

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

November 10, 2009

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Aboriginal Education Policy and Regulation Implementation Plan Update: Year Two

ORIGINATOR: D. Barrett, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE

STAFF: Sharon Bourque, Gloria Chalmers, Margaretha Ebbers, Veda Lastiwka, Elisa Rawe, Ingrid Tenkate, Bonnie Zack

INFORMATION

Background

In May 2007, the Board of Trustees approved an Aboriginal Education Policy establishing the Board's position and direction to the administration with regard to Aboriginal education in the District. Subsequently, the Superintendent approved an Aboriginal Education Regulation, identifying key directives for action in the implementation of the policy. In the fall of 2007, in consultation with a range of district staff, key priorities for implementing the policy and the regulation were identified. These priorities were incorporated in an implementation plan and a report on the first year of the plan went to public board in November 2008. This report summarizes the progress made during the second year of this plan and outlines the next steps for year three. A brief description of the projects are outlined in Appendix I while the priorities and measures are outlined in Appendix II.

Second Year Highlights

The second year of the implementation plan saw the growth of many school-centred initiatives. The newly approved Cree extended alternative program had its first year of operation as did the early learning program for First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) children. Student gatherings were held at various schools across the District to enable students to see that they were part of a community and to learn how to access support. High schools, along with Aboriginal Education unit staff, held welcoming circles at the start of each semester for those FNMI students who elected to attend, with the opportunity to participate in a smudging ceremony and meet an Elder. An Aboriginal high school centre (Oskipism) was launched at Eastglen while weekly student groups were held with administration and staff at several junior highs. Many schools across the District requested visits from the Aboriginal Education unit for the purpose of being proactive in facilitating positive relationships between schools and families, as well as for increasing their own cultural understanding.

Our community partners worked with us on expanding pilots and developing new initiatives. Together, Aboriginal Education, Jasper Place High School, Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society, the Family Centre, and Métis Child and Family Services held a three week summer

learning camp for students in the west end of the city. Ben Calf Robe Society began a youth intervention program at R.J. Scott campus. The program operated five nights a week and provided students from several schools in the northeast with a safe place to do homework, recreational and cultural activities. Our mentor project with Grant MacEwan was expanded to meet demand. As well, a number of schools linked with the University of Alberta and NorQuest.

We held FNMI staff gatherings to develop networks and help retain staff. Cree language teachers met regularly to practice speaking and to share teaching suggestions. Staff of FNMI ancestry met on several occasions, or went together to professional learning sessions in different parts of the province. We held the first Cree culture camp, in which district staff, together with families had the opportunity to learn traditional ways. All staff new to the District engage in learning about the FNMI community as part of their orientation to the District.

Third Year Initiatives

We do continue to face challenges in several areas. One is the disproportionate number of FNMI students who drop out either in the first year of high school, or between junior and senior high. In an effort to connect students with one another, as well as to provide support, Aboriginal Education has moved staff into junior high and high schools in each area of the city. Building on the success of our pilot student gatherings, we have increased the number of student groups, and are developing a number of initiatives that engage students as well as their families. These include having FNMI youth showcase their culture, by inviting students to participate in district events and increasing the number of family nights at the junior high and senior high levels. The Aboriginal Education unit also tracks and locates students who have exited the system, and helps them find ways to re-enter.

There continues to be an over-representation of FNMI students in transitional, institutional, outreach and special education programs. Transportation has been identified as a major barrier for some students. Currently the Aboriginal Education unit is working with schools to find ways to eliminate transportation barriers on a case by case basis but this is time consuming. In an effort to reduce incidents of inappropriate coding a number of decision units have come together. These include Budget Services, Consulting Services (English Language Services Support Centre, Field Services) and Programs (Aboriginal Education, Special Education and Multicultural Education). Collectively they are working on developing ways in which students might exit the special education track, ways in which school staff might access pre-coding strategies and key messages that can be distributed across the District. As the achievement results of our Aboriginal students will be disaggregated from the general data, and made public next year, we will work with staff and community groups to discuss how this data might be interpreted to enhance educational experiences for Aboriginal students.

APPENDIX I: Aboriginal Policy and Regulation Implementation Plan
APPENDIX II: Priorities and Measures

Aboriginal Policy and Regulation Implementation Plan

Respect and Recognition

Actions	Methods	Year One Status	Year Two Status	Year Three Plan
-Advise all schools and Central DUs about the Aboriginal Policy and Regulation	-Policy and Regulation distributed through Supt's Memo -Distribute Information packages to all schools and central DUs-Follow up with FNMI schools	Distributed package to all schools and central FNMI schools prior to Oct 31	Staff made school visits to offer support and provide information. Champions were identified at each FNMI school, as well as schools that asked for support. Information channeled through them	Staff will continue to visit schools that seek support, as well as any school on the FNMI list. Champions will be celebrated at a special breakfast in October.
-Recognize National Aboriginal Day at Board	-Plan a 15 to 30 minute program for June 2007 -Plan a 15 to 30 minute program for June 2008	Community consultation process led to a community supper followed by 30 minute program at June 2008 meeting of the Board	Thirty minute program at June 2009 meeting of the Board based on the theme of story telling and the oral tradition.	Consultation for program at June 2010 board meeting will begin in March
-Sensitively place special needs programs that are predominantly Aboriginal	-Ensure that special education clusters that are predominantly Aboriginal are not located in schools with no or few Aboriginal students	Sites were examined by March 2008	Sites adjusted as needed	Sites will be adjusted as needed

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Community Involvement

Actions	Methods	Year One Status	Year Two Status	Year Three Plan
-Connect regularly with Aboriginal community	-Maintain an external Aboriginal Committee - Develop a joint plan of action	Met with the external advisory committee, did many projects with different members	Increased community members on external committee. Two meetings were held for whole advisory committee, other meetings were organized for specific projects	Meetings scheduled for fall and spring for the whole committee. New members have been added on the basis of expanded networks into the community. Other meetings have already occurred for specific projects. Share and interpret disaggregated achievement data with committee. Work on key messages and plans for enhancing educational experiences.
	-Maintain connections with Hobbema (e.g., Aboriginal Teacher Educational Program [ATEP] students, Cree programming)	Ongoing	Connections were made with other Cree language programs (Onion Lake band, Ermineskin, Montana band)	Continue to work on building connections and networks with other indigenous language programs, including Cree
	-Maintain relationship with Mother Earth Charter School	Continued	Continued	Ongoing

Actions	Methods	Year One Status	Year Two Status	Year Three Plan
-Influence Aboriginal teacher education	-Follow up elementary & secondary Aboriginal teacher education programs- -Be part of Diversity Day	Serve on Advisory board of Yellowhead Tribal College (YTC) teacher education program Guest lecture in U of A Education Program Ongoing	Continued work with YTC Developed links with new Urban program (U of A) staff member provided guest lecture in one class at U of A (education) Staff attended Diversity day.	Continue work with YTC as needed. Maintain connections with Urban Aboriginal Education programs. Staff members have been invited as guest lecturers in various 200 and 300 level courses in the teacher education program. Attend Diversity day(s)
-Identify and develop new alliances	-Pursue a formal alliance with NAIT -Investigate opportunities with U of A and Norquest -Connect with Enoch, Alexis, Alexander and Paul Bands -Connect with Métis Nation, Treaty 6 and Treaty 8	Formal alliance not completed Pilot projects at U of A, Grant MacEwan so students become familiar with campuses. Contacts were made with Enoch, Alexis, Paul and Ermineskin bands Chief Littlechild, (Regional Chief of Alberta) Trevor Gladue (Métis Nation) Chief Morin (Treaty 6) attended the graduation ceremony.	Formal alliance not completed Continued Follow-up contacts were made with Alexis, Paul and Ermineskin bands. Partnership agreement meetings were held with Enoch Education Department. Chief Buffalo (Montana Band) Chief Monias (Louis Bull Band), James Atkinson (Métis Nation) attended graduation ceremony. Participated in city Wicahitowin Education Circle	Continue to work on alliance Ongoing Continue to develop partnership agreement with Enoch band education department. Staff development session conducted at Paul band in October 2009 Continue to invite representatives from Metis Nations, Treaty 6, Treaty 7, Treaty 8, Inuit community organizations for the graduation ceremony. Participation in city Wicahitowin Education Circle
-Engage parents	-Organize family nights -Organize Stepping Into Schools -Participate in The Learning Partnership -Identify what is happening in all FNMI schools -Encourage Aboriginal parent volunteers	Monthly family nights in west end Sept-June 2008 Stepping into school at four schools in west end June 2008. Participated in The Learning Partnership.	Held monthly family nights in west end schools with Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society. Held two family nights with partner organizations in the east end, one in the north end (M.E. LaZerte) Stepping into school held at one school. Began to work on parent conference at request of parent group.	Continue west end family nights with partners. Family night planned for the Millwoods area in the fall. Family nights planned for north and northeast areas of the city. Stepping into school planned for the more than one school in the west end Parent conference planned for winter. Session on what the data means.

Staffing and Professional Development

Actions	Methods	Year One Status	Year Two Status	Year Three Plan
<p>-Recruit Aboriginal staff</p> <p>-Maintain Aboriginal staff</p>	<p>- Liaise with post-secondary teacher preparation programs</p> <p>-Encourage Aboriginal students in education programs to do practicum in our district and facilitate placements</p> <p>- Initiate development of an exit interview protocol and instrument</p> <p>- Advertise in Aboriginal publications</p>	<p>Recruitment campaign targeted to Aboriginal communities conducted</p> <p>Ads placed in Alberta Native News, Sweetgrass, High Prairie South Peace News, Peace River Record Gazette, Slave Lake Lakeside Leader</p>	<p>Continued ongoing work</p> <p>Norquest students completed youth worker practicum placements in our district</p> <p>Pilot exit interview instrument work was deferred</p> <p>Support network for FNMI staff met twice. Support for Cree language teachers occurred monthly</p>	<p>Ongoing work</p> <p>Planning for new practicum placements</p> <p>After analysis of the results of the employee engagement survey which will provide an opportunity for FNMI staff to self identify, work toward the development and implementation of an exit interview tool will proceed</p> <p>Continue to provide opportunities for FNMI staff across the District to meet. Support meetings for Cree language teachers being planned.</p>
<p>-Provide targeted professional development</p>	<p>-Include information about Aboriginal policy and regulation in Principal Education Development (PED), Leadership Education Development (LED) and full-day K inservices</p> <p>-Include Aboriginal cultural sensitivity in orientation program for new staff</p> <p>- Develop and pilot sessions on Aboriginal cultural sensitivity for new hires to district</p> <p>-Make presentations to post-secondary students</p>	<p>June 2008 for PED, LED</p> <p>Full-day K Aboriginal understanding included in all sessions</p> <p>Sessions piloted and refined based on feedback from pilot</p> <p>Sessions given to U of A, King's College and Concordia</p>	<p>January 2009 for PED & LED</p> <p>Full-day K Aboriginal understanding included in all sessions</p> <p>Sessions given to all new hires to district</p> <p>Presentations to U of A, King's College and Concordia students</p>	<p>December 2009 for PED, LED</p> <p>Professional development to be provided to Kindergarten Inclusive Development Services (KIDS) north and south teams</p> <p>Ongoing with all staff groups</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Actions	Methods	Year One Status	Year Two Status	Year Three Plan
-Provide district-wide professional development	-Develop and implement plan to provide Aboriginal cultural sensitivity for all staff not previously inserviced	Plan developed by June 2008	Beginning with FNMI and cluster schools, professional learning was provided on the basis of specific needs.	Currently going out to schools and working with staff to develop professional learning sessions appropriate to each school or school cluster, e.g., monthly professional development sessions planned for teachers in eight west end schools (West 8).

Achievement

Actions	Methods	Year One Status	Year Two Status	Year Three Plan
-Monitor achievement, attendance and retention of self-identified Aboriginal students	-Continue tracking of Highest Level of Achievement Tests (HLATs) and Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs)	October 2007 for HLATs and PATs	Data collected and shared appropriately	Data collected and plan to share appropriately
-Monitor expulsions of self-identified Aboriginal students	-Continue tracking of attendance and retention by school and for district	June 2008 for attendance and retention	June 2009 for attendance and retention	June 2010 for attendance and retention
	-Monitor expulsions and identify trends	Expulsions from district were gathered by May 2008	Expulsions numbers were gathered May 2009	Expulsions numbers in May 2010
	-Investigate feasibility of providing school-level disaggregated Aboriginal achievement information	Determine feasibility of disaggregating achievement information at the school level by March 2008	Disaggregated achievement information was gathered and shared when appropriate.	Disaggregated achievement information will be shared when appropriate
	-Develop process for tracking graduation rates			
-Monitor participation of self-identified Aboriginal students in alternative and special needs programs	-Continue tracking number of students in special needs programs -Request number of students in alternative programs	March 2008 Data collected	March 2009 Data collected and shared appropriately	Data collected and will be shared appropriately

Actions	Methods	Year One Status	Year Two Status	Year Three Plan
<p>-Recognize achievement of Aboriginal students</p>	<p>-Encourage schools to nominate Aboriginal students for Nellie Carlson and other awards -Follow up to ensure nominations made</p> <p>-Organize and host an event for Aboriginal graduates</p>	<p>Sent out award information to each school as well as posted it on the Aboriginal Education website.</p> <p>Graduation celebration was held.</p>	<p>Award booklets and information sent to school counselors and champions and posted on the Aboriginal Education website.</p> <p>Held Sept/Oct meetings with interested FNMI students in high schools to promote the graduation (Grade 12) and offer support for staying in school (Grade 10). Follow-up circles for the beginning of winter term were also held in most high schools.</p> <p>Designed reference postcard for credits necessary for graduation.</p> <p>Student groups were organized in a number of junior highs</p> <p>Graduation celebration was held</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Aboriginal Education unit and high schools provide circle gatherings for students in grades 10-12 at start of each semester. Postcards and support service listings will be distributed.</p> <p>Distribute postcards to Grade 9 students at registration</p> <p>Increase number of student groups across the District.</p> <p>Graduation celebration planning begins in November 2009</p>
<p>-Advise all schools of successful practices</p>	<p>-Identify success stories and practices and inform all district schools</p>	<p>Some collected orally</p>	<p>Shared stories starting with FNMI schools.</p>	<p>Continue to collect and share stories of successful practices. Begin a written collection</p>

Curriculum

Actions	Methods	Year One Status	Year Two Status	Year Three Plan
-Increase infusion of Aboriginal perspectives throughout the curriculum.	-Develop and submit letter to Alberta Education advocating for infusion -Promote the District's Aboriginal Collection on line -Advertize the Lois Hole Digital on-line collection -Develop sample lesson plans that link with the on-line collections -Investigate ways of ensuring that school libraries have culturally accurate resources	Discussions held rather than letter Worked with Alberta Education on infusing the upcoming new science curriculum On-line collection was promoted October then in January Worked with Edmonton Public Library, Family Centre on Literacy and an outside Inuit consultant on locating culturally accurate resources	Continued working with Alberta Education on infusing new science Implemented resource review June 2009 Developed sample lesson plans June 2009	Complete provincial science infusion Aboriginal Online collection data base is being redesigned to better meet the needs of district staff. Will be launched in February 2010. Lesson ideas will be linked to data base through podcasts. Community members have been providing feedback on books and other resources. Aboriginal Education unit staff engaged in resource review and gathering culturally accurate resources

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Programs and Programming

Actions	Methods	Year One Status	Year Two Status	Year Three Plan
-Increase Aboriginal Language options	-Determine/encourage demand for Cree Bilingual -Develop Extended Cree alternative program -Explore possibility of a Michif program	Board approval for Cree extended program beginning at kindergarten April 2008	Cree extended implemented September 2008 Identified need for support for Cree speakers in the district. Monthly meetings with Cree language teachers began. Had no requests for a Michif program	Cree extended program added Grade 1. Meetings for Cree language teachers being organized for 2009-2010.

Actions	Methods	Year One Status	Year Two Status	Year Three Plan
-Increase access to research	-Participate in a Visual Narrative Research Project -Host research seminars on assessment, best practices, etc.	Pilot (K-3) completed May 2008	Research extended (depending on funding availability) and conducted 2008-2009	Applications for funding made to expand pilot
-Improve transitions between divisions	-Continue work on transitions to Grades 7 and 10	Additional liaison staff hired spring 2008	Additional liaison consultants piloted work with feeder schools so that students are supported through transition from Grades 6-7 and 9-10 Opened an Aboriginal Centre (Oskipism) at Eastglen High School to help students through transitions	Ongoing Invite and encourage interested schools to see Oskipism in action and participate in events at that location.
-Provide alternative programs responsive to needs of Aboriginal community	-Maintain and enrich Awasis and Amiskwacyi alternatives -Maintain and enrich alliance with Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society in Rites of Passage (ROP)	Continued work Request to review Rites of Passage program and the partnership between EPSB and Bent Arrow Traditional Healing society	Awasis program at maximum Rites of Passage reviewed and separated from Amiskwacyi.	Explore options for a satellite Awasis program at another west end location. Formal alliance between ROP program and Bent Arrow Traditional Healing society being developed
-Increase early learning opportunities	-Maintain relationships with Aboriginal Head Start programs supported by Ben Calf and Bent Arrow -Investigate opportunities provided by funding for English Language Learners (ELL) Canadian born	Maintained relationship with Aboriginal Head Start June 2008 early learning pilot developed	Maintained relationship with Aboriginal Head Start September 2008 additional early learning option implemented at Youngstown School	Maintain relationships with Aboriginal Head Start Continue to monitor FNMI early learning site.

Assessment

Actions	Methods	Year One Status	Year Two Status	Year Three Plan
-Increase knowledge about culturally sensitive assessment practices	-Provide workshops and written material regarding culturally appropriate assessment instruments and practices -Develop plan to reduce over identification of Aboriginal students as special needs	Workshop October 2007 Poster begun to inform parents about the stages of informed consent and involvement of students in psychological testing	Worked with Dr. Das and district psychologists to enable the use of an additional psychological test (CAS) that provides additional information to support teachers of Aboriginal students with special needs	Programs, Aboriginal Education unit, Field Services Team, Special Education, Budget Services, English Language Services Support Centre working together to reduce incidents of inappropriate coding, to look at ways to have students exit the special education track and to distribute key information across the District.

Enhanced Supports for Learning

Actions	Methods	Year One Status	Year Two Status	Year Three Plan
-Maintain alliances in support of Aboriginal students and families	-Support and grow alliance with Métis Child & Family Services re: Social Work support, fiddling and dancing and meal provision -Maintain alliances with Bent Arrow, Ben Calf and Red Road as noted previously and re literacy and family support	Developed a summer learning program in the west end with Métis Child and Family services as well as other partners	Increased summer learning camp to three weeks and 40 students. Multiple partners, included elementary, junior high and high school students. Implemented after school mentorship/homework club for the northeast ages 5-14 (Ben Calf Robe)	Continue with summer learning camp. Meetings begin in November. Ongoing after school club. Received funding for a joint project with Bent Arrow that supports grandparents who are raising their grandchildren and need help with the education system.
-Advise schools about supports available	-Distribute an Aboriginal Education brochure to all schools describing services	Sent out October 2007	Updated brochure and website to reflect increased staff Invited FNMI schools together with Aboriginal Education unit and community partners that work in schools to draft school plans based on research in promising practices for Aboriginal students success. Follow up visits to each school to help facilitate the ideas in the plans and to provide additional support as needed	Update brochure and website to reflect unit changes Invite FNMI schools together with Aboriginal Education unit, community partners to a resource fair. Resources will include community members that are available to come into schools to provide support/teachings etc. Develop sessions for clusters of schools to talk about disaggregated results and develop key messages for sharing with parents and community as well as specific strategies and plans for enhancing educational achievement.

Actions	Methods	Year One Status	Year Two Status	Year Three Plan
<p>-Expand number and type of mentorship opportunities</p>	<p>-Engage in collaborative work with Big Brothers, Big Sisters to explore additional Aboriginal options</p> <p>-Explore other options through community connections</p>	<p>Met with Big Brothers, Big Sisters and other community members from across the province</p> <p>Grants received for Aboriginal On-line Mentor Project with Bent Arrow. Data collected summer 2008</p> <p>Pilot project with Grant MacEwan bringing junior high and high school students to campus together to share experiences with FNMI students on campus</p>	<p>Met with Big Brothers, Big Sisters September 2008</p> <p>Explored options for expanding Coyote Pride in west end schools</p> <p>Web pages built fall 2008</p> <p>Expanded pilot projects to include two campuses.</p>	<p>Expand Coyote Pride to include two other schools.</p> <p>Three year program developed for Rosslyn School with Creating Hope Society funded by Federal Crime Prevention</p> <p>Launch at the resource fair</p> <p>Continue the project on two campuses (health/science and art) and expand number of schools that attend.</p>
<p>-Explore career and technology options</p>	<p>-Reconnect with Oteenow</p> <p>-Partner with Careers: The Next Generation</p> <p>- Investigate Paul Martin Foundation Entrepreneurial option</p>	<p>Did not reconnect with Oteenow</p> <p>Continued</p> <p>Entrepreneurial option explored and linked with Amiskwaciy Academy March 2008</p> <p>Youth Apprenticeship program (YAP) in partnership with Alberta Job Corps piloted at Britannia School with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal in Grade 7/8</p>	<p>Reconnected with Oteenow</p> <p>Careers: Next Generation – made presentations to high schools – Aboriginal Education unit assisted the organizers in locating students for internships</p> <p>Paul Martin project commenced January 2009</p> <p>Paul Martin Project continued at Amiskwaciy</p> <p>Did not expand pilot.</p>	<p>Implement project with Oteenow</p> <p>Continue to support work of Careers: The Next Generation in our schools</p> <p>Introduce new Paul Martin project in two sites in the area of accounting</p> <p>Had a booth at the September 2009 Cando conference in conjunction with the Skills Centre</p>

Actions	Methods	Year One Status	Year Two Status	Year Three Plan
-Expand options for dealing with attendance issues	-Advocate to province for changes to the Attendance Board -Analyze impact and learnings from attendance pilot -Develop additional strategies to improve attendance -Review research regarding improving attendance	Advocacy letter March 2008 Pilot developed and submitted to attendance board	Implement pilot with 10 families Reviewed Attendance Board pilot.	Process was reviewed and flaws were identified. Ten additional families are being recruited for implementation of new protocols.

Accountability

Actions	Methods	Year One Status	Year Two Status	Year Three Plan
-Report regularly to Board and Executive Team	-Develop report for board in December 2007 -Develop annual report to board in May or June -Review implementation plan on a yearly basis	Report submitted December 2007 Reported on Year 1 of implementation plan 2008	Report submitted November 2009 Reported on Year 2 of the implementation plan 2009	Board report 2010 Report on Year 3 of the implementation plan 2010

PRIORITIES AND MEASURES

The following priorities are incorporated within the plan (Appendix I):

Priorities Year Three

Reduce the number of FNMI students in outreach, transition and special education sites

- Follow-up on plans that emerge from cross DU working group
- Follow-up on attendance pilot

Continue Monitoring and Information Dissemination as Required

- Disseminate research information
- Cree extended program, early childhood FNMI site
- Use data to develop responsive programming

Alliances and Joint Activities

- Strengthen pilot projects
- Strengthen links with bands and political organizations

Staffing

- Pilot exit interview for staff
- Implement plan for further increasing number of staff across staff groups

Review Progress Relative to Policy, Regulation and Plan

- Revise Plan Based on Analysis of Progress

Measures

- ❖ Success in Completing Identified Actions
- ❖ Improvement in Achievement
- ❖ Improvement in Attendance
- ❖ Improvement in Retention
- ❖ Decrease in Expulsions
- ❖ Increased Parental Involvement
- ❖ Increased availability of services and resources
- ❖ Increased staff participation in cultural awareness
- ❖ Increased staff diversity