

DATE: April 10, 2012

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: Edgar Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Annual Report – Aboriginal Education Update

ORIGINATOR: Tanni Parker, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE STAFF: Eileen Marthiensen, Rosalind Smith, Corrie Ziegler

REFERENCE: [Aboriginal Education Policy IAA.BP](#)
[Aboriginal Education Administrative Regulation IAA.AR](#)
[November 29, 2011 Board Report - Annual Progress Reports to Board \(Trustee Request #102\)](#)

ISSUE

Aboriginal Education Annual Report

BACKGROUND

- Aboriginal Education Policy, IAA.BP and Aboriginal Education Administrative Regulation, IAA.AR provides direction for the First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) work in the district.
- Of 197 schools in the District, 51 have 15 per cent or more of their student population self-identified as FNMI.
- Cree language programs are offered from K-12 at Abbott, Prince Charles, Westlawn, Westmount, and Amiskwaciy schools.
- Aboriginal Headstart programs are offered at Abbott, Sherwood and Belmead schools.
- One full and two part-time education consultants provide professional learning sessions to district staff on Wise Practices in FNMI education, support and advocate for self-identified FNMI students and families, develop new initiatives to support literacy in FNMI education, collect data and cultivate research to foster student achievement, review, develop and recommend FNMI resources, and work collaboratively with community partners to support students, guardians and families in the district.
- Seven liaison staff members are primarily based at junior high schools in order to support transitions into high school and to respond to requests from elementary feeder schools. Liaisons provide individual student, group and classroom support in schools to reduce barriers and increase cultural competency and cultural integrity in FNMI education. Staff also bridge home and school relationships to support student achievement.
- Two Elders/Knowledge Keepers on staff provide culture and language support as well as student, family and school supports.
- Enrolment data is provided in Attachment I.
- HLAT data is provided in Attachment II.

CURRENT SITUATION

The District continues to support Aboriginal Education and although not an exhaustive list, the information below demonstrates key work in these areas.

Respect and Recognition

- An annotated, web-based bibliography of recommended FNMI literature resources representing diverse Aboriginal cultures is maintained by FNMI staff.
- FNMI staff developed Guidelines for Evaluating Resources for and about Aboriginal People, and is available to all district staff.
- FNMI staff developed a recommended FNMI novel study resource list that has been distributed to district library technicians for elementary, Junior and Senior High, and is available to all district staff.
- FNMI staff host Circle Gatherings in high schools to provide an opportunity for students to connect with one another and school staff. Traditional teachings, high school course credit planning, post-secondary preparation such as scholarship opportunities and individual supports occur at the gatherings.
- A junior high art project with guest Artist Nathaniel Arcand provided the opportunity for fifteen students selected from across the District to participate in the three day workshop.
- Métis author, Jacqueline Guest provided presentations to three schools in the district in support of FNMI literacy.
- FNMI staff are currently planning the National Aboriginal Day Celebration for June 2012, in collaboration with community partners.
- The Fifth Annual Honouring Celebration for FNMI students is currently in the planning process in collaboration with hosting high school, J. Percy Page.

Community Involvement

- FNMI staff collaborate with community partners, post-secondary institutions, bands and organizations, and through the FNMI External Advisory Committee.
- FNMI staff support Wichitowin family nights hosted by West-8 schools and Bent Arrow Healing Society.
- Presentations are provided to University of Alberta fourth year Education students on FNMI education, and Engaging and Empowering Aboriginal Students.
- Year two of the provincially mandated Success in Schools initiative supports junior and high school students who are in care, using a strength based approach.
- The Visual Narrative Inquiry Research Study at Westlawn School is in year two of a three year study.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Enoch Band regarding students that attend both jurisdictions is under development.
- FNMI staff developing a parent handbook to support, inform and engage FNMI families.

Staffing and Professional Development

- The Aboriginal Learning Resource Centre (Woodcroft) in collaboration with the Institute for Innovation in Second Language Education provides FNMI educational support to district staff and students and includes literacy resources, six Cree and two Inuit portable Edukits (containing authentic cultural items) and more.
- A Cree Network has been created to increase literacy and enhance the Cree program in the District. The network is focusing on creating a data bank of resources through sharing wise practices, strategies, methodologies, and assessment tools.
- FNMI staff provide professional learning opportunities for district staff and students in FNMI resource review, Wise Practices in FNMI education, engaging and increasing

students literacy through the use of FNMI literacy resources, and traditional teaching sessions at Woodcroft.

- FNMI staff provide annual presentations at Edmonton Public Schools Human Resources, New Staff Orientation sessions on cultural competency and cultural integrity.
- Professional learning sessions about FNMI education are offered provincially, in collaboration with Alberta Education.
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a research based strategy has been introduced to district staff, to enhance learning for all students, including FNMI students. UDL allows choice and different pathways for learning, respecting all that diverse learners bring to the classroom, as well as the various ways they demonstrate their learning.
- A three year FNMI Literacy Research project entitled Seeing Self in Literature is under development and will be implemented in three schools in 2012-2013.

Achievement

- FNMI staff continue to collect data on a 2020 cohort group of self-identified FNMI students, now in grade 4, to determine literacy status and further supports that may be needed to support high school completion.
- FNMI staff who are housed at junior high schools track self-identified students based on monthly registration data to support high school completion.
- Collaboration with high schools to monitor and track while providing support to Aboriginal students who are near completion of the prerequisites for a provincial high school diploma.

Challenges

- Mobility of FNMI families is higher than other groups.
- Poverty impacts many FNMI students.
- High School completion rates impacted by lower literacy level of FNMI students.
- Continue to explore ways to equitably distribute support to FNMI students across the District, which includes building the capacity of all district consultants to support and empower FNMI students.
- Assist parents of FNMI students in understanding why the District requests that FNMI students self-identify.

NEXT STEPS

- Infuse FNMI resources into literacy interventions (Middle Years literacy Intervention (MYLI), Leveled Literacy Intervention(LLI), Reading Recovery (RR)).
- Expand on the success of the FNMI Edu Kits and create additional kits in areas of need.
- Create a FNMI Guiding Document.

KEY POINTS

- The District is committed to supporting and empowering FNMI students.
- All areas of the Aboriginal Education Board Policy and Administrative Regulation are being addressed; some areas are well in place, and some areas will need continued focus.

ATTACHMENTS & APPENDICES

ATTACHMENT I FNMI Enrolment Data 2007-2012

ATTACHMENT II FNMI HLAT Data 2007 - 2012

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FNMI ENROLMENT DATA

School Year	Grade														Total
	Pre-K	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
2007-08	56	393	475	478	504	495	523	524	517	536	494	524	369	419	6,307
2008-09	66	412	458	505	504	531	541	535	566	585	538	570	512	524	6,847
2009-10	72	395	437	453	497	491	526	530	546	568	609	601	547	702	6,974
2010-11	64	377	435	448	459	501	507	533	549	572	601	623	561	759	6,989
2011-12	59	387	430	464	516	469	505	502	557	581	602	619	616	838	7,145

**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF HLAT READING SCORES FOR
SELF-IDENTIFIED FNMI STUDENTS FOR FIVE YEARS**

Enrolment Grade	Year	Percentage of Students			Total N
		Below Grade Level	At Grade Level	Above Grade Level	
All Grades	2011	33.5	58.8	7.7	4275
All Grades	2010	34.4	58.6	7.0	4382
All Grades	2009	32.5	60.0	7.5	4384
All Grades	2008	32.7	58.9	8.4	4414
All Grades	2007	32.4	59.7	8.0	4474

The total number of students in this data has decreased by 199 students since 2007. Overall, the percentage of students reading below, at and above grade level has remained relatively stable, with slight increases and decreases over the past five years.

The five year trend (2007-2011) for HLAT Reading indicates:

- The percentage of students reading below grade level has increased slightly from 32.4 per cent in 2007 to 33.5 per cent in 2011 (+1.1 per cent).
- The percentage of students reading at grade level has remained relatively stable with a slight decrease from 59.7 per cent in 2007 to 58.8 per cent in 2011 (-0.9 per cent).
- The percentage of students reading above grade level has remained relatively stable with a decrease from 8.0 per cent in 2007 to 7.7 per cent in 2011 (-0.3 per cent).

**PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF HLAT WRITING SCORES FOR
SELF-IDENTIFIED FNMI STUDENTS FOR FIVE YEARS**

Enrolment Grade	Year	Percentage of Students			Total N
		Below Grade Level	At Grade Level	Above Grade Level	
All Grades	2011	28.0	71.9	0.1	4267
All Grades	2010	29.3	70.6	0.2	4392
All Grades	2009	27.5	72.3	0.2	4413
All Grades	2008	28.7	71.2	0.1	4437
All Grades	2007	25.4	74.5	0.1	4470

The total number of students in this data has decreased by 203 students since 2007. Overall, the percentage of students writing below grade level has increased, while the percentage of students writing at grade level has decreased. The percentage of students writing above grade level has remained stable.

The five year trend (2007-2011) for HLAT Writing indicates:

- The percentage of students writing below grade level has increased from 25.4 per cent in 2007 to 28.0 per cent in 2011 (+2.6 per cent).
- The percentage of students writing at grade level has decreased from 74.5 per cent in 2007 to 71.9 per cent in 2011 (-2.6 per cent).
- There are no noticeable trends in the percentage of students writing above grade level.