

Developing a Culturally Responsive School Division Final Report

June, 2008

An Aboriginal Education Research Network Grant

“A vision without a task is a dream; a task without vision is drudgery; but a vision with a task can change the world.”


Black Elk

“This work is like dropping a stone in the water. We are creating ripples and eventually all people will find themselves in the circle.”

Albert Scott-Nakawé Traditional Knowledge Keeper, Kinistin First Nation





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Preamble

Saskatoon Public Schools is grateful for the research grant and support of the Ministry of Education, First Nation and Métis Education Branch and the Canadian Council of Learning that made this action research and report possible. Appreciation is extended to the schools, educators, administrators, students, parents, and community members who shared their knowledge and vision with the research team.

Report Structure

It is the hope of the research team that this report will become a guide to follow in the resolve to become a more culturally responsive school division. Part A captures the background and intent of the research. Part B reflects the key understandings gained from international, provincial and local site visits. Part C summarizes the perspectives and insights that the community advisory committee identifies as potential systemic actions that will provide direction in becoming a more culturally responsive school division. Part D includes Mount Royal and Pleasant Hill Community School reports. Finally, Part E summarizes the essential understandings learned in this research project.

Part A: Background, Purpose and Process

It is the goal of Saskatoon Public Schools to improve student learning by adopting a model of education that is culturally responsive and affirming. The work of the Okiciyapi Partnership (partnership with Saskatoon Tribal Council-STC, Central Urban Métis Federation Inc. -CUMFI and Saskatoon Public Schools-SPS) has underscored the urgency of the work of becoming a more culturally responsive school division.

Saskatoon Public Schools utilized action and appreciative research methodologies to guide the inquiry into the questions: What is cultural responsiveness? What are the processes that will help move Saskatoon Public Schools to become a more culturally responsive school division? These are the specific steps taken to carry out the research plan:

- A. engage two action research sites (1 elementary- Pleasant Hill Community School; 1 secondary- Mount Royal Collegiate) in a collaborative process for the development of cultural standards and guidelines for use in Saskatoon Public Schools
- B. form an Advisory Committee to seek guidance in conducting our action research project, to be a sounding board for the application of our findings (literature review, site visits, community consultation) in Saskatoon settings and to advise on the recommendations outlined in our final report

- C. respectfully engage Elders, cultural leaders, students, parents, staff and community members in conversations around the development of cultural standards and guidelines. Forums will be organized at each school site.
- D. engage a researcher/writer in preparing a literature review and the compilation of research findings. Members of the Working Committee will be provided with sub days to visit sites and to be involved in writing projects. Additional research supports may include meeting with resource personnel from the exemplary sites and the acquisition of professional resources.
- E. use facilitators to support community engagement and networking opportunities
- F. travel to local, provincial and international sites recognized for their innovative responses in meeting the cultural needs of their diverse communities
- G. network with colleagues from the Alaskan Native Knowledge Network and the Alaskan Department of Education to gain first hand knowledge on the processes they used to engage their communities in the development of the Alaskan Cultural Standards
- H. have our research team share findings with our two action research sites' learning communities regarding cultural affirmation and respectful school climates as foundational to the successful development and implementation of cultural standards
- I. support members from the two sites in the processes of engaging their learning communities in the development of their schools' cultural standards
- J. develop a communication plan for the dissemination of research findings. This may include the development of multimedia resources.

Essential to actualizing the research plan is the spirit of intent. Saskatoon Public Schools engaged in this research with a spirit of collaboration and humility to learn from the Community Advisory Committee and the schools that have reflected promising practices in cultural responsiveness.

Part B

International, National, Provincial and Local Site Visits

International Site Visit

Alaska

The Alaskan Native Knowledge Network report that in a culturally responsive model, “the focus moves from learning about cultural heritage as another subject to teaching/learning through culture as a foundation for all education, it is intended that all forms of knowledge, ways of knowing, and world views be recognized as equally valid, adaptable and complementary to one another in mutually beneficial ways.” (Alaska

Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools, 1998) The Alaskan people have committed years to researching the meaning of culturally responsiveness. Their work has been documented and published by the Alaskan Department of Education during the period of 1998-2003. Specifically these publications are titled: Alaskan Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools (1998); Guidelines for Nurturing Culturally Healthy Youth (2001); Guidelines for Culturally Responsive School Boards (2002); Guidelines for Strengthening Indigenous Languages (2001); Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge (2000); Guidelines for Cross-Cultural Orientation Programs (2003); and Guidelines for Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers for Alaska's Schools (1999). In their publications they refer to their "cultural standards" as providing touchstones for schools to consider and adapt when attending to the cultural needs of the children and youth in their care. These resources were developed with the goal of encouraging schools to "nurture and build upon the rich and varied cultural traditions" of their diverse communities (Alaskan Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools, 1998).

It was the Cultural Responsive literature that created the impetus for Saskatoon Public Schools to investigate more deeply into the body of research compiled by the Alaskan people and determine what actions would help move Saskatoon Public Schools to becoming more culturally responsive. A research team was created comprised of: Patricia Prowse, Superintendent of Education; Cort Dogniez, Coordinator First Nation and Métis Education; Krista Segó, Vice Principal, Pleasant Hill Community School; Chris Roy, Guidance Counselor, Mount Royal Collegiate; Don Speidel, Waakiye (Traditional Helper) and Jennifer Hingley, Learning Leader First Nation and Métis Education.

The research team spent five days in Alaska under the mentorship of Dr. Ray Barnhardt, Co-director of the Alaska Native Knowledge Network, and Cross-Cultural Studies University of Alaska Fairbanks.



Dr. Barnhardt facilitated the meetings and connected the research team with key organizations that have helped lead the way for the development and implementation of Alaska's guidelines and standards for cultural responsiveness.

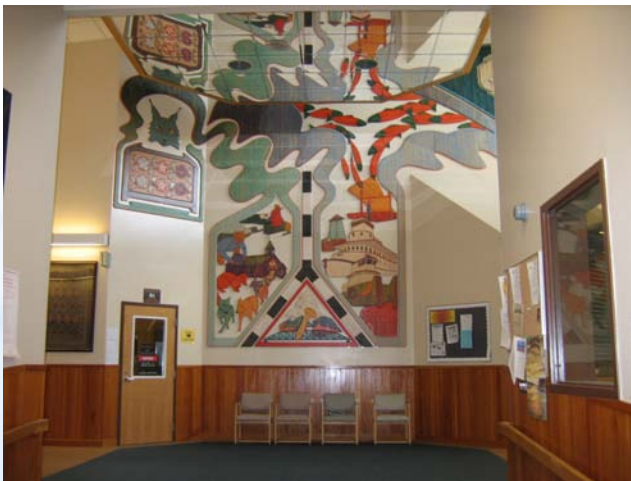
These are the key ideas and actions that the research team learned from the site visit to Alaska:

Culture is the Context for learning

The traditional Alaskan worldview and philosophy for learning is the foundation for student learning. Students learn through traditional stories, songs, Language, culture camps, and direct interaction with Elders. The curriculum becomes the medium for traditional knowledge to be integrated into the daily learning of teachers and students. Ideally, traditional knowledge is at the center of learning and teachers are able to devise curricula that are relevant within a 21st century context. Technology is an important tool for connecting students for shared learning experiences in language and culture.

The Alaskan people value both formal and informal education systems. The question was posed, “Does one way of life have to die so another can live?” One of the goals of the standards is to provide the interfacing to bring Traditional Indigenous Knowledge and the formal education systems together to provide powerful learning experiences for the children and young people of Alaska. As Dr. Barnhardt states, “we have come to recognize that there is much more to be gained from further mining the fertile ground that exists within Indigenous knowledge systems, as well as at the intersection of converging knowledge systems and world views. The depth of knowledge derived from the long term inhabitation of a particular place that Indigenous people have accumulated over millennia provides a rich store house upon which schools can draw on to enrich the educational experiences of all children. However, this requires more than simply substituting one body of knowledge for another in a conventional subject based curriculum it requires substantial rethinking of not only what is taught, but how it is taught, when it is taught and who does the teaching.” (Barnhardt, 2005)

Culture is Visible



A strategy used by the Alaskan people to validate culture was to make it visible everywhere. Artwork, pictures of cultural leaders, role models, maps that reflect the traditional territory of the Alaskan language groups, value posters and showcases honoring traditional Elders decorated the walls of the school. It is powerful evidence that validates the significance of cultural knowledge.

The Power of Partnerships

Dr. Barnhardt made it clear that the Alaskan Standards are the result of decades of work, research and powerful partnerships. The research and development was sponsored by many different organizations, including Alaska Department of Education, Alaska Federation of Natives and the University of Alaska. Native educators, Elders, leaders, parents, youth, and child care providers all contributed to the development of the guidelines.

Staff Development

The personal and professional development of teachers is critical in the success of the implementation of the guidelines. Teachers participate in a ten day intensive culture camp experience. Elders, cultural leaders and helpers facilitate the learning process. The role of the teachers is to make the curricular connections from the knowledge that the Elders share.

The main outcomes for teacher learning are:

- Teachers can describe their philosophy of education and demonstrate its relationship to their practice.
- Teachers understand how students learn and develop and apply that knowledge in their practice.
- Teachers know their content area and how to teach it.
- Teachers facilitate, monitor and assess student learning.
- Teachers create and maintain a learning environment in which all students are actively engaged and contributing members.
- Teachers work as partners with parents, families and with the community.

There are many indicators that describe the outcomes. The ultimate goal of all professional learning is to create culturally competent staff that will benefit all of Alaska's children. (Guidelines for Preparing Culturally Responsive teachers for Alaska's Schools, 1999)

Teachers learn through cultural experiences and enhance this learning with researching the promising practices in education. While the research team was in Alaska, professional symposiums were being planned for Alaskan teachers on the topic of learning styles. Learning styles is a major focus for Alaska as they believe that deepening the understanding of teachers in this area will support the implementation of the guidelines for cultural responsiveness.

Value the Process

The process of becoming cultural responsive requires work at a personal and professional level. The process is just as important as the end result. Teachers, administrators, school board trustees, educational assistants must be validated, while at the same time challenged in their worldviews to be responsive to the students and the communities in which they serve. Critical to moving the process forward is the assertion that schools need to become culturally responsive. The Alaska Department of Education has adopted the Standards and Guidelines that hold school divisions accountable to this work.

Summary of Findings

The research team learned many valuable lessons from the people of Alaska. It is clear that becoming culturally responsive requires a comprehensive effort from many different levels, essentially from the board room to the classroom. Policies, curricula, staff development initiatives, community involvement and partnership development must be aligned to support the goal of becoming culturally responsive. Dr. Barnhardt cautioned the research team that simply adopting the Alaska standards will not give Saskatoon Public Schools the change it desires. The real change will occur when the work is taken up at many different fronts to create the conditions necessary for this work to reach its potential in support of culturally responsive schools.

National, Provincial and Local Site Visits

The research team investigated several national, provincial and local schools that reflect promising practices in becoming culturally responsive schools. The following table lists the school and the culturally responsive practices that were learned from each school:

School	Culturally responsive practices
Children of the Earth School, Winnipeg School Division Winnipeg, MB Grades 9-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Male and female cultural advisor on staff• Inclusion of ceremony- Smudging, Pipe, Naming, Clan and Colours, teaching lodge and other cultural ceremonies occur regularly(monthly and seasonally)• Involvement of home and community in sharing and teaching circles• Cultural orientation for students and staff which includes Medicine Gathering, Teachings and Ceremonies• One on one counseling and group counseling based on traditional teachings• Main goals are to enhance cultural identity to strengthen personal identity• Offer Language and cultural mentorship opportunities• Staff according to the needs of the school-tie positions to the work as this gives value to the cultural work that is being

	<p>done</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All girls program-female culture advisor works with a group of young girls
<p>niji mahwakwa, Winnipeg School Division Winnipeg, MB K-8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • niji mahkwa School and Community upholds the belief that all children have an inherent right to the highest quality of holistic education. • The integration of traditional, cultural teachings in a supportive learning environment provides students with the strengths and skills to meet the challenges of life • Cultural mentorship and Language courses • Inclusion of ceremonies daily, weekly, monthly and seasonally • Community partnership and advocacy on behalf of the community • Curricula design based on values and teachings of the Cree and Ojibwa Cultures • Appropriate staffing for needs of school- examples include Family Support worker, Language teachers, Numeracy and literacy teacher, resource teacher, educational assistants, Family Learning assistant, Learning Assistant Teacher (congregated multi-age room for students who need intensive intervention to help heal the gaps in their learning before they are assigned a classroom) • Assessment is on-going with parent and student input • Celebration of student achievement
<p>Mother Earth's Children's Charter School, Wabamun, AB PreK-8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture advisor who supports the learning of students and teachers in cultural practices and teachings • Cree and Stoney Language teachers • Cultural retreat for staff before students arrive • Parents, staff, students and community members participate in culture activities and ceremonies on a regular basis • Curricula is devised around Medicine wheel teachings delivered within a cultural context • Students are taken out on the land to learn from the cultural advisors in a natural setting • Value based teaching around traditional respect and spirituality • Classrooms have no more than 18 students • Instructional practices are based on traditional First Nation pedagogy and include mentoring, observing, storytelling, project based learning and participation in ceremonies • Create a sense of family

<p>Sakewew High School, Battleford School Division, North West School Division and Battlefords Tribal Council Grades 9-12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of responsibility and commitment to Elders • Culture advisor on staff • Development of a culture course where students can receive three credits for participation in Culture activities • Inclusion of ceremonies • Cree Language classes • Involvement of parents and community • The school is a result of the partnership between Battleford School Division, North West School Division and Battlefords Tribal Council • One of the school goals is to help students see the relevance of culture in their lives • Student art work adorns the walls and speaks to cultural pride
<p>Won Ska, SaskRivers School Division, Prince Albert,SK Alternative programming 9-12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture advisor on staff and the inclusion of network of elders to support the students and their families and staff • Create strong family relationships to create an attachment to school • A philosophy of education that is youth centered and flexible based on the emotional, mental, spiritual and physical needs of the young person • Inclusion of ceremonies and culture programming to strengthen identity which helps students make significant life changes • Teach parenting classes based on traditional First Nations values, beliefs and practices • Work with young people from where they are at and support them to grow from a position of strength • Build partnerships within the community to bring together the strengths of the different agencies • Staff according to the needs of the students
<p>Oskayak, Greater Saskatoon Catholic School Division Saskatoon, SK Grades 9-12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of male and female culture advisors • Community board to act as advisors to the school • Culture academy offered to students • Inclusion of weekly and seasonal Ceremonies • Language and culture classes offered • Visible representation of culture in design, artwork and logo of the school • School name responsive to beliefs of culture • First Nation and Métis teachers represented in the school
<p>Princess Alexandra</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture advisor on staff who speaks Cree fluently and is knowledgeable about cultural practices and values • Create a strong sense of belonging and attachment to the

<p>Community School, Saskatoon Public Schools Saskatoon, SK K-8</p>	<p>school by building strong family relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage the community and validate their voice through talking circles and forums • Inclusion of ceremonies- Feasts, Pow Wow celebrations • A philosophy that the school belongs to the community and the development of the values of connection and respect • Team approach on staff • Emphasis on assessment for learning and essential skills in literacy and innumeracy (Pre-K and Full day K offered) • First Nation and Métis teachers on staff who are excellent role models • Celebration of community-family photos, artwork, and role model posters adorn the walls of the school
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Summary of Findings

These schools shared several common practices:

- The presence of cultural leaders and advisors. It is these individuals who become a strong support for students, their families and staff. They have the skills to help guide teachings, lead ceremonies and reveal the knowledge of the culture that for the most part is not in public domain.
- Inclusion of family and community in the planning of school events.
- The acknowledgement that ceremonies are a key to cultural understanding and reinforcement of worldview, beliefs and practices.
- The belief that strengthening student identity through pride in culture and by nurturing strong relationships will improve learning and achievement.
- Development of language and culture classes.
- A culture mentorship component to learning.
- Staffing appropriately to meet the unique needs of the community.
- First Nation and Métis staff who are powerful role models.

Other observations that were noted by the research team are the conviction of the school administrators and staff. There was a strong feeling of togetherness and pride in buildings that were working cohesively to become culturally responsive. The work may not have always been easy, but was life changing and enhancing. As Shane Skjerven, Principal of Princess Alexandra Community School stated, “I am a different person, a stronger person and I will carry with me all that I have learned wherever I go.”

Part C

Cultural Advisory Committee

A strategy used by the research team was to form an Advisory Committee to seek guidance in the understanding of cultural responsiveness and to respectfully engage Elders, cultural leaders, students, parents, staff and community members in conversations around the development of cultural standards and guidelines. The advisory committee for cultural responsiveness consisted of individuals who have dedicated their lives to the advocacy, protection and promotion of First Nations and Métis culture. Members of the advisory are: Albert Scott, Darlene Speidel, Harvey Thunderchild, Ken Goodwill, Otto Fietz, Perry Bellegrde, Rita Bouvier, Sharon Laflamme, Val Harper, Winston Walking Bear, Shirley Isbister and Allan Adams. A total of five meetings occurred during the 2007-2008 school year.

A key outcome of the advisory meetings was to devise a common understanding of cultural responsiveness. The following definition is a result of capturing the wisdom of the advisory.

Culturally responsiveness is:

- **Affirming:** Honours First Nation and Métis knowledge, ways of knowing , doing and being
- **Honouring:** Elders and traditional knowledge keepers are the foundation for the transmission and continuation of culture. They become the foundation and the center of our work.
- **Holistic:** Engages the heart, mind, body and spirit of all learners and recognizes the gifts and strengths of all students and grows and nurtures those gifts.
- **Ceremonial:** Ceremonies nurture the spirit and offers guidance in personal development and self awareness. Ceremonies promote pride in nationhood, community, family and the individual; fosters family togetherness and a spirit of community pride as the community witnesses and celebrates the achievement of individuals.
- **Healing:** Schools become centers for cultural continuity. Language, learning from place, traditional songs all reinforce pride in who you are as a person
- **Value Based:** Respect, balance, integrity, belonging, compassion, forgiveness, generosity, responsibility and wisdom are the values that shape relationships and guide teaching and learning.
- **Symbolic:** Schools are welcoming and create a feeling of pride. Artwork, place names, symbols and other visuals represent cultural beliefs and values.
- **Purposeful:** Creates a stronger sense of personal self worth and connection to community.
- **Community based:** A true partnership between child, family, school (all adults in the building and the system that is in place) and community exists.

- **Inclusive:** School is a place that nurtures the spirit of belonging. Belonging is about caring, connection and the belief that all are equally valid and needed for the community to be strong.
- **Respectful of Cultural Diversity:** All cultures should be validated, recognized and honoured. The cultural knowledge of the Swampy, Plains and Woodland Cree, Nakawé, Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, Dene and Métis people must be honoured as the distinct Nations that they are. There is a place for all in the Circle.
- **Celebration of Life:** Prayer, Ceremony and Thanksgiving show appreciation to the Creator and to those who walked before us.

These characteristics define culturally responsiveness and provide a vision for what cultural responsiveness has the potential to become in schools. At the heart of this understanding is that the purpose of school is to strengthen, educate, and nurture children and young people so that they can contribute to their family, school, community and nation in a good way. Cultural responsiveness must engage the families if it is to truly have an impact on the child. This was reiterated by the advisory committee many times.

The Process for Becoming More Culturally Responsive

The work of moving a school system to adapt its philosophy, practices, principles and policies to support schools in becoming culturally responsive is no easy task. As the advisory cautioned, it is work that requires great courage, leadership and a strong vision. There are several first steps that the advisory felt that Saskatoon Public Schools should consider as they proceed in this work:

- **Create a standard that all schools are accountable to achieve.** This may include Treaty education, cross-cultural learning experiences, anti-racist education and a focus on the history of Saskatchewan and Canada that includes First Nation and Métis people's experiences. Design rubrics that schools can use to evaluate their work and offer examples of what to teach, when to teach and how it should be taught. Recognize that in some schools there is a need to go deeper to reconnect children and young people with their cultural identity. These schools have the potential to become centers of healing for children and their families. Their curricula includes ceremonies, rites of passage, strong cultural mentorship all with the intent of preparing young children and youth who can take their place in society and contribute in a good way.
- **Reflect and review practices and policies that may impede the work of cultural responsiveness.** Prayer and ceremony are an integral part of education from a First Nation perspective. It is how the heart, mind, body and spirit of an individual are nurtured. Ceremony is a foundation and starting point for schools that are working to becoming culturally responsive.
- **Create a five to ten year strategic plan with a strong vision and values to guide the work.** The advisory committee encouraged the research team to take small steps that will make a great impact, not to do too much too soon. The idea is to create success so that teachers, administrators, children and their families will feel encouraged to continue.

- **Create a staffed position in each school that is responsible for working on cultural responsiveness as well as a facilitator at the system level.** It was acknowledged that this work requires a tremendous amount of coordination and facilitation. In order for this work to grow and develop it needs to be properly resourced, this places value on the work of becoming culturally responsive.
- **Create a strong staff development plan.** The advisory made it very clear that this work needs to be done by engaging all staff. Staff development must go beyond workshops and resources by developing relationships that will allow for the examination of beliefs and values, school policy, instructional and support practices and explore the basis of teacher practice. The value of relationships can not be over emphasized as it relates to this work. Ceremonies are a way to create these relationships as they engage and nurture the heart, mind body and spirit of people. Ceremonies also create a sense of family togetherness and will energize the work of the people in becoming culturally responsive. Sharing world view, an Indigenous philosophy and model of education, the values that are the foundational to First Nation and Métis people should all be topics for staff development. It is about bringing all educators into the circle. As Albert Scott shared, “This work is like dropping a stone in the water. We are creating ripples and eventually all people will find themselves in the circle.” There needs to be accountability as well. The Advisory Committee was being generous by sharing with Saskatoon Public Schools. In turn, they want to see commitment to the work and a shared vision for the future. Clearly, there needed to be evidence that the knowledge was being taken to heart and applied.
- **Create strong partnerships with families the community and other agencies that will offer their support to becoming culturally responsive.** A repeated theme in the conversations with the advisory was the need to engage and create strong partnerships with families and community members. The family is the first place that learning occurs for children. Schools need to genuinely engage parents, grandparents and caregivers so that they feel and see that they are valued members of their child’s learning team.
- **Communication-** Cultural responsiveness can not happen in isolation. Understanding of the purpose, definition and work involved must include all levels of administration, educators, parents and community members. Essentially, from the “boardroom to the classroom”. This work should be shared with all stakeholders so that others can benefit from this research.
- **Become advocates for the community.** First Nation and Métis people have many barriers that they must overcome. The school system needs to be a powerful advocate for anti-poverty, anti-racism and help the family and the community with access to what they need. This requires creative thinking and the commitment to be responsive to the voice of the community. This advocacy work requires partnerships with other agencies.

The Community Advisory encouraged and commended Saskatoon Public Schools for focusing attention to the work of becoming culturally responsive. As Albert Scott shared, “this work is not as difficult as it seems. It is about sharing worldviews and seeing yourself in the circle... I have been in your world, come into my world.”

Part D

School Reports

Pleasant Hill Community School and Mount Royal Collegiate volunteered to be the two action research sites that would commit to the development of a common understanding of cultural responsiveness and create school strategic plans that would implement the learning from the international, national, provincial and local site visits as well as the directives recommended by the Advisory Committee.

Pleasant Hill Community School



Pleasant Hill Community School (PHCS) was built in 1928 and received Community School designation in 1986. PHCS is located in the core area of Saskatoon's inner city. PHCS has a student population of approximately 204 students (Pre K-8). 85.78% of the students self declare that they are of First Nations descent. The PHCS school staff is composed of thirteen FTE teachers, a community coordinator, fourteen support staff, one vice-principal, and one principal. The school community also has access to a counselor, school social worker, educational psychologist and speech-language pathologist. A Nutrition Coordinator and team, as well as a Public Health Nurse complement the school staff.

PHCS offers a regular academic program, with literacy development as a primary focus within the program. Our students have benefited greatly from the Picture Word Induction Model as a strategy to develop reading skills. Literacy promotion and development is at the foundation of many of our initiatives. One of our most successful initiatives to support both literacy and parental involvement continues to be our monthly Literacy Bus to one of our civic libraries. The award of a Chapters-Indigo grant will support the development of libraries in the classrooms and school.

In keeping with the mandate of Community Schools, PHCS offers a number of supports to provide for the total needs of children and families. A number of programs are offered

to that end: Families and Schools Together (FAST), Adult Sip 'n' Chat, Kookum's Group, and Parenting Classes all support positive family and community development. Students may also choose to participate in a number of sporting opportunities (Kinsmen Hockey League, Little Kicks Soccer, traditional team and individual sports), cooking classes, hoop dancing and Girls' Group.

Pleasant Hill Community School is an active and caring school, one where students and families learn, play and become truly engaged in their community.

During the 2007-2008 school year Pleasant Hill school planned events to help facilitate the dialogue and development of a common understanding around cultural responsiveness.

*Cultural Responsiveness
At Pleasant Hill Community School
2007 – 2008 School Year*

- 1) **Elder Presence in our school** – needs to be regular and purposeful so we can learn and be guided by her
 - Elder Katie at many of our assemblies and other celebrations (and the smudging after the death on our playground). *Very important to our staff and community.
 - Kookum group who meet weekly at Pleasant Hill.
- 2) **First Nations, Inuit and Métis Art** – build a welcoming and colourful school for our students, staff and parents
 - Kevin Pee-Ace work completed with our students to brighten our halls and building
 - Bulletin boards with First Nations content and art
- 3) **Collaboration between Culture Teacher and classroom teachers** – identify needs and develop plans that reflect world view
 - Work together to guide students in performances, presentations and projects which explore ideas from the Harmony Binders
 - Ensure communication between our staff so they may learn from each other, ask important questions and seek out resources that will best suit the learning needs of our students
- 4) **Collaboration between First Nations, Inuit and Métis Unit** – work closely with the First Nation, Inuit and Métis Education Unit to promote Cultural awareness in our school and support teachers with guidance and resources
- 5) **Sharing Circles** – increased participation of parents and community members in our Talking Circles
 - Increase parental involvement in our school strategic plans and recruitment of other parents and family members

- Increase in Talking Circles with our staff to promote the sharing of cultural resources and ideas

6) **Collaborate with Princess Alexandra School** – need to work with the school most like ours to trade ideas and promote sharing, learning and growing between staff

- Is important to build teamwork and ensure collaboration with new staff to each school

7) **Ceremonial Room** – have our Parent/Family Room equipped with proper ventilation to promote smudging in our school and among our community members

- Will be completed by Friday, January 18, 2008

8) **Promote Annual Canoe trip for Grade 7/8 Students** – has become a tradition in the last three years at Pleasant Hill Community School.

- Begins and ends with a Talking Circle where both students and staff are amazed (and emotional) at the end of their journey
- The history of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis people is a major component a long with the history of our city “Saskatoon”
- Teamwork, working together and believing in your self are highlighted and it is a definite relationship and self-esteem builder among our students and staff

9) **Cree Language Classes** – offered to our parents after they shared their fears in losing their language.

10) **First Nations, Inuit and Métis Celebrations** – each classroom will be responsible for teaching the rest of the school a “Something they learned...” About a specific tribe in Saskatchewan

- May be a dance, tradition, celebration, or words in the language
- Classes will present at our weekly assemblies

11) **Staff Sweat Lodge Ceremony**– March 14, 2008 at Wanuskewin

- Staff will participate in a sweat led by system Waakiye followed by a feast
- Staff who are unable to participate will participate in a sharing circle about First Nation and Métis culture

Advocacy

What are the next steps?

1) Involving our Educational Assistants – can apply for professional development funds

2) Allowing our staff to learn from mini-in-services by experienced staff

3) Make up a template for staff to share how they are integrating First Nations, Inuit and Métis content

- What First Nations, Inuit, and Métis content are included?
- How was it culturally responsive?

- What learning did your students have?
- What evidence do we have of cultural respect in our classroom?
- What staff development have you participated in?

Community Consultations

Pleasant Hill School engaged its community in several rounds of talking circles to determine how the parents felt about cultural responsiveness. The parents identified several key areas that they felt would make a difference in the lives of their children.

- Language classes taught at the school
- Storytelling as a way to teach children
- Multicultural fairs and displays
- Opportunities to participate in ceremony
- Continue with the dance program
- Begin a drumming program
- Have more Elders in the school
- Focus on keeping the school grounds safe (gangs in the community are an issue)
- Talking circles are a respectful way to engage the community-make them part of the school

Planning for 2008-2009

On May 16, 2008 the PHCS staff dedicated their professional development day to the topic of Cultural Responsiveness. The purpose of the day was to explore the following questions:

- What is cultural responsiveness?
- What needs to be learned so that Pleasant Hill School will become more culturally responsive?
- What are the guiding questions for action research?
- Do you see yourself in this plan? Do you have a sense of belonging within this research plan? Do you understand your purpose and role in helping the school achieve this vision?

Utilizing a talking circle and small discussion groups the staff discussed these important questions. The following is a summary of the group dialogue. The notes are colour coded to reflect the identity of the small groups.

Cultural Responsiveness: Towards a Common Understanding Pleasant Hill Community School

What is the fundamental purpose behind this work? Why bother?

- create a sense of belonging and acceptance and to nurture all parts of student/teacher understanding
- connect with self and others
- close the gap and open the gate
- acceptance and validation

- affirmation
- embrace change in a positive way
- acknowledges the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups
- to develop learning that encompasses all four facets of life (intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical)
- self understanding – we can not teach or deliver teachings if we don't understand
- be proactive – we need to look at the big picture in-terms of the growing FNIM population
- empowerment of our youth
- inclusive education
- success

2. What would Pleasant Hill look like if it were more culturally responsive? In five years from now, if Pleasant Hill achieved its vision and goal of becoming more culturally responsive, what would be different? Describe what would be happening in terms of practices, procedures, relationships, results and climate.

- celebrations
- more visuals
- personal student work
- empowered students, staff and community
- strong sense of self worth and identity
- celebration – drumming, dancing, food, music from all cultures
- celebrate our school
- a visually stimulating through all kind of art and inviting
- healing from the Residential School era
- celebrating everybody's individuality
- students that exhibit pride and positive self image
- more symbolic representation of all cultures
- more parental and community involvement
- students that feel good about where they fit and how they will contribute to our society
- community-based organizations-in the school (dental, counseling) parents actively engaged in the school
- new school facility – more multi-cultural teachers, visually multicultural school art, music
- ceremonies in school
- family support (on board)
- increased attendance
- parents comfortable, confident, glad to be there
- continued safe place for all
- support to change curriculum as needed

- similar teacher practices

3. What are the specific commitments that must be honoured to achieve the goal/purpose/vision of becoming more culturally responsive?

- parent involvement (increased)
- bring parents into classroom – space 2-3 portables
- focus on this for strategic plan
- sharing circles with our students, staff and the community
- commitment and follow through
- be good listeners at sharing circles
- continue to participate in events that require parental and community involvement
- more hands on learning opportunities for our students
- more art in the hallway that represents other cultures
- culture fair
- vision circle meeting with the whole community
- set realistic goals
- short-term leading to life-long learning
- consensus/commitment and shared vision
- talking circles in all classrooms with administration and all other adults present
- staff circle (talking – just to keep connected not on a staff meeting day)
- staff must be committed and accountable for participation

4. What are the must dos?

- in school PD on this focus connect Board initiatives to cultural responsiveness (ways of learning) (money and time)
- sharing circles
- focus on students explore more hands on learning
- PD Elders forum

Questions generated by discussion:	Strategies that may strengthen the learning program:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you instill pride in achievement? • How do we guide students? • How do we relax as teachers (not to overwhelm)? • How do we engage our Elders/community? • How do I make connections? • How do I give them a great start? • Family time? day? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • talking circles • positive messaging • helping kids learn their gifts • career planning • we are already doing many things that are culturally responsive • more sharing time (staff) • traditional music • be there (hugs) • purpose of learning

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships? Outdoor education? • How can I build more connections with literacy? • Discussion time? • How can I better integrate culture with what I am doing? • How do we engage Elders? • Elders' forum? • How will we change it? • How will it work? • How do we incorporate spirituality? • How do we involve all cultures? • What if you are at a standstill in your learning? How do you move on? • How can we bring parents in? • How do we find time in a day for wait time? • How do we connect with other grades? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • openness • holistic (mind, body, spirit, emotion) • smudging • goal setting • more wait time • think alouds • potential – high expectations
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There clearly is alignment between the purpose, vision, goals and starting points generated by the staff and the directives of the Community Advisory committee. It is difficult to capture on paper the honest, open, heartfelt dialogue that occurred that day. The staff demonstrated commitment to the work of becoming culturally responsive. The 2008-2009 school strategic plan will reflect how the school will begin to embark on its vision and journey of becoming more culturally responsive.



It was advised that the school should begin with a very clear vision statement. PHCS generated these words to provide a basis for their vision statement:

- belonging
- caring
- strong sense of self-worth and identity
- involvement (parental)
- celebrations, commitment, strong sense of community
- empowerment
- ownership
- pride (heritage and history)
- engaging students heart, body, mind and spirit
- what brought us here? Who are we? Who influences our actions? What have we accomplished?

Strategies

Teachers will use talking circles as a key instructional strategy. Talking Circles will be planned for the staff to help reflect and assess the progress made on the implementation

of the strategic plan. Community talking circles will be planned to continue to engage the community in this work and honour their voice, perspective and needs.

Talking Circles will facilitate the following outcomes:

- to build relationships
- to teach values/respect
- to encourage student voice
- to problem solve
- to be a tool for assessment for learning
- to encourage ownership and create a sense of belonging
- to create healing
- to honour a culturally relevant teaching strategy
- to strengthen listening/speaking skills

Pleasant Hill Staff will focus on honouring the gift of each child to strengthen the child/young person so that each child feels a sense of pride, self-worth and recognize the ways in which he/she is needed and can contribute to his/her school, family and community. These are the anticipated outcomes:

- to improve self-confidence, self-worth
- to develop a stronger understanding of worldview and cultural practices
- build communication
- understanding of historical events (awareness of culture)
- to nurture and affirm student identity and make connection to the Social Studies curriculum
- to honour heritage
- to develop social skills
- to model and teach about the value of respect
- to improve public speaking
- to foster self-respect and respect of others
- to make connections to career guidance and to the place that a young person potentially has in their school and community
- to integrate the world view and practice of First Nations and Métis people into the learning program of students
- to engage the heart, mind, body, spirit of children
- increased engagement and joy in learning
- to honour the diverse learning styles of students
- for learning to be relevant to students and help paint a vision for young people where they see the connection to learning and their role in the community

The staff at Pleasant Hill Community School has asked for support to carry this work forward. They will require the support of cultural and spiritual leaders who can share worldview and help deepen this understanding so that practices and policies of the school can reflect an integration of First Nation and Métis ways of being and doing.

Mount Royal Collegiate



Mount Royal Collegiate opened to students in 1960. The comprehensive addition including a second gym and shops opened in 1967. The latest renovations included the addition of the Cosmetology lab in 2004 and an upgrade to the Graphic Arts/Photography area in 2005.

Mount Royal is a Grade 9-12 Comprehensive Collegiate, offering a variety of courses at various levels. Since becoming a Community School in September 2001, M.R.C.I. has been able to add numerous support programs for all students. A daycare center with a room for ten infants (0-19 months) and one for twelve toddlers (18-29 months) has been a part of Mount Royal since 1989. A daycare center for 25 children (18 months to 5 years) was opened at Royal West Campus in 2002.



There are two off-site programs that are associated with Mount Royal. Royal West, a satellite program which offers Grade 12 classes to adult learners, was opened September 2002. Royal West Campus struck a partnership with the University of Saskatchewan to start a “Transitions Program” in 2005. This program provides first year Arts and Sciences classes to students in the Mount Royal Community who have completed their Grade 12 requirements. The partnership is blossoming and for 2007-2008 they expect approximately 165 students. Each year, approximately 250 students take advantage of the many opportunities that Royal West has to offer. Our other satellite, Bridges, is an alternative placement for at-risk students under 16 years of age. This program provides a more individualized one-on-one experience for students in need.

Mount Royal’s enrolment is projected to be 1200 for the 2007-2008 school year including the 265 Royal West and 15 Bridges students. Our diverse population includes approximately 35% of students who self declare as First Nation, Métis or Inuit and approximately 90 English as a Second Language students. We have on staff 70 teachers, 12 educational assistants, 6 secretaries, 3 counselors, 3 administrators, 3 cafeteria workers, 10 caretakers, 13 daycare staff, 1 police liaison, 1 Community School

Coordinator, 1 Restorative Justice worker, 1 School to Work Liaison, 1 Addictions Counselor, and 1 First Nation, Inuit, and Métis “Success Coach”.

In 2003, M.R.C.I. entered a partnership with the School Division and the Saskatoon Rotary Club to implement the Mount Royal Restorative Action Program (R.A.P.) This facilitated the hiring of a Restorative Justice worker who provides opportunities for students, staff and community to work together toward a common understanding regarding conflict resolution in the Mount Royal Learning Community.

Mount Royal Collegiate is excited to be partnering with Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology (S.I.I.T.), Dumont Technical Institute (D.T.I.) and Kelsey S.I.A.S.T. Campus through the Saskatoon Trade and Skills Center during the 2007-2008 school year. The goal is to best utilize the space that has opened up at Mount Royal due to the construction of two new secondary schools in the west sector of Saskatoon. These partnerships will provide tremendous opportunity to the secondary students attending M.R.C.I.

Mustang Volley, a volleyball tournament held in October, and Royal Tip-Off Classic, a basketball tournament held in December, are two of Mount Royal’s biggest athletic events. Teams come from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and out-of-province for both tournaments. The Mustang Mania Cheerleading tournament is the biggest in Canada.

Extracurricular activities include school sports, Les Voyageurs (canoe club), G.S.A. (Gay-Straight Alliance Club), S.L.C. (Student Leadership Council) and many more. Every year, Mount Royal hosts a variety of events, including Dinner Theatre, Dessert Theatre, Multicultural Fair, Arts Showcase, and Pow Wow. From a curricular perspective, Mount Royal offers a variety of elective classes. (HCAP and a Practical and Applied Arts transition program for Grade 7 students are a few of our newest initiatives.)

For more information, please visit our school website at:
<http://schools.spsd.sk.ca/Mount>



Cultural Responsiveness at Mount Royal Collegiate 2007 – 2008 School Year

Aboriginal Success Coach

- This position was staffed in the spring of 2007. The primary objective of the success coach is to help students engage in school and be successful. A “Guiding Group” has been formed in which students talk about MRCI and ways in which they can be successful

Culture Room

- Furnished in October, 2007. The room is used by the Aboriginal Success Coach as well as other staff when they are engaged in special projects or talking circles.

The room is developing from a primarily Aboriginal focus to a multicultural focus (as requested by students)

CRU Teen Wellness Group

- This group meets in the Culture Room Mondays at lunch and Wednesdays after school. The group is staffed by Aboriginal people and primarily targets Aboriginal youth. A variety of cultural and health related topics are addressed.

A-Coach Program

- This program began in the winter of 2007 and is assisting Aboriginal students in learning to be certified coaches.

Sask Tel Partnership

- ★ Mission Massinga – Mozambique: School participation in the Sask Tel partnership which provides a container of supplies to children in Mozambique.
- ★ ESL students helped to build the playground at Royal West Campus. In return, Sask Tel provided “Community Corps” T Shirts and an international calling card for each ESL student who participated in the community service activity.

Powwows

- Classroom field trips to the U of S Powwow, FSIN Powwow and whole school participation in the Saskatoon West Intertribal Powwow.

Okiciyapi Camp

- Sent a group of fifteen students to the Okiciyapi Camp in the fall

FSIN – Survivors of Residential Schools Conference

- Sent thirty students to a one day forum sponsored by the FSIN.

Pathways of Success

- Approximately twenty students went to this celebration of Aboriginal achievement. The students experienced a full day of Aboriginal displays, performances, Powwow dancing and jigging.

Curriculum Adaptations

- Numerous examples of how classroom teachers adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of Aboriginal and ESL Students or go on field trips to various cultural sites (Wapos Bay Productions, Batoche, Diefenbaker Centre, Mosques, etc.).

Culturally Responsive Course Selections

- ★ World Religions Class
- ★ World Music Class
- ★ Cree Language Classes
- ★ French Class
- ★ Reentry Classrooms

- ★ Native Studies Classes

Partnerships with SIIT, Dumont Technical and the Saskatoon Trades and Skills Center regarding post-secondary programming.

Partnership with the Open Door Society

- Settlement worker at the school one and a half days per week.

Sask Tel Aboriginal Awards

- Nominate students and attend the event.

Seasonal Sweat Lodge Ceremonies

- Many staff attend these as well as other cultural in-service opportunities. This year Mount Royal hosted a sweat for all its staff members as a professional development opportunity.

Tell Them From Me is a data collection strategy utilized to capture student voice and perceptions. Mount Royal has surveyed students on belonging. Students have indicated that they feel safe and accepted at Mount Royal.


Diversity Focus Group

- ★ Planning a school-wide Multicultural Fair in March of each year with entertainment, food and displays from a variety of cultures;
- ★ Developing strategies to promote cultural awareness (announcements over the intercom, informational materials, “did you know”);
- ★ Diversity displays in the main foyer area.

Diversity Club

- ★ World Harmony Run: international organization that runs for world harmony. In Canada it begins at Victoria BC and ends in Halifax.N.S. Our school has been engaged in this activity for 3 years. The third year we collaborated with the First Nations University. We are featured on the World Harmony website;
- ★ 2007 - 7th Annual "Holding human rights in our hands event" in creating awareness for the United Nations Universal Declaration of human rights December 10. Activities for the whole school usually in Royal Mentors classes;
- ★ United Nations International Women's Day March 8. Activities for the whole school usually in Royal Mentors Classes;
- ★ Bullying awareness week: new activity this year to draw attention to the issue of bullying;
- ★ United Nations World Food Day October 16, Bringing awareness to the issues of hunger and poverty through an activity in all Royal Mentors classes. Collaboration with Oxfam;
- ★ Providing training in ACT – Now (Anti-racism education and training).

The goal is to move Mount Royal forward in its quest to become a more Culturally Responsive school.

INTENDED OUTCOME	EVIDENCE	STRATEGY	ACTION	LEADERSHIP	TIMELINE
<i>The desired change we are striving for in the priority area.</i>	<i>The quantitative and qualitative data that we will use to measure our progress.</i>	<i>Broad-based actions that help us to achieve our intended outcome.</i>	<i>The specific steps we will take related to our strategy.</i>	<i>The person(s) who will lead or be significantly involved in this action.</i>	<i>The specific date or month(s) this action will take place.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “F.N.I.M. Success Coach” ▪ M.R.C.I. is excited to build on the success of the Aboriginal Success coach started in the Second Semester of 2006-2007. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Breaking down barriers to retain more F.N.I.M. students (track the numbers.) ▪ Involving more F.N.I.M. students in school leadership and with extra curricular programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with Success Coach the F.N.I.M. educational unit, and school leadership to promote cultural responsiveness. 	<p>The success coach will work towards:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Reducing barriers to student success b) Celebrating F.N.I.M. student success c) Increase F.N.I.M. role models and extra curricular opportunities d) Communication and home visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aboriginal Success Coach • Cultural Responsiveness Focus Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2007 – 2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ “Celebrate First Nation Opportunities” ▪ Pow Wow ▪ “ACT NOW” Camp ▪ Culture Camp ▪ Sweat Lodge opportunities ▪ Conferences ▪ “First Nation Renovation” ▪ As part of the 17 million dollars M.R.C.I. received, we would like to see a portion of this money used to renovate M.R.C.I. in a Culturally Responsive way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Send individual students, whole classes, and staff to these cultural opportunities. ▪ Track the numbers attending these events. ▪ Construction of a culturally responsive room/centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with the Success Coach at M.R.C.I. counselors, School-to-Work Liaison, and our partners (S.I.I.T. and D.T.I.) to promote the transition to post secondary institutions. ▪ Work with Saskatchewan Learning and the Steering Committee on this design. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communicate cultural opportunities to students and staff at M.R.C.I. ▪ Provide funds through M.R.C.I.’s Community School’s budget for opportunities and programs. ▪ Last year, members of the F.N.I.M. Educational Unit and M.R.C.I. Administration toured culturally responsive facilities in Winnipeg, Manitoba. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ F.N.I.M. Educational Unit ▪ M.R.C.I. Administration ▪ M.R.C.I. Collegiate Renewal Focus Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2007 – 2008 ▪ 2008 – 2009

The goal is to move Mount Royal forward in its quest to become a more Culturally Responsive school.

INTENDED OUTCOME	EVIDENCE	STRATEGY	ACTION	LEADERSHIP	TIMELINE
<i>The desired change we are striving for in the priority area.</i>	<i>The quantitative and qualitative data that we will use to measure our progress.</i>	<i>Broad-based actions that help us to achieve our intended outcome.</i>	<i>The specific steps we will take related to our strategy.</i>	<i>The person(s) who will lead or be significantly involved in this action.</i>	<i>The specific date or month(s) this action will take place.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ ▪ “Support F.N.I.M. Content” ▪ This will happen across curricular areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Success coach will be presenting to classes on culturally relevant material. ▪ Bring in guest speakers and performers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support teachers who are working to introduce culturally responsive material into the curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Utilize the Harmony Binder in all subject areas. ▪ Provide Culturally Relevant experience for students within the community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Success Coach ▪ F.N.I.M. Educational Unit ▪ M.R.C.I. Administration ▪ M.R.C.I. teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2007 – 2008 ◆



Planning for the 2008-2009 School Year

Mount Royal Collegiate will focus its efforts in cultural responsiveness in the development of its Grade Nine program. The Grade Nine program will become an important start and will impact programming and practices at the school level. The staff and planning team at Mount Royal have taken to heart the advisement of the Advisory Committee to start on a smaller scale and develop and build from that point. Mount Royal has significant plans in place for their Grade Nine program.

The Grade Nine Program is designed to help students in their transition from Grade Eight to a high school setting. A small group of staff work together as a team in setting goals and delivering the academic program. Safe, caring and culturally-inclusive learning environments are created that build positive relationships with all students. The goal is to help students develop independent thinking, self-confidence, and a sense of social responsibility as they discover their own strengths and talents.

The natural curiosity, need for relevance and meaning is recognized in what students study. Connecting learning experiences in a meaningful way is crucial in keeping students engaged as active learners. To foster student engagement students are equipped with the necessary skills to plan and assess their own learning.

To meet these goals an integrated curriculum is provided that balances academic (with an emphasis on Literacy), Artistic, Practical and Applied Arts and Career Education. The curriculum prepares students for senior high school and also teaches about basic human values including respect, honesty, trust, determination, and responsibility. Career education and service projects both within the school and in the larger community foster qualities that will help students be successful citizens. All students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities and outdoor educational opportunities which teach them to meet new physical and social challenges.

Specific plans for cultural responsiveness include a needs assessment for the teaching and support staff to determine their perspective in this area with follow up staff development on developing cultural competencies. Students will be interviewed to determine their perspective on cultural responsiveness. The grade nine teaching team and administration with support from the First Nation and Métis Unit will create long range plans for the rest of the school to follow as they achieve their goal of becoming culturally responsive.

Part E

Towards A Common Understanding of Cultural Responsiveness

Saskatoon Public Schools has engaged in this research because it values and recognizes the vital role that culture plays in the development of strong learners, schools and systems. *This work is about becoming more cultural responsive to enhance and improve student achievement with an emphasis on First Nation, Inuit and Métis students.*

Enhancing culturally responsiveness in Saskatoon Public Schools has three distinct forms. It is:

De-constructive- It requires honest reflection on the current practices in schools to determine if there needs to be a tearing down of philosophy, beliefs, and actions that are not in alignment with the characteristics of culturally responsive schools.

Re-constructive- Attention may need to be directed to areas that need enhancement to nurture and grow culturally responsive schools. After internal assessments are performed, each school will have the opportunity to determine their needs and subsequently their starting points.

Constructive- Cross-Cultural understanding, respect and appreciation will allow for an enlightened system to emerge that embraces the knowledge that cultural diversity brings and is strengthened as a result of this cultural sharing. This will build on the good work and practices currently utilized by Saskatoon Public Schools and deepen the knowledge of responding appropriately and respectfully to the cultural diversity in the school community. A data collection strategy will be devised to form baseline data and design appropriate measures to assess the impact that culturally responsive practices have on school culture and student achievement.

This report is written and presented in a spirit of humility. It is our hope that with the continued support of the Okiciyapi Partnership, the Community Advisory Committee and the resolve to improve student achievement for First Nations, Inuit and Métis students the vision of affirmed, successful, strong young people who feel a sense of belonging, know their place in the world and can contribute to their school, family, community and nation will be fulfilled.

Bibliography

Alaska Native Knowledge Network. (1998). *Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools*

Alaska Native Knowledge Network. (1999). *Guidelines for Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers for Alaska's Schools*



Literature Review: Developing Culturally Responsive Schools

Introduction

Saskatoon Public Schools has explored the goal of creating a culturally responsive school division. This discussion has grown out of the work published by the Alaskan Department of Education during the period of 1998 – 2003. In their publication they refer to their “cultural standards” as providing touchstones for schools to consider and adapt when attending to the cultural needs of the children and youth in their care. These resources were developed with the goal of encouraging schools to “nurture and build upon the rich and varied cultural traditions” of their diverse communities (p. 4, Alaskan Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools, 1998).

The intent of this study is to investigate the processes and programs used by various educational organizations to develop and implement cultural standards and guidelines. In particular, this literature review examines the promising practices and recommendations provided by educational organizations to develop and implement cultural standards and guidelines in schools. There are four main areas of consideration in this literature review, which include:

Culturally Competent Educators
Positive and Inclusive School Climates
The Inclusion of First Nations, Inuit, And Métis Content Into Curricula
Authentic Community Engagement Models

Several studies offer descriptions of schools that are culturally competent and responsive. Many of these studies focus on developing culturally competent educators because teachers play central roles in determining the school climate, choosing content and engaging parents and community members.

According to Klotz (2006), “A culturally competent school is generally one that honors, respects, and values diversity in theory and in practice and where teaching and learning are made relevant and meaningful to students of various cultures” (p. 11). Various studies offer the recommendations and promising practices set by educational organizations as standards culturally responsive schools should meet. Klotz explains, “To create culturally sensitive educational environments, schools must set goals for success” (p. 11, Klotz, 2006). The first section of this study highlights seven themes in the literature that are emphasized as standards and guidelines educational organization should meet to be culturally responsive:

Cultural Competency
Pedagogy
Professional Development
Assessment
Positive and Inclusive School Climates
Diverse and Inclusive Curriculum
Community Engagement

The standards and guidelines highlighted are all dependent upon a school's cultural context.

Unfortunately, few studies identify the processes and programs used to develop and set these standards. While reviewing Canadian school board websites and respective literature for this study, it was found that many schools state that they are committed to cultural responsiveness for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students. However, few educational organizations highlight the standards and guidelines used to determine if schools are successful. Those that do identify standards and guidelines rarely provide information about the processes and programs used to determine the standards. It is clear that further research is needed to identify and describe the processes and programs utilized to develop cultural responsiveness guidelines. The second section of this review highlights eleven examples of educational programs and organizations that are committed to cultural responsiveness.

Parent Partnership for Achieving Literacy
Northwest Territory Teacher Induction Program
Mother Earth Charter School
Inclusive Planning to Support Aboriginal Education Workshop
Forests for the Future
The Aboriginal Knowledge and Science Education Research Project
Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative
Cowichan Aboriginal Education Improvement Agreement
Indian Education for All
Transitional Education for Aboriginal Math Learning
The "Choice" School



Cultural Standards and Guidelines

Culturally Competency

Teachers play a pivotal role in creating culturally responsive schools. Teachers contribute in many ways to the four main areas considered in this review. For example, if teachers are culturally competent, it is more likely that the school climate will be positive and inclusive, First Nations, Métis and Inuit content will be integrated into the curriculum, and the community and students' parents will be authentically engaged in the school.

Much of the literature focuses on the recommended standards and guidelines teachers need to meet for schools to become culturally responsive. Teachers who are culturally competent have the ability to successfully teach students from cultures other than their own (Ming and Dukes, p. 42, 2006). Because teachers have the ability to determine students' academic success, it is crucial that they are willing and able to "develop cultural competence for the benefit of their students" (p. 43). As Ford and Whiting (2007) argue,

in a culturally responsive school all teachers “must become culturally competent and endorse policies that are culturally responsive” (p. 52).

Pedagogy

Several studies highlight pedagogy as a central role in determining a teacher’s cultural competence. To be a culturally competent educator, teachers need to develop and practice culturally responsive pedagogy. “Culturally responsive pedagogy is wholistic and inclusive. It engages students spiritually (culturally), emotionally, physically, and intellectually...for both heart and mind education” (Nicol, Archibald, Kelleher, Brown, 2006). Richards, Brown, Forde (2007) offer another definition of culturally responsive pedagogy:

In a culturally responsive classroom, effective teaching and learning occur in a culturally supported, learner-centered context, whereby the strengths students bring to school are identified, nurtured, and utilized to promote student achievement. Culturally responsive pedagogy comprises three dimensions: (a) institutional, (b) personal, and (c) instructional. The institutional dimension reflects the administration and its policies and values. The personal dimension refers to the cognitive and emotional processes teachers must engage in to become culturally responsive. The instructional dimension includes materials, strategies, and activities that form the basis of instruction. (p. 64)

The majority of literature focuses on the personal and instructional dimensions of culturally responsive pedagogy. For example, to develop cultural competency as an educator, Lynch and Hanson (2004) stress that teachers must consider their own culture and history, the culture and history of others, and how to apply this knowledge to work with families.



An educational organization that stresses the connection between teacher philosophy and practice in developing culturally competent educators is the Alaska Native Knowledge Network (ANKN). The ANKN’s Guidelines for Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers for Alaska’s Schools (1999) provides eight standards that culturally responsive teachers school administrators should work towards. These standards have been adapted and implemented by the Assembly of Alaska Native Educators.

The first standard proposed by the ANKN is that teachers should be able “to describe their philosophy of education and demonstrate its relationship to their practice” (p. 4). According to ANKN, culturally responsive teachers who meet this standard will develop a philosophy of education that accommodates the world view of Alaska Native societies which is incorporated in their teaching practice and gained through experience working with community members. Teachers’ should be able to demonstrate this understanding to community members who practice and can evaluate the teachers’ practice. In addition, teachers should be able to recognize differences and similarities between alternative ways of knowing, “particularly with regard to the intermingling of Alaska Native and Western

traditions” (p.5). The literature also stressed the importance of integrating Indigenous and western knowledge in culturally responsive schools (Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2005).

Culturally competent teachers should “understand how students learn and develop and apply that knowledge in their practice” (ANKN, 1999, p. 6). Teachers who meet this standard will draw from the knowledge and experiences of students and understand how to incorporate parenting practices valued by the community. Understanding the importance of multiple intelligences, culturally competent teachers will draw from the “naturalistic intelligence” of Indigenous students in their teaching practice through offering experiential learning opportunities (p. 6). Recognizing that that all students learn and develop in their own way is a reoccurring theme in the literature that examines important factors that lead to culturally competent teachers (Garrett, Bellon-Harn, Torres-Rivera, Garrett, & Roberts, 2003).

Professional Development

According to the literature, culturally responsive schools should provide teachers with professional development opportunities that are culturally sensitive and inclusive to develop their cultural competence (ANKN, 1999; Klotz, 2006). The ANKN standards for culturally competent teachers maintain that teachers who are culturally responsive will draw upon regional, state and district resources for educational and professional growth. To reach this standard, teachers should engage in critical self-reflection, prepare and maintain a portfolio, contribute to supportive staff relationships that benefit students and “participate in, contribute to and learn from local community events and activities in culturally appropriate ways” (ANKN, 1999, p.16).

ANKN further argues that school boards need to offer professional development to teachers as a career incentive and make efforts to attract and hire community members. For example, new teachers should be provided with cross-cultural orientation as an in-service program. This could include, where possible, a weeklong cultural camp experience and the assignment of an experienced Native teacher/aide, an Elder and a student as mentors throughout the first year of teaching.

Ming and Dukes (2006) stress the importance of including support for teachers as part of the “current school operations” (p. 43). This includes providing access to training opportunities and feedback from peers, administrators, and families. Teacher support can be enhanced through visits with or reading about successful culturally competent teachers (Richards, Brown and Forde, 2007; Ming and Duke, 2006).

Self-reflection was highlighted as an important aspect of developing a culturally responsive teaching philosophy in the literature (ANKN, 1999; Ming and Duke, 2006). Richards, Brown and Forde, (2007) explain that teachers cannot depend on experience alone to prepare them to be culturally competent. It is therefore important for educators to engage in self-reflection to examine their beliefs about self and others and to confront biases that may emerge. The researchers explain that when these biases are not

confronted, they will affect the ability to build positive relationships with their students and their students' parents, families and communities. Furthermore, the biases will influence their ability to provide equal educational opportunities to all of their students (p. 65).

To engage in self-reflection, Richards, Brown and Forde (2007) highlight several standards that schools can expect from their teachers. For example, teachers should explore their personal histories and experiences and those of students through opportunities that allow them to engage in reflective thinking and writing (p. 65 – 66). In addition, the researchers emphasize the need for educators to acknowledge their own membership in different groups and how this membership may influence instruction and assumptions about students. For example, culturally competent teachers who speak English as a first language should be able to distinguish the difference between language acquisition and learning disabilities (Klotz, 2006).

The ANKN (1999) emphasizes the importance of teacher education programs in preparing culturally competent teachers (p. 17 – 18). Teacher candidates need the opportunity to experience working with students of various cultural backgrounds. As suggested in the Guidelines for Preparing Culturally Responsive Teachers for Alaska's Schools, students who want to teach in rural Alaska should have the opportunity to complete an internship in an Alaskan community. Furthermore, teachers should be provided with ongoing support from Teacher Education Programs while in their first year of teaching. University instructors also need cross cultural training and experience cultural immersion opportunities.

Assessment

According to the ANKN (1999), culturally responsive teachers facilitate, monitor, and assess student learning through a variety of instructional strategies that are reflective of the instructional cultural environment (p. 12). In addition, the ANKN stresses the importance of assessing all forms of intelligence and problem solving forms of intelligence (p. 15). In particular, teachers need to provide educational opportunities for all students to be successful and utilize technology to “enhance educational opportunities and to facilitate appropriate documentation and communication of local cultural knowledge while honoring cultural and intellectual property rights” (p. 13).

Richards, Brown and Forde (2007) emphasize peer tutoring and cooperative group learning approaches to emphasize cooperation and sharing as well as inter group competition (rather than individual competition) in the classroom. Ford and Whiting (2007) suggest that schools offer cultural clubs that focus on school harmony and inter group relationships.

Positive and Inclusive School Climates

According to ANKN (1999) culturally responsive educators need to “create and maintain a learning environment in which all students are actively engaged and contributing members” (ANKN, 1999, p.14). To meet this standard, the ANKN suggests teachers model classroom environments on the natural community learning environments and utilize the local community. Teachers can prepare, “organize and implement extended camps and other seasonal everyday-life experiences to ground student learning naturally in the surrounding environment” (p. 14). The ANKN recommends that teachers create learning environments that reflect the cultural and ecological context of their students, which will assist in creating a positive and inclusive school climate.

School service staff and administration can play key roles in creating culturally responsive schools (Garret, Bellon-Harn, Torres-Rivera, Garrett, & Roberts, 2003; Klotz, 2006). Klotz emphasizes the role administrators need to play in creating culturally responsive school climates. In particular, principals should consider the assignment of classrooms, the hours the building is open, and whether the building and staff are accessible. According to Klotz, administrators need to consider whether their school’s physical appearance is respectful of different groups, examine which students get instruction from the most experienced teachers and how resources are allocated (Klotz; Richards, Brown & Forde, 2007). Administrators can also work towards hiring qualified school staff who are members of the school’s cultural communities (Klotz, p. 13)

Ming and Dukes (2006) argue that culturally competent educators must take the responsibility to develop, implement, and maintain culturally responsive activities that become a part of the school’s regular routine (p. 43). This will contribute in creating a culturally responsive school climate. Ming & Duke argue that teachers who lack cultural competency may implement culture into the classroom as a form of tokenism. For example, they argue that discussing holidays, including a limited amount of cross cultural content, or having international food fairs cannot work alone in creating inclusive school climates.



Diversity and Inclusive Curriculum

Teaching for diversity is the third standard recommended by the ANKN (1999). According to the ANKN, culturally responsive teachers should be able to “teach students with respect for their individual and cultural characteristics” (p. 8). The community’s language(s) and culture(s), including traditional teaching pedagogy, should be acquired and applied when teaching. Several studies support ANKN’s suggestions such as teachers should support Elder’s in Residence programs, understand the significance of cultural identity, understand the local, regional and state-wide content of the students, assist students to understand cultural diversity within and beyond their community and act as a role model through participating in and contributing to traditional community practices (Garrett, Bellon-Harn, Torres-Rivera, Garrett, & Roberts, 2003; Richards, Brown and Forde, 2007; Klotz, 2006).

The literature suggests it is important for students to feel connected to the content they are taught. Richards, Brown and Forde (2007) argue that culturally competent teachers should “know their content area and how to teach it” (p. 10). They also argue that students who cannot relate to content may become disconnected from school, which can limit student retention and success rates.

Klotz (2006) and Ford & Whiting (2007) argue that the curriculum should be culturally inclusive, while encouraging cultural inquiry. This includes providing students with information about privilege, power, and injustice. In addition, Ford and Whiting encourage teachers to hold cultural sensitivity discussions with students when curriculum holds negative stereotypes (p. 14)

Community Engagement

In culturally responsive schools, school staff will initiate the development of relationships with parents, families, and community members and incorporate the knowledge gained from these relationships in their teaching practice (Ming & Duke 2006; ANKN, 1999; Richards, Brown and Forde, 2007; Colombo, 2006; Smith, 1999). In addition, community members and family should be offered the opportunity to co teach and assist in curricular and instructional planning and these contributions should be appropriately recognized.

Ming and Duke (2006) argue:

In short, teachers must strive to help parents of culturally diverse students feel that they are an essential part of the school environment by making sure that these parents feel comfortable enough to communicate with faculty and staff and participate in classroom and other school wide activities and events (p. 47).

Teachers need to understand that schools play a “significant factor in the social, economic and political make-up of the surrounding community and” act “as a major contributor to the community’s health and well-being” (p. 15). It is important that teachers respect the cultural norms of the community through their actions and perceptions of community members (Ming and Duke, 2006). For example, Garrett, Bellon-Harn, Torres-Rivera, Garret and Roberts (2003) suggest that culturally responsive schools must respect family or tribe-related absences for American Indian students.

Klotx (2006) argues that schools need to ensure that communications from the school are available in languages that reflect the languages spoken by parents. For example, principals could hire parent liaisons or a staff member who speaks the language of a student group and who understand their cultural background to work with parents to bring them into the school (13). In addition, schools can make childcare available at

parent meetings, collaborate with parents and other community members and invite them to share their cultural knowledge with the school (p. 14).

Educational Models

Parent Partnership for Achieving Literacy

The Parent Partnership for Achieving Literacy (PAL) program was integrated into a Massachusetts urban school (Colombo, 2006, p. 315). PAL draws on the strengths of teachers and community members and offers professional development and community outreach programs. Parent coordinators are at the centre of the project. The parent coordinators work with university faculty members to develop culturally responsive literacy programs. In addition, they work with teachers and share their knowledge of classroom expectations with parents, as well as communicate on behalf of teachers who cannot speak the first language of parents. PAL also offers homework help four nights a week and English language classes in the evenings (p. 315). Colombo (2006) explains, “PAL professional development focused on helping teachers understand and capitalize on the strengths within the culturally and linguistically diverse families and rejected the notion that differences were deficits to be overcome” (p. 316).

Northwest Territories Teacher Induction Program

The Northwest Territories offers professional development to all first year teachers through the Teacher Induction Program (NWT Teacher Induction Program, 2007), which assists in developing culturally responsive teachers. This innovative program is organized around four phases. The pre-orientation is the first phase and occurs throughout the time of hiring until the new teacher arrives in the community where he or she will teach. During the first phase, the teacher is provided with information about his or her teaching assignment, curriculum and resources, the school, and historical and cultural information about the community, region, and territory. Teachers are also provided with an Induction Binder and a mentor who contacts the new teacher before she or he arrives at the school.

Phase Two, the Orientation, begins when the teacher arrives in the community and lasts until the end of the second month of teaching. At this time, teachers learn more about the school and community. In particular, teachers learn about the community’s cultures, languages, and regional Educational organizations. Teachers attend regional and mentor workshops, community and school activities, and receive professional information.

Systemic Sustained Supports is Phase Three of the Induction Program and lasts from August until June. In Phase Three teachers participate in a formal mentor program, new and beginning teacher communication networks, team planning/teaching. Teachers also have access to resource files, study groups, resource people, and master teacher

observations. During this phase teachers receive release time for mentorship teams, monthly newsletters, First Class Client resources and access to fellow new and beginning teachers, observations of fellow teachers and reviews of Mentorship plan in September and January

In Phase Four, Professional Development, teachers are offered opportunities to connect the theory studied in pre-service education courses with teaching experience and occurs periodically throughout the school year. Schools arrange for teachers to attend workshops, courses, on-line learning, committee work, staff meetings, research, and curriculum development.

The Teacher Induction website includes a section that prepares teachers to practice culture based education. According to the website, “Culture-based education is education, which reflects, validates and promotes the values, worldviews, and languages of the community's cultures.” (NWT Teacher Induction, 2007). To practice culture-based education, teachers are expected to incorporate the community culture into their teaching, use local materials and local human resources, and participate in the community and outside of the school.

In addition, teachers are expected to work in partnership with parents, challenge students to find and develop their individual strengths, and find mechanisms to incorporate cultures and languages throughout the school year. These expectations are adapted from the ANKN Guidelines for Teachers (1999). The website also includes a list of recommendations for teachers to practice culture-based education and a useful checklist of eleven questions.

Mother Earth Charter School

In August 2003 the first Indigenous charter school, Mother Earth's Children's Charter School (MECCS), opened in western Canada (Pearce, M., Crowe, C., Letendre, M., Letendre, C., & Baydala, L., 2005). In 2002, the school organizers submitted a charter school application to the government of Alberta and received notice of approval in May 2003. The school began with 146 students three months later and offered kindergarten to grade eight classes with the aim to expand to grade twelve. The student population primarily identifies as Cree, Nakota, and non-Aboriginal.

MECCS is a culturally responsive school in many ways. For example, at MECCS the land is the first classroom. Evaluation procedures correspond to the knowledge gained from the land. While test scores are important, and guides the MESSC project as mandated by the Alberta Learning Charter School Handbook, “The school, school board, and evaluation team members designed a visual narrative inquiry to attend directly to the experiences of students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, and Elders as these stories are lived out on the MECCS landscape” (Pearce, M. et al., 2005, p. 346).

Curriculum used at the school is also culturally responsive. The philosophy of the school is based on the medicine wheel and all teachings centre on respect for Mother Earth. Ceremonies such as smudging and prayer take place in every classroom. “The school program is seeped in the traditional values of family, extended, and community involvement in the development and education of each child” (Pearce, M. et al., 2005, p. 346). MECCS’s school calendar is also culturally responsive as the school year and days are longer “to allow for seasonal ceremonies that occur at times that do not necessarily fit into a regular school day” (p. 347). Second language classes are offered to all students and include Cree, Stoney, French and sign language.

Inclusive Planning to Support Aboriginal Education Workshop

Inclusive Planning to Support Aboriginal Education was a one day work shop put on by the River East Transcona School Division in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 2003. The workshop provided a handout to the participants that included a section to make notes on the following areas: Professional development, staffing, community connections, resources, data collection, school – initiated projects, and communication strategies. The school division encouraged the schools to apply for an Aboriginal Academic Achievement Grant that can be used for professional development, release time for staff, and materials. The grants are to be used to increase Aboriginal academic achievement, knowledge of Aboriginal heritage for students, action towards responsible citizenship, and Aboriginal cultural awareness. The proposals are expected to reflect the learning outcomes of the Social Studies curriculum. The workshop was designed to explore a model of partnerships, strategies to engage learners and community and make connections.

Forests for the Future



Several studies in the literature examine the Forest for the Future social studies and science curriculum project designed for high school students in the Tsimshian territory of British Columbia (Butler, 2004; Innas, 2004; Orłowski & Menzies, 2004). The Forests for the Future social studies curriculum focuses on four unit plans that incorporate Indigenous and western scientific knowledge to meet the ecological needs of the local community. Butler (2004) explains that Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) of Gitxaala Elders, “enhanced and expanded the science curriculum for several grade levels” (p. 35). The curriculum is based on knowledge gathered from interviews with community Elders and other local knowledge holders and meets the academic requirements set by the provincial government.

The Aboriginal Knowledge and Science Education Research Project

Snively and Williams (2006) highlight another science initiative designed to increase Aboriginal student achievement and positive learning outcomes in British Columbia. The

Aboriginal Knowledge and Science Education Research Project was developed by the Aboriginal Education Enhancements Branch of the Ministry of Education and the University of Victoria. One of the principal goals of the project is to provide a meaningful context that will enable curriculum developers at a later phase to develop culturally appropriate science curriculum materials and programs for Aboriginal students (p. 242 – 243). The program began in 2002 and is a six-year initiative.

Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative

The Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI) was established in 1995 as a ten-year project between the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the Alaska Federation of Natives, and the National Science Foundation (Barnhardt and Kawagley, 2005). AKRSI is a culturally responsive systemic initiative as it seeks to address the vast diversity of sixteen linguistic and cultural groups located throughout the state of Alaska. The initiative involves 176 schools and approximately 20, 000 students, the majority of which identify as Native Alaskan. Local knowledge and pedagogical practices are “integrated into all aspects of the education system” (p. 14).

Cowichan Aboriginal Education Improvement Agreement

The Aboriginal Education Improvement Agreement, one of four district agreements at the time, began in 2001 as an agreement between the Cowichan Valley School District, the British Columbia Ministry of Education, and the territory’s First Nations. The agreement promotes culturally responsive schools as it centers on building respectful relationships with First Nations and Métis through integrating cultural traditions and practices into schools (Cadwallader, 2004). Cadwallader, the school district’s Curriculum Coordinator explains, “Variables always come into the process and provide challenges to continual improvement. Imperative in meeting these challenges successfully is the groundwork that is done at the beginning, the relationships of trust and honesty, friendship and collaboration” (p. 101).

Indian Education for All

In 1999 the state of Montana passed Indian Education for All (IEFA), a law that mandates all schools become culturally responsive to American Indian students through three areas (p. 186, Starnes, Swaney, and Bull, 2006). First, IEFA stresses that Indian education should be offered to all students in Montana. The second area emphasizes the importance of representing the distinct and diverse twelve tribes in Montana. The last area is to ensure Indian education is culturally responsive, which the authors explain is difficult to do because of a lack of educational resources that represent Indian perspectives.

IEFA does not mandate specific standards for curriculum, instruction or programming but rather serves to enhance current teacher practices. To create guidelines for teachers to work towards, the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and tribal representatives worked together to develop Essential Understandings:

The Essential Understandings include seven broad topics that range from the straightforward need to know the reservations' names, histories, and locations, to a statement about the nature of history as a story told from the perspective of the teller, to the difficult and complex issues of Indian spirituality and the historical and contemporary impact of government policies on American Indians. They have also served as a basis for a series of social studies standards to be infused into existing instruction. (p. 186)

Transformative Education for Aboriginal Mathematics Learning

Transformative Education for Aboriginal Mathematics Learning (TEAM) began in 2006 and is a partnership between the Haida Gwaii Nation and School District, Nisga'a Nation and School District, the Vancouver School Board, and the University of British Columbia (Nicol, Archibald, Kelleher, & Brown, 2006). The partnership was developed to create culturally responsive mathematics curriculum for First Nations students. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal educators work with students, teachers, parents, and community members in TEAM to explore “ways of teaching that are culturally responsive—practices that honour student thinking and emotions, respect and build upon community values and views, and prepare students to be successful with mathematics in a range of contexts that open possibilities for future study or careers” (p. 1).

The “Choice” School



Riddle Buly and Ohana (2004) describe what they call a “choice” school, which was built on a reserve, developed for American Indian students who attend state-run public school. The school was designed for grade six to twelve students and aims to be culturally responsive to the community. The project was a collaborative effort that included a school designer (hired to develop programs with staff to meet the needs of the student body and district), university faculty, the Indian Education coordinator, the school counselor, principal and school district. The new school also hired three Indigenous teachers. The school provides culturally responsive curriculum and drew on the knowledge of cultural consultants such as “elders, officials of the tribe, language experts, and social services for the tribe” (p. 31).

However, Riddle Buly and Ohana, both university faculty members who worked on the project, explain that developing this curriculum was difficult. They say,

The changes in curriculum, structure, and cultural context constituted an immense logistical and intellectual challenge. In order to make it less

overwhelming, it was decided to focus on a few expeditions in the first year and expand them in following years. Expeditions were planned that centered on carving and cedar weaving, drum making, and an end-of-year feast. The school also planned classes in the tribal language, as well as other cultural art classes. (p. 31)

Conclusion

In summary, the literature suggests that numerous standards and guidelines are required for schools to become culturally responsive to the cultural context in which schools are situated. While several educational organizations aim to be culturally responsive to Aboriginal and American Indian students, few provide details in terms of how they propose to meet the standards identified in the literature. While the scope of this literature review is limited, it is clear that additional studies are required to determine the practices and processes required to develop the standards and guidelines of culturally responsive educational organizations. The findings of this study suggest that a comprehensive literature review that examines the Alaska Department of Education initiatives in greater detail would be useful to Saskatoon Public School's aim to develop culturally responsive schools for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students.



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