

# Special Announcement

June 2024

## 2024 Outstanding Employee Contribution Award Recipient

The Board of Trustees is pleased to announce that three (3) recipients have been selected to receive the **Outstanding Employee Contribution Award**.

**Ernestine Huhtala (Teacher – Skownan School)**

**Hector Riquelme (Teacher – Brochet School)**

**Marietta Anterola (Principal – Leaf Rapids Education Centre)**

The criteria for this award includes proficiency in responsibilities, contribution to the Division and community, evidence of leadership, and personal and/or professional growth.

Subsequent announcements will provide information about the other recipients.

### ERNESTINE HUHTALA

Ernestine received an Educational Assistant Diploma in 1993. She obtained her Bachelor of Education degree, a Post Baccalaureate in Inclusive Special Education and more recently she completed her Masters in Language and Literacy in 2022.

Ernestine first joined the Division as a term Teacher at Waterhen School in 2005. She then worked as a term Teacher at Skownan School in January 2006 before becoming permanent in September 2006 where she continues to teach today. Her strength is “student first” philosophy, creating a positive learning experience to ensure all students understand course content, working on one on one so that they acquire their credits for the year. She is always creating fun learning environments where she often takes her class outdoors to teach land-based skills, traditional ways of life, and the love of nature. She is also conscious of meeting student needs such as cooking skills and collecting items to create a ‘store’ at Christmas so they can select items for family gifts.

Ernestine is dedicated and hard working. She is a constant role model to her students by sharing her success in continuing her education, showing them, “It’s never too late to learn!”

Testimonials provided the following insights into Ms. Huhtala’s contributions:

*“Those who know Ernestine describe her as very patient, kind, caring and compassionate. She recognizes her student’s strengths and interests and uses those to enhance her teaching and student learning. She is very creative and creates beauty in her class and throughout the school in all events that take place.”*

**(Robert Chartrand, Area 2 Superintendent)**

*“She has supported colleagues and guided vulnerable support staff to be diligent supports to their assigned students and classrooms by sharing crafts, skills, resources and vital programs to ensure the best practices were used in educating her students. Ernestine has committed countless hours to the extra-curricular events and celebrations hosted by Skownan School and Skownan First Nation.”*

**(Mary McKay, Principal, Skownan School)**

*“Ernestine is truly an angel and an amazing addition to any school, division or community. I have never seen someone put so much into their community, students and workplace with the passion and commitment she does.”*

**(Katelyn Osmond, Teacher, Skownan School)**

*“Ernestine is committed to building and maintaining relationships across staff, students, parents and community. Her focus is definitely “Our Children, Our Success and Our Future.” She has the ability to make everyone feel valued. I believe many of our school successes are because of her continued commitment to inspire and motivate her students to be a better version of themselves.”*

**(Sheryl Richmond, School Counsellor, Skownan School)**

Please join us in congratulating Mrs. Huhtala on this achievement and we thank her for her outstanding contribution to students and to the Division.

  
Linda Ballantyne, Chairperson  
Board of Trustees