

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

September 10, 2002

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Aboriginal Art Project 2002: "Clothing as Identity"

ORIGINATOR: Bob Holt, Executive Director Instructional and Curricular Support Services

RESOURCE STAFF: Sharon Busby, Donna Leask

INFORMATION

As part of the district's commitment to strengthen program delivery for Aboriginal students, Aboriginal Education sponsored a second highly successful art workshop for selected junior high Aboriginal students. The art teachers from district junior high schools nominated the students.

This year's workshop, "Clothing as Identity," was led by Suzanne McLeod, an Anishinabe from Sagkeeng First Nation, Manitoba. Ms. McLeod is completing her Masters in Art and Art History at the University of Alberta. She strongly believes that in the learning and understanding of our unique Aboriginal heritages and the richness of our cultural pasts, the strength of the Aboriginal community is enhanced.

The selected students worked for three days with Ms. McLeod. Their art teachers then participated with Ms. McLeod in a one-day workshop.

This workshop was an opportunity for junior high Aboriginal students, who are enthusiastic about art making, to create a work of art, to learn more about themselves as artists, and to learn about themselves as Aboriginal persons. At the same time, students acquired knowledge about Aboriginal art history and about how Aboriginal people have been portrayed by others.

So impressive was the work produced by our students that many people and organizations have recognized their superior achievements. The Edmonton Police Service purchased three of the works and donated them to the Interprovincial Association on Native Employment (I.A.N.E.). These works were featured pieces at the I.A.N.E. national conference focusing on issues in Aboriginal employment and opportunities for Aboriginal youth.

The Edmonton Police Service has made a commitment to continue supporting this Edmonton Public Schools art project through the purchase of works produced at the next three student workshops. I.A.N.E. is also purchasing a limited-time copyright of all the student works from this year's workshop.

The efforts of all involved district staff and, in particular, those of the students must be celebrated and further encouraged. You can view these student images on our district website under Student Showcase, Junior High, “Clothing as Identity”.

DL:sjb