

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

November 25, 2008

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Aboriginal Education Policy and Regulation Implementation Plan: Year One

ORIGINATOR: D. Barrett, Assistant Superintendent

RESOURCE

STAFF: Gloria Chalmers, Margaretha Ebbers, Veda Lastiwka, Lil Rueck, Ingrid Tenkate

### 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. This report summarizes the progress made during the first year of this plan and outlines the next steps for year two. A brief description of the projects are outlined Appendix I while the priorities and measures are outlined in Appendix II.

#### **First Year Highlights**

The first year of the implementation plan saw the flourishing of links between the Aboriginal communities and the District. These links included meeting with several band schools in Treaty 6 area, working with the community to develop a Cree extended alternative program and creating opportunities to partner schools with community members. Work with the community culminated in two shared celebrations: the first ever district-wide ceremony to mark the graduation of First Nation, Métis, Inuit (FNMI) students, and the second recognition of National Aboriginal Day at a public board meeting. After a teaching given by a Cree Elder on the importance of gift giving, gifts were exchanged between each Trustee and a student from a school in their ward to symbolize the shared partnership of education.

The first year also saw an increased demand for cultural understanding across the District. Many schools requested professional development from the educational consultants while full day kindergarten teachers had a series of in-services that incorporated Aboriginal perspectives. As well, liaison consultants provided regular on-site cultural support in schools with the highest number of FNMI students, and an Aboriginal cultural understanding pilot for new hires to the District was completed by spring. Since then the pilot has gone through two refinements and is now being presented on a regular basis across all staff groups to newly hired staff members in the District.

There were several insights brought to light in year one. The first is that our distribution of information in support of FNMI education may not have been sufficiently targeted. We learned that the information is best distributed as relationships are established with the schools so that it can be matched to specific needs, challenges or expertise. The second was that a number of students and families as well as staff members are choosing not to self-declare, until there is a positive and safe reason to do so, such as a graduation ceremony for example. The third was that a number of our Aboriginal students are in care, or moving from family to family as the collective family provides support, rather than having families give up their children to the care system.

### **Second Year Initiatives**

In response to these learnings, a number of changes in practice were incorporated into year two of the implementation plan. First, the Aboriginal Education unit brought together 44 schools to build school plans based on documented promising practices outlined by the FNMI branch of Alberta Education and the Canadian Council of Learning. Alongside the unit, community partners, who work in our schools, assisted these schools with planning. A champion for this work was identified at each school site and has become the contact for future information. As well, district staff has been linked to each of the participating schools in order to facilitate follow-up work. Secondly, Grade 10 and 12 FNMI students were invited to an information sharing session held at most of the high schools in early fall. This initiative offered support to high schools in their efforts to develop relationships with Grade 10 students who often feel isolated, as well as with the Grade 12 students who are close to graduation. At this session students had the opportunity to meet some of the Aboriginal staff working in our district, receive some information about available support and hear about the District-wide graduation celebration. There was also an opportunity for students to participate in a smudging ceremony if they so chose. Aboriginal Education intends to provide similar support with Grade 9 students in the spring, to help them with high school registration, and to advise them of support available during this important transition.

To date additional initiatives include: working with group care operators in order to decrease barriers for students who are transient or in temporary housing; working with administration at Eastglen School, where the percentage of high school students of self-declared FNMI ancestry is 23 per cent, to create an Aboriginal Centre – similar to the ones found in post-secondary institutions; providing professional development to meet specific school needs across the District; and working with the parent community on a parent conference for early 2009.

ES:wb

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

## Aboriginal Policy and Regulation Implementation Plan

Policy and Regulation Area	Actions	Methods	Year One Status	Year Two plan	Current Status
Respect and Recognition	Advise all schools and Central DUs about the Aboriginal Policy and Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Policy and Regulation distributed through Superintendent's Memo</li> <li>- Distribute Information packages to all schools and central DUs</li> <li>- Follow up with FNMI schools</li> </ul>	Distributed package to all schools and central FNMI schools prior to October 31.	Update and re-distribute packages (if 2007-08 distribution effective)  <b>Note:</b> did not find that this worked. Changed to identifying a champion at each school	Schools and DUs appear to be familiar with the new policy and regulations  Information distributed through the champion at the school or through personal visits to the schools by members of the unit.
Respect and Recognition	Recognize National Aboriginal Day at Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plan a 15 to 30 minute program for June 2007</li> <li>- Plan a 15 to 30 minute program for June 2008</li> </ul>	Community consultation process led to a community supper followed by 30 minute program at June 2008 meeting of the Board	Begin community consultation in March for June 2009 Board meeting	Ongoing
Respect and Recognition	Sensitively place special needs programs that are predominantly Aboriginal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure that special education clusters that are predominantly Aboriginal are not located in schools with no or few Aboriginal students</li> </ul>	Sites were examined by March 2008	Sites will be adjusted as needed	Ongoing
Community Involvement	Connect regularly with Aboriginal community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintain an external Aboriginal Committee</li> <li>- Develop a joint plan of action</li> <li>- Maintain connections with Hobbema (e.g., Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP) students, Cree programming)</li> <li>- Maintain relationship with Mother Earth Charter School</li> </ul>	Met with the external advisory committee, did many projects with different members  Ongoing  Ongoing	Ongoing  Ongoing	Increased community members on external committee. Three meetings set for this year for whole advisory committee, other meetings to be organized with specific projects
Community Involvement	Influence Aboriginal teacher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Follow up elementary &amp; secondary Aboriginal teacher education programs-Guest lecture in U of A Education Program</li> <li>- Be part of Diversity Day</li> </ul>	Serve on Advisory board of Yellowhead Tribal Council (YTC) teacher education program  Ongoing	Continue work with YTC Develop links with new Urban program (U of A) Link with Hobbema	Ongoing

3

<b>Policy and Regulation Area</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Year One Status</b>	<b>Year Two plan</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
Community Involvement	Identify and Develop new alliances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pursue a formal alliance with NAIT</li> <li>- Investigate opportunities with U of A and NorQuest</li> <li>- Connect with Enoch, Alexis, Alexander and Paul Bands</li> <li>- Connect with Métis Nation, Treaty 6 and Treaty 8</li> </ul>	<p>Formal alliance not completed. Pilot projects at U of A, Grant MacEwan so students become familiar with campuses</p> <p>Contacts were made with Enoch, Alexis and Ermineskin Bands</p> <p>Invitations were issued to Métis Nation, Treaty 6, Treaty 8 for the graduation ceremony</p>	<p>Continue to work on alliance</p> <p>June 2009 for NorQuest and U of A</p> <p>June 2009 for joint project(s) with Bands and political organizations</p>	<p>Links made with Enoch, Métis Nation for planning 2008-09 FNMI graduation ceremony</p> <p>Link with NorQuest for youth worker practicum placements</p> <p>Work has begun with Enoch student services</p>
Community Involvement	Engage parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organize family nights</li> <li>- Organize Stepping Into Schools</li> <li>- Participate in The Learning Partnership</li> <li>- Identify what is happening in all FNMI schools</li> <li>- Encourage Aboriginal parent volunteers</li> </ul>	<p>Monthly family nights in west end Sept-June 2008</p> <p>Stepping Into School at four schools in west end June 2008</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Model will be used to plan nights for junior high schools as well as family nights in the east end (two)</p>	Continued success with family nights, two additional schools in west end are included.
Staffing and Professional Development	Recruit Aboriginal Staff  Maintain Aboriginal Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Liaise with post-secondary teacher preparation programs</li> <li>- Encourage Aboriginal students in education programs to do practicum in our district and facilitate placements</li> <li>- Initiate development of an exit interview protocol and instrument</li> <li>- Advertise in Aboriginal publications</li> </ul>	<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>Pilot exit interview instrument</p> <p>Continue ongoing work</p>	<p>Working with NorQuest college to develop practicum placements for youth worker program</p> <p>Established a support network for district FNMI staff—meets every two months</p>

<b>Policy and Regulation Area</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Year One Status</b>	<b>Year Two plan</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
Staffing and Professional Development	Provide targeted professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Include information about Aboriginal policy and regulation in PED<sup>1</sup>, LED<sup>2</sup> and Full Day K inservices</li> <li>- Include Aboriginal cultural sensitivity in orientation program for new staff</li> <li>- Develop and pilot sessions on Aboriginal cultural sensitivity for new hires to district</li> <li>- Make presentations to post-secondary students</li> </ul>	<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>Offer sessions to all new hires to district</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Dec 2008 for PED, LED Full Day K ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing with all staff groups</p>
Staffing and Professional Development	Provide district-wide professional development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop and implement plan to provide Aboriginal cultural sensitivity for all staff not previously inserviced</li> </ul>	Plan developed by June 2008	Start with the FNMI schools, AISI Community Collaboration cluster schools	Currently going out to schools and working with staff to develop PD appropriate to each school
Achievement	<p>Monitor achievement, attendance and retention of self-identified Aboriginal students</p> <p>Monitor expulsions of self-identified Aboriginal students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue tracking of HLATs<sup>3</sup> and PATs<sup>4</sup></li> <li>- Continue tracking of attendance and retention by school and for district</li> <li>- Monitor expulsions &amp; identify trends</li> <li>- Investigate feasibility of providing school-level disaggregated Aboriginal achievement information</li> <li>- Develop process for tracking graduation rates</li> </ul>	<p>October 2007 for HLATs and PATs</p> <p>June 2008 for attendance and retention</p> <p>Expulsions by May 2008 Determine feasibility of disaggregating achievement information at the school level by March 2008</p>	<p>October 2008 for HLATs and PATs</p> <p>June 2009 for attendance and retention</p> <p>Expulsions by May 2009 School level (if feasible) by November 2008</p>	Data collected and plan to share appropriately
Achievement	Monitor participation of self-identified Aboriginal students in alternative and special needs programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continue tracking number of students in special needs programs</li> <li>- Request number of students in alternative programs</li> </ul>	<p>March 2008 Data collected</p>	<p>March 2009 Data Collected</p>	Data collected and shared appropriately

<sup>1</sup> PED Principal Education and Development Program  
<sup>2</sup> LED Leadership Education and Development Program  
<sup>3</sup> HLATs Highest Level of Achievement Tests  
<sup>4</sup> PATS Provincial Achievement Tests

<b>Policy and Regulation Area</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Year One Status</b>	<b>Year Two plan</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
Achievement	Recognize achievement of Aboriginal students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage schools to nominate Aboriginal students for Nellie Carlson and other awards</li> <li>- Follow up to ensure nominations made</li> <li>- Organize and host an event for Aboriginal graduates</li> </ul>	Sent out award information to each school as well as posted it on the website	<p>Resend the award information to school counselors and champions</p> <p>Follow-up to see if students have been selected in March</p> <p>Follow-up to see who has been nominated in May</p>	<p>Arranged 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)</p> <p>Award booklets and contact numbers given to champions</p>
Achievement	Advise all schools of successful practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify success stories and practices and inform all district schools</li> </ul>	Some collected orally	Ongoing Share stories starting with FNMI schools	Some stories shared at September meeting with FNMI schools
Curriculum	Increase infusion of Aboriginal perspectives throughout the curriculum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop and submit letter to Alberta Education advocating for infusion</li> <li>- Promote the District's Aboriginal Collection on line</li> <li>- Advertize the Lois Hole Digital on-line collection</li> <li>- Develop sample lesson plans that link with the on-line collections</li> <li>- Investigate ways of ensuring that school libraries have culturally accurate resources</li> </ul>	<p>Discussions held rather than letter</p> <p>Worked with Alberta Education on infusing the upcoming new science curriculum</p> <p>On-line collection was promoted October then in January</p> <p>Worked with Edmonton Public Library, Family Centre on Literacy and an outside Inuit consultant on locating culturally accurate resources</p>	<p>Continue working with Alberta Education on infusing new science</p> <p>Implement resource review June 2009</p> <p>Develop sample lesson plans June 2009</p>	Begun reviewing books for Aboriginal On-line Collection
Programs and Programming	Increase Aboriginal language options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Determine/encourage demand for Cree Bilingual</li> <li>- Develop Extended Cree alternative program</li> <li>- Explore possibility of a Michif program</li> </ul>	<p>Demand/Encourage April 2008</p> <p>Board approval April 2008</p>	<p>Implemented September 2008</p> <p>Identified need for support for Cree speakers in the District Had no requests for a Michif program</p>	Monthly immersion suppers are being organized to support Cree speakers in the District

<b>Policy and Regulation Area</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Year One Status</b>	<b>Year Two plan</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
Programs and Programming	Increase access to research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participate in a Visual Narrative Research Project</li> <li>- Host research seminars on assessment, best practices, etc.</li> </ul>	Pilot (K-3) completed May 2008	Research extended (depending on funding availability) and conducted 2008-2009	Ongoing
Programs and Programming	Improve transitions between divisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore early learning opportunities and links to K</li> <li>- Continue work on transitions to Grades 7 and 10</li> </ul>	<p>Early learning program developed June 2008</p> <p>Additional liaison staff hired spring 2008</p>	Additional liaison consultants piloting work with feeder schools so that students are supported through transition from 6-7 and 9-10	Ongoing Staff at Montrose and Highlands instigating ways to have students become familiar with each other's campuses
Programs and Programming	Provide alternative programs responsive to needs of Aboriginal community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintain and enrich Awasis and Amiskwacyi alternatives</li> <li>- Maintain and enrich alliance with Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society in Rites of Passage</li> </ul>	Request to review Rites of Passage program and the partnership between EPSB and Bent Arrow Traditional Healing society	Awasis program at maximum	Re-visioning of partnership for Rites of Passage has begun
Programs and Programming	Increase early learning opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Maintain relationships with Aboriginal Head Start programs supported by Ben Calf and Bent Arrow</li> <li>- Investigate opportunities provided by funding for to ELL Canadian born</li> </ul>	June 2008 early learning pilot developed	<p>Maintain relationship with Aboriginal head starts</p> <p>September 2008 additional early learning option implemented at Youngstown</p>	Ongoing program development for early learning FNMI site
Assessment	Increase knowledge about culturally sensitive assessment practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide workshops and written material regarding culturally appropriate assessment instruments and practices</li> <li>- Develop plan to reduce over identification of Aboriginal students as special needs</li> </ul>	<p>Workshop October 2007</p> <p>Poster begun to inform parents about the stages of informed consent and involvement of students in psychological testing</p>	Work with Dr. Das and district psychologists to enable the use of an additional psychological test, Cognitive Assessment System (CAS), that provides additional information to support teachers of Aboriginal students with special needs	<p>Created a plan to pilot the use of cognitive development tools (PASS and COGENT) in a few special needs (Mild/Moderate Cognitive Disabilities) classrooms with high numbers of self-identified FNMI students.</p> <p>The tools align with the CAS psychological test information.</p>

<b>Policy and Regulation Area</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Year One Status</b>	<b>Year Two plan</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
Enhanced Supports for Learning	Maintain alliances in support of Aboriginal students and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support and grow alliance with Métis Child &amp; Family Services re: social work support, fiddling and dancing and meal provision</li> <li>- Maintain alliances with Bent Arrow, Ben Calf and Red Road as noted previously re literacy and family support</li> </ul>	Developed a summer learning program in the west end with Métis Child and Family services as well as other partners	<p>Apply for grant dollars to extend the summer learning program</p> <p>Continue to maintain alliances to further literacy and family support</p>	<p>Meetings for summer programming are scheduled to begin in November 2008</p> <p>Implementing an after school mentorship/homework club for the northeast—ages 5-14 (Ben Calf Robe)</p>
Enhanced Supports for Learning	Advise schools about supports available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Distribute an Aboriginal Education brochure to all schools describing services</li> </ul>	Sent out October 2007	<p>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.</p> <p>Update brochure and web site to reflect increased staff</p>	Follow up visit to each school by consultants, to help facilitate the ideas in the plans and to provide additional support as needed.
Enhanced Supports for Learning	Expand number and type of mentorship opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engage in collaborative work with Big Brothers, Big Sisters to explore additional Aboriginal options</li> <li>- Explore other options through community connections</li> </ul>	<p>Met with Big Brothers, Big Sisters and other community members from across the province</p> <p>Grants received for Web role model 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>Continue to work on mentor work with Big Brothers, Big Sisters</p> <p>Explore options for expanding Coyote Pride in west end schools</p> <p>Expand pilot projects</p>	<p>Met with Big Brothers, Big Sisters September 2008</p> <p>Web pages built fall 2008 Launch early in 2009</p> <p>Ongoing</p>



<b>Policy and Regulation Area</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Year One Status</b>	<b>Year Two plan</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
Enhanced Supports for Learning	Explore career and technology options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reconnect with Oteenow</li> <li>- Partner with Careers the Next Generation</li> <li>- Investigate Paul Martin Foundation Entrepreneurial option</li> </ul>	<p>Did not reconnect with Oteenow</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 with both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal in Grades 7 and 8</p>	<p>Paul Martin project commences January 2009</p> <p>Careers: Next Generation – making presentations to high schools – Aboriginal unit is assisting the organizers to find students for internships</p> <p>Will expand, depending on the success of the program</p>	Ongoing
Enhanced Supports for Learning	Expand options for dealing with attendance issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advocate to province for changes to the Attendance Board</li> <li>- Analyze impact and learnings from attendance pilot</li> <li>- Develop additional strategies to improve attendance</li> <li>- Review research regarding improving attendance</li> </ul>	<p>Advocacy letter March 2008</p> <p>Pilot developed and submitted to attendance board</p>	<p>Implement pilot with 10 families</p> <p>Review feedback from Attendance Board pilot. Develop strategies in response to suggestions</p>	To date, seven families have been identified
Accountability	Report regularly to board and Executive Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop report for board in December 2007</li> <li>- Develop annual report to board in May or June</li> <li>- Review implementation plan on a yearly basis</li> </ul>	<p>Report submitted December 2007</p> <p>Report on Year 1 of implementation plan 2008</p>	Board report November 2009	Ongoing

<b>PRIORITIES AND MEASURES</b>
--------------------------------

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

### **Priorities Year Two**

Advocacy by board and administration

- Infusion of Aboriginal outcomes in Core curriculum
- Follow-up on Attendance pilot

Continue Monitoring and Information Dissemination as Required

- Disseminate Research Information
- Cree extended program
- Use data to develop responsive programming

Alliances and Joint Activities

- Increase breadth of external committee
- Generate joint activities or approaches with bands and political organizations
- Generate joint approaches with post secondary institutions

Staffing

- Pilot exit interview for staff
- Implement plan for further increasing number of staff across staff groups
- Develop immersion support for Cree speaking teachers
- Develop support network for FNMI staff

Professional development

- Work with FNMI schools to develop need and site specific professional development
- Offer PD to schools that call unit

### **Priorities Year Three**

Review Progress Relative to Policy, Regulation and Plan

Revise Plan Based on Analysis of Progress

<b>Measures</b>
-----------------

- ❖ 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