.



Major Capital projects in MESC schools is valued at **\$6,700,000** (over the last two fiscal years: 2017-2019)

- ▶ Secured 3 28-passenger buses, 3 trucks and 4 SUV's
- ▶ Approximately \$3 million invested in technology
- ▶ Major modernization and retrofit at Grace Marie Swampy Primary School (Pink School)
- ▶ Replaced flooring at Meskanahk Ka Nipa Wit School
- ▶ Purchased over \$600,000 in school furniture for classrooms and shared spaces



Staffing:

- ▶ Increased First Nation staff from 64% before amalgamation, 68% in the 2018-2019 school year, and **70%** in the 2019-2020 school year
- ▶ MESC is proud to employ 454 staff of which 52% of staff are from Maskwacis (237)
- ▶ 15 of the 22 school administrators are First Nations
- ▶ Hired 12 Maskwacis teachers from the Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP)

# BOARD PRIORITIES

## 1. Nehiyaw Pimâtisiwin and Identity

Kiskinwahamâkosôwak live the Nehiyaw Pimatisiwin and take pride in their Nehiyaw identity.

*2018 - 2019 Target:* Creation of the Maskwacis Curriculum Development Guide

It is MESC's priority that Awâsisak and Oskâyak live the Nehiyaw way of life and take pride in their Nehiyaw identity. MESC Board of Governors reviewed and approved the Maskwacis Curriculum Development Guide on September 17, 2019.

### How we achieved this:

- ▶ MESC recognizes the Maskwacis Cree Language declaration
- ▶ The Maskwacis Education Law states: "The official language of instruction for all schools operated by MESC will be Cree and English."
- ▶ Nehiyawatsiwin Kisikaw and Nehiyawatsiwin Conference Elders Forum (feedback guiding direction of education in Maskwacis)
- ▶ Cree language instruction in all Maskwacis schools
- ▶ School activities (sweats, feasts, and drum groups)
- ▶ Nehiyawitsiwin Daytime and Evening Classes in all four Nations for Maskwacisak

### 2019 - 2020 Targets:

- ▶ Begin Development of Maskwacis Curriculum
- ▶ Learning Services will develop assessments for Nehiyawewin and culture



# PRIORITIES IN ACTION

## Takwâkin Minahowin (Fall Buffalo Harvest)

Each takwâkin (fall), MESC kiskinwahamâkosôwak and staff participate in the takwâkin minahowin - fall buffalo harvest. The harvest demonstrates the connection that nehiyawak have to the buffalo. Kiskinwahamâkosôwak and staff have the opportunity to assist in skinning, preparing, and making dry meat.





# BOARD PRIORITIES

## 2. Rates of Graduating Kiskinwahamâkosôwak

Increase the number of graduating kiskinwahamâkosôwak. We believe Maskwacis is a leader in implementing the treaty right to education - and the best way to implement the treaty right to education is to achieve a high degree of success within our Maskwacis schools.

2018 - 2019 Result: 39 Graduates

### How we achieved this:

Ehpewapahk Alternate School, Ermineskin Junior-Senior High School, Maskwacis Outreach School, and Nipisihkopahk Secondary School were proud to celebrate the graduation of 39 grade 12 kiskinwahamâkosôwak last school year with; 23 kiskinwahamâkosôwak receiving the 100 credit Alberta high school diploma, 12 kiskinwahamâkosôwak with an 80 credit Alberta Education achievement certificate and 4 kiskinwahamâkosôwak received a MESC certificate of completion or Alberta Education certificate of completion.

These graduates demonstrated a commitment and dedication to their studies, completing their secondary education with confidence and excitement for the future.

### How we are improving this:

Academic and Career Coach - Career planning and transition support can be received at the high schools.  
Flex blocks - Flex blocks are offered at both EJS and NSS for kiskinwahamâkosôwak to receive extra support where needed  
Homework club- kiskinwahamâkosôwak can receive extra assistance after school hours from teachers and will get a ride home.

### 2019 - 2020 Targets:

- ▶ 60 Graduating kiskinwahamâkosôwak



## 3. Academic Success

Kiskinwahamâkosôwak are successful, creative and adaptive in their academic studies.

**52%** of MESC Grade 12 kiskinwahamâkosôwak passed their diploma exams in English, Science, and Math last year. **16.9%** of our Grade 6 students passed their Provincial Achievement Test (PAT) in Math, and 36.1% passed their Language Arts PATs. However, the Ermineskin Elementary School results showed great promise. Their results showed **53%** achievement in the reading section of the Grade 6 LA PAT, and **92%** in the writing portion of this test.

### How we are improving this:

- Martin Family Initiative (MFI) - Continued partnership and support for the MFI at the Ermineskin Elementary school. New partnership on the Early Years Initiative to support families with young children. This project focuses on children 0 to 3 years old. It will include building relationships with all Maskwacis Head Starts and Day Cares.
- Support for principals - System Principal has been hired to support principals on instructional leadership and student achievement.
- Learning commons - Kiskinwahamâkosôwak can schedule one-on-one support at the learning commons room.

By implementing these strategies, MESC's goal is to improve individual learner success.

### 2019-2020 Targets:

- ▶ 55% of kiskinwahamâkosôwak will pass all their diploma exams
- ▶ PAT results: Math 20%  
Language Arts 38%



# BOARD PRIORITIES

## 4. Healthy lifestyles

MESC provides kiskinwahamâkosôwak with safe learning environments and promotes healthy lifestyle choices.

Nanâtohk Mîciwin provides healthy meals, snacks, and beverages for all 11 MESC schools. Along with providing comprehensive food education, Nanâtohk Mîciwin includes kiskinwahamâkosôwak in growing and preparing meals.

### School Safety:

Central office staff, school administrators, and school counsellors are taking part in a year-long professional learning community focusing on becoming a trauma-informed organization. This will support a shared understanding among all staff about the impact of trauma and adversity on kiskinwahamâkosôwak and families in order to support feelings of physical, social, and emotional safety within MESC schools.

Kiskinwahamâkosôwak have access to comprehensive school mental health and behavioural health services to promote kiskinwahamâkosôwak well-being including access to:

- ▶ Qualified school counsellors, who offer counselling onsite in our schools;
- ▶ Cultural supports, including access to cultural advisors, circles, and a variety of cultural approaches (Wâhkôhtowin and Nehiyawewin)
- ▶ Liaisons to support communication between home and school, including home liaisons, youth workers, and a kiskinwahamawâkan and family support worker
- ▶ Support for families in navigating child and youth mental health supports in the Maskwacîsak and province

### 2019-2020 Target:

- ▶ 95% of parents satisfied with Nanâtohk Mîciwin

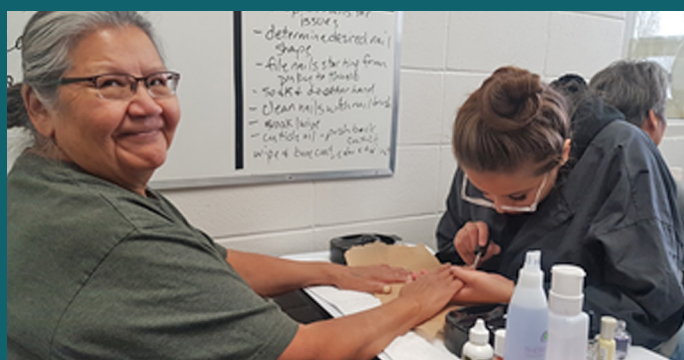
93%

of parents/guardians satisfied with Nanâtohk Mîciwin

# SCHOOL HIGHLIGHT

## Ermineskin Junior/Senior High Cosmetology

Our kiskinwahamâkosôwak have been providing hair and nail services to our elders this school year. EJSH has made connections with the kehteyak lodge to invite kehteyak in and enjoy what our kiskinwahamâkosôwak have been learning. It's not easy for our elders to get around so the kiskinwahamâkosôwak have been fortunate to have this time with them.



# BOARD PRIORITIES

## 5. Ohpikaniahawasiswin (Caregiver) Engagement

Parents and guardians are engaged in the decision-making process regarding their children's education.

MESC has regular parent/teacher nights that provide an opportunity for parents to connect with teachers.

Parent Advisory Committees will be established in the 2019-20 school year. This will include the appointment of 2 parents to sit on the MESC Board of Governors.

### 2018-2019 Ohpikaniahawasiswin survey results:

- ▶ **94%** of Ohpikaniahawasiswin are satisfied with how safe the schools are
- ▶ **92%** of Ohpikaniahawasiswin are satisfied with the facilities and grounds
- ▶ **96%** of Ohpikaniahawasiswin are satisfied with the quality of education their child is receiving at school

MESC hosted the first annual Ohpikaniahawasiswin Conference in November 2019.

### Attendance = Success

School attendance is important for all MESC kiskinwahamâkosôwak. Each of our schools takes attendance daily - and some schools take it at the start of every class. Attendance is tracked on-site as well as at MESC's district office for each kiskinwahamawâkan.

Kiskinwahamâkosôwak who attend school regularly and on time, are more likely to experience success in school. Kiskinwahamâkosôwak who are absent 10% of the school year, will have missed a month of school days.

Weather in Maskwacis can be unpredictable and create challenging conditions for transporting students to school and this is evidenced by our student attendance when buses are not running due to inclement weather. In spite of weather and bus cancellations, 54% of kiskinwahamâkosôwak still attended school.

### Attendance committee:

MESC's attendance committee is made up of representatives from MESC's eleven schools. This committee discusses - as a school authority - our current state of attendance with the aim of developing a plan to improve kiskinwahamawâkan attendance and overall academic success. This committee reviews district data and examines strategies and research to support kiskinwahamawâkan learning through regular attendance.

### 2019-2020 Targets:

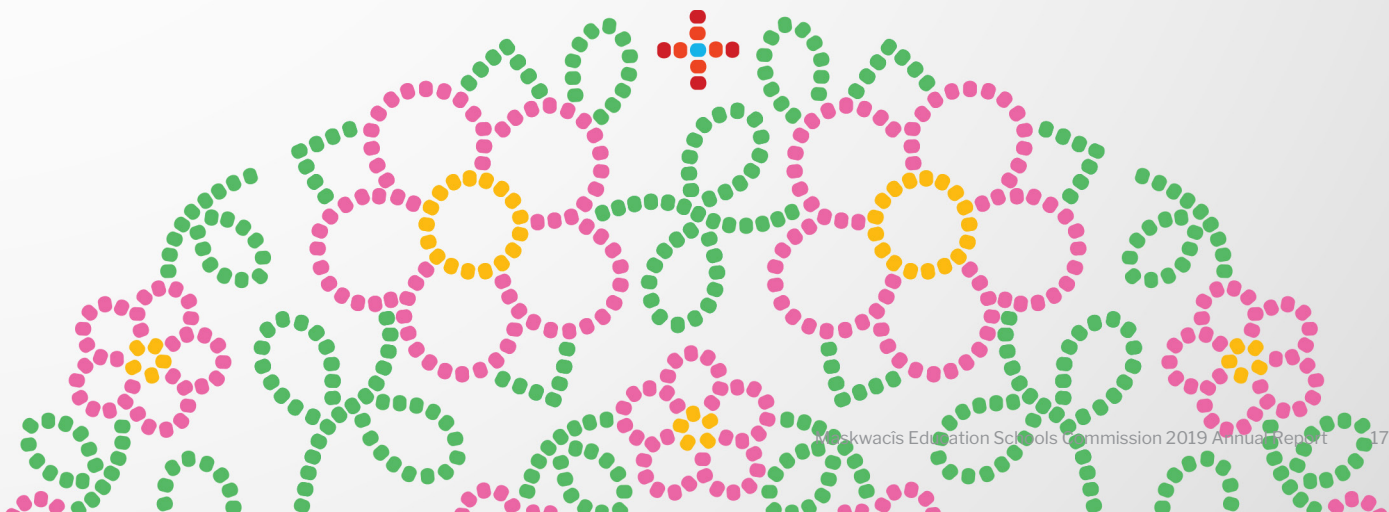
- ▶ 96% Parents who are satisfied with how safe the schools are
- ▶ 94% Parents who are satisfied with the facilities and grounds.
- ▶ 98% Parents who are satisfied with the quality of education awasisak is receiving at school

2099

school enrollment in 2018-2019

23%

of students with attendance between 90-100%



# 2019 - 2020 MESC CORE STRATEGIES

## **1. Strategy: Kiskinwahamâkosôwak centered programming and assessment**

MESC will address kiskinwahamâkosôwak learning needs based on Maskwacis priorities, including a focus on Nehiyawitisiwin, diverse learning styles, curriculum, aligned programming and regular assessment.

## **2. Strategy: Building instructional capacity**

MESC understands that to improve teaching and learning, educators must provide excellent instruction that is effective and highly engaging, resulting in improved kiskinwahamawâkan success. We achieve this through planning, critical reflection, continuous professional learning and collaboration.

## **3. Strategy: Nehiyawitisiwin, building a positive organizational culture**

MESC will build an open and transparent organizational culture based on Îyiniw Mâmitonehikan, Nehiyawewin, Nehiyaw Pimâtisôwin ekwa Wâhkôhtowin. This will be accomplished through ongoing internal and external engagement and communication. Maskwacis curriculum will be the foundation of daily life and activities in our schools.

## **4. Strategy: Trauma-informed organization**

MESC recognizes the impact of intergenerational trauma as a result of settler colonization and residential schools. As an organization MESC implements trauma-informed practices to ensure a safe, caring, and respectful school environment. We believe this will ensure staff and kiskinwahamawâkan success.

## **5. Strategy: Strategic recruitment and succession planning**

MESC understands that strategic recruitment and succession planning built on professional growth, formal mentorship and leadership development that help foster a healthy and successful organization. MESC will work to increase the number of Maskwacisak and First Nations employees throughout the organization.

## **6. Strategy: Strengthening system leadership capacity**

MESC understands the importance of wâhkohtowin and the role leaders play in building effective teams that are focused on kiskinwahamawâkan achievement, wellness and success. MESC will strengthen leadership through a coordinated and strategic system-wide approach.

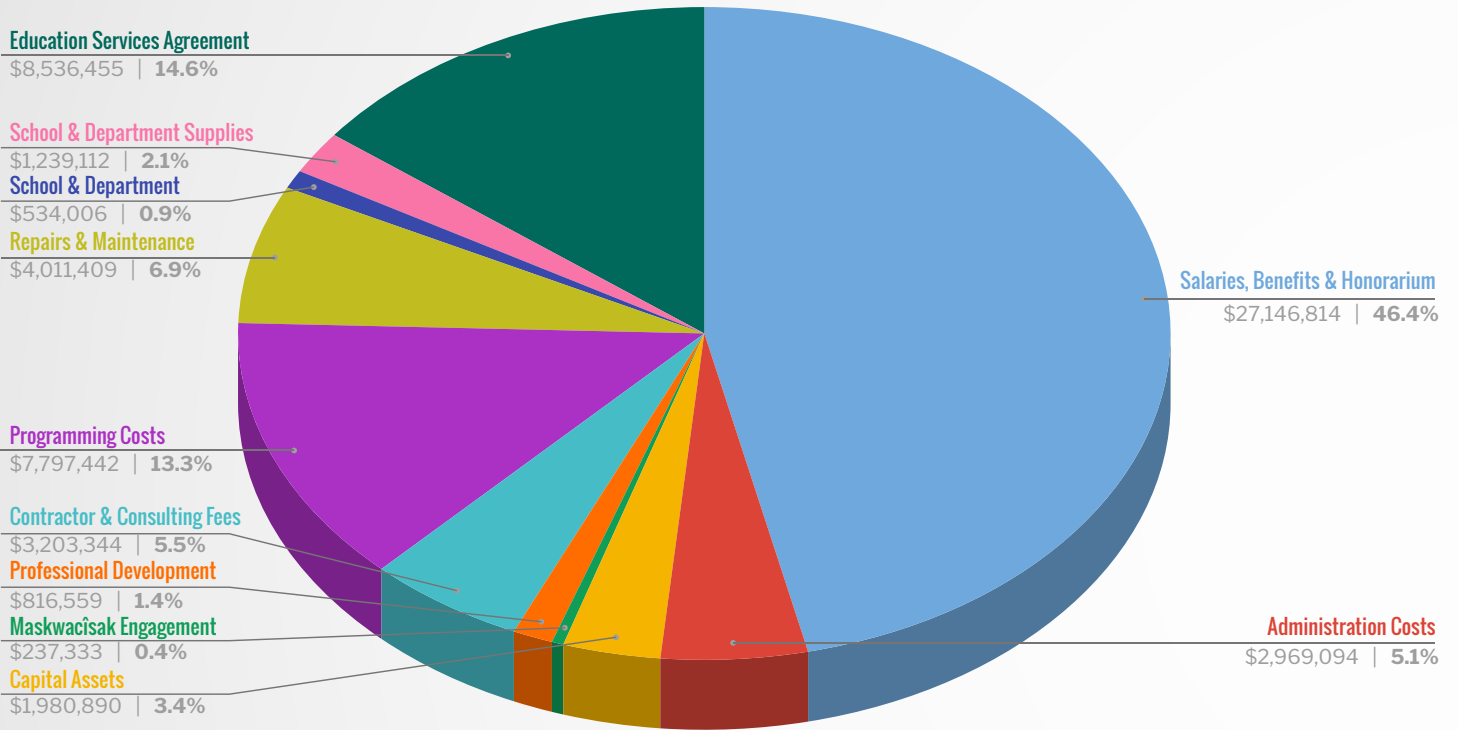
## **7. Strategy: Effective strategic management and accountability**

MESC believes that being a transparent, accountable school system - focused on results - drives success. MESC empowers leaders through effective plans, policies and procedures to support a successful Maskwacis Nehiyaw school system.

MESC celebrated it's inaugural school year in 2018-2019. By adhering to MESC's core values of Îyiniw Mâmitonehicikan, Nehiyaw Pimâtisiwin, Nehiyawewin and Wâhkohtowin, students remain at the forefront of everything we do. It is our goal to continue to serve students and provide a balanced Nehiyaw education in which students participate in rich and engaging learning and growth. With Maskwacîsak support, we will continue to build on our strengths in 2019-2020.



### MESC Consolidated Budget by Expenditures for the 9 months of Fiscal Year 2018-2019





# MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY

To the Members of Maskwacis Education Schools Commission:

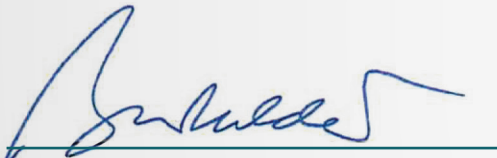
Management is responsible for the preparation and presentation of the accompanying financial statements, including responsibility for significant accounting judgements and estimates in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards and ensuring that all information in the annual report is consistent with the statements. This responsibility includes selecting appropriate accounting principles and methods, and making decisions affecting the measurement of transactions in which objective judgement is required.

In discharging its responsibilities for the integrity and fairness of the financial statements, management designs and maintains the necessary accounting systems and related internal controls to provide reasonable assurance that transactions are authorized, assets are safeguarded and financial records are properly maintained to provide reliable information for the preparation of financial statements.

The Board of Directors is composed entirely of Directors who are neither management nor employees of the Organization. The Board is responsible for overseeing management in the performance of its financial reporting responsibilities, and for approving the financial information included in the annual report. The Board fulfills these responsibilities by reviewing the financial information prepared by the appointment of the Organization's external auditors.

MNP LLP is appointed by the Board of Directors to audit the financial statements and report directly to them; their report follows. The external auditors have full and free access to, and meet periodically and separately with, both the Board and management to discuss their audit findings.

July 11, 2019



Chief Executive Officer



Secretary Treasurer



# INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Maskwacis Education Schools Commission:

## Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Maskwacis Education Schools Commission (the "Organization"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2019, and the statements of operations and accumulated surplus, changes in net financial assets (net debt) and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Organization as at March 31, 2019, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards.

## Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Organization in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

## Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Organization or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Organization's financial reporting process.

## Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Organization's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Organization to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Edmonton, Alberta

July 11, 2019

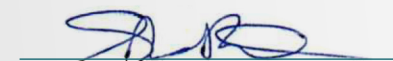
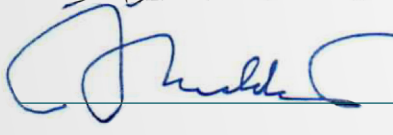
The logo for MNP LLP, featuring the letters 'MNP' in a large, bold, sans-serif font, followed by 'LLP' in a smaller, similar font.


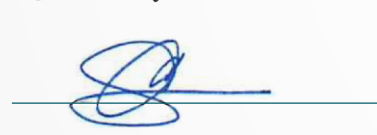
Chartered Professional Accountants

**Maskwacis Education Schools Commission (MESC)**  
**Statement of Financial Position**  
*As of March 31, 2019*

	2019	2018
<b>Financial assets</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	14,855,503	6,040,348
Accounts receivable	232,018	-
Goods and services tax receivable	1,452	570
Guaranteed investment certificate (Note 3)	200,000	-
Advances to related Nations (Note 6)	747,854	-
<b>Total financial assets</b>	<b>16,036,827</b>	<b>6,040,918</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Accounts payable and accruals	1,149,464	735,091
Deferred revenue (Note 4)	14,887,363	5,313,766
<b>Total financial liabilities</b>	<b>16,036,827</b>	<b>6,048,857</b>
<b>Net financial assets (net debt)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(7,939)</b>
<b>Commitments (Note 5)</b>		
<b>Non-financial assets</b>		
Tangible capital assets (Schedule 1)	5,111,097	1,541,481
Prepaid expenses	-	7,939
<b>Total non-financial assets</b>	<b>5,111,097</b>	<b>1,549,420</b>
<b>Accumulated surplus</b>	<b>5,111,097</b>	<b>1,541,481</b>

**Approved on behalf of the Board**

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chair of the Board  
  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief Executive Officer

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Vice Chair of the Board  
  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Secretary Treasurer

**Maskwacîs Education Schools Commission (MESC)**  
**Statement of Operations and Accumulated Surplus**  
*For the year ended March 31, 2019*

	<i>Schedules</i>	<b>2019 Budget</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Revenue</b>				
Indigenous Services Canada		<b>48,633,722</b>	<b>47,123,574</b>	12,686,727
Province of Alberta		<b>7,799,340</b>	<b>7,799,340</b>	-
Carried forward from prior year		<b>5,313,766</b>	<b>5,313,766</b>	169,598
Other revenue		<b>484,561</b>	<b>2,093,199</b>	-
Investment income		<b>300,000</b>	<b>310,318</b>	-
Contributions		-	<b>2,500</b>	-
Repayment of funding		-	-	(80,007)
Carried forward to next year		-	<b>(14,887,362)</b>	(5,313,766)
		<b>62,531,389</b>	<b>47,755,335</b>	7,462,552
<b>Program expenses</b>				
Administration and Schools	4	<b>40,481,900</b>	<b>35,393,640</b>	-
Structural Readiness	5	<b>5,477,855</b>	<b>2,044,318</b>	2,562,738
Government of Alberta - Enhancement	6	<b>4,612,000</b>	<b>2,565,202</b>	-
Health and Safety	7	<b>1,200,000</b>	<b>117,415</b>	-
First Nation Student Success Program (FNSSP)	8	<b>724,188</b>	<b>715,188</b>	2,701,987
New Paths	9	<b>686,535</b>	<b>570,016</b>	-
Capital	10	-	<b>1,143,400</b>	556,581
Capital Planning Projects - Education	11	<b>785,833</b>	<b>484,882</b>	24,546
Innovations in First Nations Education (IFNE)	12	<b>2,687,340</b>	<b>582,000</b>	-
Government of Alberta - Framework	13	<b>500,000</b>	<b>310,168</b>	56,099
Facility Health and Safety	14	<b>3,016,046</b>	<b>64,869</b>	19,120
Ermineskin Headstart	15	<b>484,561</b>	<b>194,621</b>	-
<b>Total expenditures</b>		<b>60,656,258</b>	<b>44,185,719</b>	5,921,071
<b>Surplus</b>		<b>1,875,131</b>	<b>3,569,616</b>	1,541,481
<b>Accumulated surplus, beginning of year</b>		-	<b>1,541,481</b>	-
<b>Accumulated surplus, end of year</b>		<b>1,875,131</b>	<b>5,111,097</b>	1,541,481

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

**Maskwacîs Education Schools Commission (MESC)****Statement of Change in Net Financial Asset (Net Debt)***For the year ended March 31, 2019*

	<b>2019 Budget</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Annual Surplus</b>	<b>1,875,131</b>	<b>3,569,616</b>	1,541,481
Purchases of tangible capital assets	-	<b>(4,713,016)</b>	(2,098,062)
Amortization of tangible capital assets	-	<b>1,143,400</b>	556,581
Acquisition of prepaid expenses	-	-	(7,939)
Use of prepaid expenses	-	<b>7,939</b>	-
<b>Increase in net financial assets</b>	<b>1,875,131</b>	<b>7,939</b>	(7,939)
<b>Net debt, beginning of year</b>	-	<b>(7,939)</b>	-
<b>Net financial assets, end of year</b>	<b>1,875,131</b>	-	(7,939)

*The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements*

**Maskwacîs Education Schools Commission (MESC)****Statement of Cash Flows**

For the year ended March 31, 2019

	2019	2018
<b>Cash provided by (used for) the following activities</b>		
<b>Operating activities</b>		
Surplus	<b>3,569,616</b>	1,541,481
Non-cash items		
Amortization	<b>1,143,400</b>	556,581
	<b>4,713,016</b>	2,098,062
Changes in working capital accounts		
Accounts receivable	<b>(232,018)</b>	-
Prepaid expenses	<b>7,939</b>	(7,939)
Accounts payable and accruals	<b>414,373</b>	567,837
Deferred revenue	<b>9,573,597</b>	5,144,168
Goods and services tax receivable	<b>(822)</b>	(570)
	<b>14,476,025</b>	7,801,558
<b>Capital activities</b>		
Purchase of tangible capital assets	<b>(4,713,016)</b>	(2,098,062)
<b>Investing activities</b>		
Advances to related Nations	<b>(747,854)</b>	-
Purchase of guaranteed investment certificate (Note 3)	<b>(200,000)</b>	-
	<b>(947,854)</b>	-
<b>Increase in cash resources</b>	<b>8,815,155</b>	5,703,496
<b>Cash resources, beginning of year</b>	<b>6,040,348</b>	336,852
<b>Cash resources, end of year</b>	<b>14,855,503</b>	6,040,348

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements

# Glossary

Please note, the following **Cree** words are found in the **English** sections of this report.

**Awâsisak** - Children

**Îyiniw Mâmitonehikan** - Indigenous Thought

**Kehtehayak** - Elder who has traditional knowledge rooted in Nehiyawewin

**Kiskinwahamawâkan** - student

**Kiskinwahamâkosôwak** - students

**Maskwacîs** - Bear Hills

**Maskwacîsak** - Maskwacîs People

**Maskwacîsihk** - Bear Hills (locative term)

**Miyo Pimâtisiwin** - Living a Good Life

**Nehiyaw Pimâtisiwin** - Cree Life

**Nehiyaw** - Cree

**Nehiyawak** - Cree People

**Nehiyawewin** - Cree Language

**Nikaniwin** - Leadership

**Okâwîmâw Askîy** - Mother Earth

**Ohpikinahawasiwin** - Caregiver ( Child Rearing)

**Oskâyak** - Youth

**Wâhkôhtowin** - Relationships/Kinship















**MASKWACÎS EDUCATION SCHOOLS COMMISSION**

P.O Box 58  
Maskwacîs, AB T0C 1N0

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Learning and Student Services: 780-585-3243  
Nehiyawew Kamik : 780-585-2879  
Fax: 780-585-3857  
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