

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 21, 2002

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: A. McBeath, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: First Nations, Metis and Inuit Educational Policy Framework

ORIGINATOR: M. de Man, Department Head

RESOURCE
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INFORMATION

Alberta Learning's, First Nations, Metis and Inuit Education Policy Framework, (Attachment 1), is a comprehensive, collaboratively developed report designed to assist educators, stakeholders and community members to improve the education for Aboriginal students. It also recommends and promotes Aboriginal awareness through various programs, inservices and curricula. The Policy Framework offers recommendations to the province to increase and improve the rate of success for Aboriginal students. Edmonton Public Schools was one of the key players in the creation and development of this policy. Community members and professionals, from different regions across the province, also partook in the development. The goals, strategies and recommendations have direct and indirect implications for Edmonton Public Schools especially in the areas of human and financial resources.

The First Nations, Metis and Inuit Education Policy Framework is a commitment to the Strengthening Relationships: The Government of Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Framework that sets out to accomplish two main goals:

- Enhance opportunities, including educational opportunities, for all Aboriginal peoples in the province.
- Work with Aboriginal people, federal and municipal governments, industry and other interested parties to improve individual and community well-being and self-reliance and clarify federal, provincial and Aboriginal roles and responsibilities.

The following is Alberta Learning's commitment to achieving the policy framework goals:

Transparent: ease and access to information concerning all aspects of their children's education

Inclusive: have meaningful opportunities to participate actively in decisions that directly impact their children's education.

Innovative: Outcomes for Aboriginal learners will be improved by initiatives that recognize and model best practices.

Learner-Centered and Equity Focused: Programs designed will be learner-centered and culturally respectful. Access to culturally sensitive support services. Barriers to access to learning, career and employment opportunities will be reduced. Have no less access than other Albertans to information about educational choices and opportunities.

Responsive: Community knowledge will be sought in the development of ECS to Grade 12 curriculum, post-secondary programs, and teaching resources.

Collaborative: Programs designed primarily for Aboriginal learners will be developed in collaboration with Aboriginal communities.

Results-Oriented: Innovative, practical and measurable strategies and actions will be supported.

The policy framework anticipates assisting stakeholders in identifying their role in helping First Nations, Metis and Inuit learners achieve their educational goal and help guide in the planning and evaluation of Aboriginal learner's programming.

Long term expected outcomes include:

- Improve First Nations, Metis and Inuit learner success in Early Childhood services to grade 12 and in post secondary education.
- Recognize and increase parental involvement in the education of First Nations, Metis and Inuit learners.
- Strengthen relationships among First Nations, Metis and Inuit people, school jurisdictions, post-secondary institutions, vocational schools, apprenticeship providers, industry, other key education stakeholders, and government.
- Foster greater appreciation and understanding by all Albertans of First Nations, Metis and Inuit people.

Alberta Learning commits to proactive collaboration and consultation with First Nations, Metis and Inuit parents and communities, and other key education, government, and community stakeholders to implement learner-focused strategies that will:

- Increase and strengthen knowledge and understanding among all Albertans of First Nations, Metis and Inuit governance, history, treaty and Aboriginal rights, lands, cultures and languages.
- Provide First Nations, Metis and Inuit learners with access to culturally relevant learning opportunities and quality support services.

- Develop ministry capacity to address First Nations, Metis and Inuit learner needs effectively.
- Report progress on the achievement of expected long-term outcomes for First nations, Metis and Inuit people and other Albertans.

To these ends, the *First Nations, Metis and Inuit Education Policy Framework* includes goals and strategies for several key areas. These are reviewed in Attachment II. Special attention must continue in the district as suggested in the implications that are identified for Edmonton Public Schools.

Edmonton Public Schools' has made significant contributions to improving Aboriginal education in a variety of areas including:

- Aboriginal Education unit expansion
- Monitoring of achievement testing for Aboriginal students
- Identification of Aboriginal students
- Leadership and participation in projects that include:
 - Cree Curriculum resource development
 - Aboriginal Studies
 - Aboriginal Collection Review Committee
 - Teaching Core subjects and options from an Aboriginal Perspective
 - Alberta Aboriginal Apprentice Project
- Continued support of programs including:
 - Awasis (Prince Charles and Sherbrooke)
 - Amiskwacy
 - Alternative programs
 - Rites of Passage (Partnership between EPS and Bent Arrow Society)
- Community involvement as resources for varying situations
- Schools served throughout the district with various time commitments
- Staff of Aboriginal Education are members of a variety of boards throughout Edmonton
- Aboriginal Awareness inservices provided to principals, teachers and support staff
- Aboriginal Student Achievement Committee research, plan and develop strategies on best practices for teaching and learning for Aboriginal learners
- Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee - community members involved in reducing barriers for Aboriginal learners
- Liaise with students, teachers, parents, administration
- Researching learner and teaching styles for Aboriginal students

To further implement the goals, strategies and recommendations Aboriginal Education needs to continue to build its working relations between community and district schools. This is particularly important as suggested in the demographic trends as identified in Attachment III. Aboriginal Education could for example work with the appropriate community heads and parent advisory committees to examine the policy framework and then work at establishing workable solutions from recommended ideas. Aboriginal Education must continue its work in examining and considering appropriate research and program initiatives to assist schools in identifying and reducing barriers to Aboriginal student achievement.

More attention must be given to researching, cataloging and promoting best practices, and resources that have been shown to be effective in improving Aboriginal student success. All in all the goals, strategies and recommendations have clear implications for the district in terms of financial and human resources. The provincial document does not address financial and human resource issues.

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Attachment I - First Nations, Metis and Inuit Education Policy Framework

Attachment II - Goals, Strategies and Implications

Attachment III - Demographics