

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

November 30, 1999

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Dossdall, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Initiative

ORIGINATOR: A. McBeath, Department Head

RESOURCE
STAFF: Gloria Chalmers, Donna Leask

INFORMATION

Background: Representatives from various federal, provincial and municipal departments, boards and authorities were invited to participate on an Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Initiative Steering Committee. The initiative was developed under the leadership of OTEENOW, representing Treaty 6 and Treaty 8 First Nations, the Metis Nation of Alberta, the Downtown Rotary Club and the Edmonton/Northeast Region of the Career Development Division of Human Resources and Employment. The intent of the initiative is to bring together a broad range of organizations that have in common the goal of improving the quality of life, and the services to, urban Aboriginal peoples living in Edmonton. Your administration has been participating in the initiative since its inception approximately one year ago.

Current Status: The participants on the initiative steering committee have developed draft terms of reference (Appendix I). The terms of reference provide a rationale, underlying values, vision and mission statements, principles to guide the initiative, results expected and member responsibilities. As the initiative is a coalition of representatives from various autonomous decision-making bodies, should there be any recommendations that would impact organizations involved, they would be brought to the various governing bodies. Initially, the goal is to identify the common goals and priorities and to determine if we can provide added value to activities undertaken by initiative members. For instance, the district will advise of the Aboriginal Secondary School and members will have an opportunity to indicate ways they could provide support for this endeavour.

Next Steps: The terms of reference will be confirmed. Subsequently, through a joint business planning process, the steering committee will begin to identify the common goals and priorities. This will enable the development of a more comprehensive picture of needs, plans and activities related to the Edmonton urban Aboriginal community.

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APPENDIX I - Terms of Reference, Edmonton Urban Aboriginal
Initiative Steering Committee

TERMS OF REFERENCE

12/11/99

EDMONTON URBAN ABORIGINAL INITIATIVE

STEERING COMMITTEE

BACKGROUND:

There are significant disparities between the socio-economic conditions of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in Alberta. By every commonly employed indicator, Aboriginal people remain substantially disadvantaged in comparison to the general population. These disparities in conditions must be addressed. Significant challenges face urban Aboriginal residents. A long list of social and economic needs are currently pressing. The gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Alberta cities will grow in the future, as waves of young people reach working age and an economically disadvantaged population ages. Many urban Aboriginal needs are urgent.

Since no single government/authority (federal, provincial, municipal, school board, First Nation, Métis) can address the range of interrelated needs, there is clearly a need for a holistic, coherent, integrated approach.

In October 1998 a collaborative arrangement between Oteenow Employment and Training Society (representing Treaty 6 and Treaty 8), Alberta Human Resources and Employment (formerly Advanced Education and Career Development), the Downtown Rotary Club, and the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) was established. The primary goal of the initiative was to identify the service needs of the Edmonton urban Aboriginal community. (The Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Initiative: Community Consultation Report – June 1999)

The formation of effective partnerships between government departments, Aboriginal Authorities and service providing organizations is recognized by Treaty 6 and 8 and the MNA as a fundamental requirement of impacting the broad socio-economic issues faced by urban Aboriginal peoples. Collaboration and coordination of various lead organizations is required for

the success of an Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Initiative because there is no single government department, service agency or aboriginal organization that would have the ability or capacity to address all of the issues.

The federal government is committed to addressing urban Aboriginal issues as identified in the Gathering Strength Action Plan (1998). The government of Alberta recognizes that the emerging social, economic and security issues facing urban Aboriginal people must be addressed (Strengthening Relationships: The Government of Alberta's proposed Aboriginal Policy Framework).

Other service delivery authorities (e.g. Children Services Authorities, School Boards, City of Edmonton - Community Services) also acknowledge and recognize the need to address the situation of Aboriginal people in Edmonton and in some cases are already taking action in this area.

The Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Initiative, through the conscious involvement of Treaty areas 6 and 8 and the Métis Nation of Alberta, is consistent with the strategic direction advanced by both the Federal and Provincial Governments in working directly with First Nations and Métis elected groups to address Aboriginal issues, including urban Aboriginal issues. This approach in Alberta is embodied in existing agreements such as: An Understanding on First Nations/Canada Relations; An Understanding on First Nations/Alberta Relations; the Métis Nation of Alberta Framework Agreement and the Métis Nation of Alberta Tripartite Process Agreement, as well as in numerous community-specific program agreements and arrangements. As noted earlier, this approach is also consistent with the recent draft Alberta Aboriginal Policy Framework paper.

In order to develop a coherent and integrated approach to the Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Initiative, a small group consisting of representatives from the federal and provincial governments, Treaty 6 and 8, the Métis Nation of Alberta, City of Edmonton - Community Services, and District 5370 Rotary Urban Hope began meeting in the fall of 1998 to discuss the development of an Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Strategy. The past months have been spent building connections across the community and growing trust between the partners.

In the spring of 1999, consultations, led by Treaty 6 and Treaty 8 and the Métis Nation of Alberta, were held to identify service needs, existing gaps and suggestions for improvements in the delivery of services. A final report on the findings has been prepared.

A critical first step in working together is the establishment of a coordinating mechanism involving all partners.

WE VALUE:

- **INTEGRITY:** We give precedence to ethical principles and obligations in our decisions and actions. We respect all ethical obligations deriving from applicable laws and agreements. We do not condone unethical conduct.
- **LOYALTY:** We fulfill our commitments in a manner that best serves the community.
- **COURAGE:** We face challenges with determination and strength of character.
- **HONESTY:** We are truthful in our decisions and actions.
- **FAIRNESS:** We are just and equitable in our decisions and actions.
- **RESPONSIBILITY:** We perform our tasks with competence, diligence and dedication. We are accountable for and accept the consequences of our decisions and actions. We will achieve meaningful change.
- **RESPECT:** We respect the dignity of all persons. We honour the ideas, decisions and actions of all people.
- **INTERDEPENDENCE:** We are socially, culturally, and economically interdependent. This interdependence requires partnerships, equity and balance among all parties.

VISION:

Edmonton's Aboriginal community is safe, healthy and productive.

MISSION:

To establish a coherent, integrated approach to program and service delivery to meet the needs of the Edmonton urban Aboriginal community.

PRINCIPLES:

- Aboriginal people are key stakeholders and are vital to the planning, delivery and evaluation of programs and services
- Programs and services are respectful of aboriginal culture and relationships
- Multiple barriers and holistic needs are addressed

- Innovation is required
- Existing partnerships and linkages are employed to the benefit of the aboriginal community

MANDATE:

To provide leadership to the Edmonton Urban Aboriginal Initiative to ensure that:

- common goals and priorities are identified through a joint business planning process
- integrated delivery vehicles and program approaches are adopted
- responsibilities and resources are appropriately shared
- mutually acceptable accountability measures and performance outcomes are developed and reported

RESULTS:

To achieve substantive change in the circumstances of the Edmonton Aboriginal community in the following areas:

- access and basic needs
- education
 - employment
- health
- justice
- citizen involvement

MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES:

Steering Committee members will:

- identify, discuss or resolve issues
- engage in strategy development, planning, problem solving and implementation
- make recommendations to their home departments/authorities
- establish and provide direction to project or specialist sub-groups focussed on specific issues.
- review environmental scanning information to identify emerging issues
- exchange information

MEMBERSHIP:

To ensure strength in diversity and comprehensive representation, members will include:

Aboriginal Authorities	Treaty 6 Treaty 8 Métis Nation of Alberta
City of Edmonton	Community Services

Province of Alberta	Human Resources and Employment Children’s Services Health and Wellness Justice Learning Municipal Affairs International & Intergovernmental Relations
Government of Canada	Human Resources Development Indian and Northern Affairs Canadian Heritage Alberta Council of Senior Federal Officials Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation Health Canada Western Economic Diversification Justice Canada
Business	District 5370 Rotary Urban Hope Economic Development Edmonton Edmonton Chamber of Commerce
Provincial Authorities	Capital Health Authority Ma Mowe Childrens Authority
School Boards	Edmonton Public Schools Edmonton Catholic Schools

REPORTING:

- The integrated business plan for the initiative will require approval by all member departments and authorities through an administrative sign-off
- Ongoing reports will be provided regarding progress on the business plan
- An annual report will be produced for public scrutiny.

EVALUATION:

- A joint evaluation of the initiative will take place at 1, 3 and 5 years.

ADMINISTRATION:

- A project director, reporting to the Steering Committee co-chairs, will be appointed for a 5-year period
- Two to three project managers
- Administrative support