

Native Education Advisory Committee

Meeting No. 02/2005-2006

Red Rock Inn

Tuesday, February 28, 2006

Present: Cindy Fisher, Terry Ellwood, John Robart, Andy Graham, Bette Bartelett, Les Aylward, Kelly Angecone, Patti Pella, Xavier Thompson, Celine Belleau, Rachel Taggart

1.0 Welcome

The meeting began with a Smudge and a reading by Cindy on being open to new perspectives.

2.0 Purpose

Meeting of Regular First Nation Advisory Committee Meeting

3.0 Minutes

Minutes of Inaugural First Nation Advisory Committee Meeting of November 23, 2005 were reviewed and adopted.

4.0 Presentations

4.1 Andy Graham re NOEL Regional Project.

Our First Nation Advisory Committee was interested in the fast tracking of students and the impact on their post secondary education. Terry emphasized that the NOEL group is working with the Ministry to get focused funding for First Nations students, right now the funding is project based but the NOEL group is looking for regular/ongoing funding and partnerships between the Ministry and INAC. Andy shared very positive examples from around Northwestern Ontario that are having a positive impact for our First Nation students. Cindy is really interested in bringing these projects into Superior-Greenstone. John Robart will highlight the projects in our board.

4.2 SGDSB Learning to 18 Project

SGDSB gets about \$125 000 and is using it to run a "Later Literacy Program". The goal is to raise the comprehension level of students by at least two levels. One challenge has been to have the student complete the course and get credit for it. The schools have found ways to be creative that have resulted in students buying into the program and getting credit at the same time. SGDSB has added extra staffing in all of the high schools for Alternative Education which supports the Credit Recovery, Alternative Education and Later Literacy.

Over 50% of the students involved in these programs are First Nation Students. We are looking at setting up this program for all of our schools. We will be providing the Joyce McDonald training for 20 people to accomplish this goal which will allow for program expansion. One of the challenges we face in setting up programs in our board is the large geographical area and the numbers of students that are separated by distance. We are always open to ideas and looking for positive solutions to our challenges.

4.3 Seamless Transition Project

Cindy asked about the seamless transition project. She said that in some First Nations they had looked at the amount of tuition that would have been paid out to school boards through agreements and they advanced that through INAC. We need to look at the amount of money we pay in tuition and compare that with the success our students experience. Cindy is suggesting that maybe if the money was invested in the communities that schools could be set up to support their needs.

4.4 OSSLT Credit Accumulation

John distributed data to reflect First Nation Student achievement with regards to the OSSLT, Credit Accumulation for Grade 9 students in the past two school years. Bette suggested that we could use our small numbers to our advantage and bridge the distance between small communities with technology. John agreed and then pointed out that the hands-on aspect that has made some of these programs attractive to students is difficult to present through technology. He gave the example of a project in Sault Ste. Marie where 25 students are building a house and that is the type of project is more challenging in our area. We try to find solutions but one size does not fit all, we try to find programs to fit the students and bring out the expertise in our staff.

4.5 E-Learning

John highlighted “e-learning” and the opportunities it may provide. Bette encouraged us to keep looking at the opportunities because there are more and more available.

4.6 Webcasts

Patti shared information about Webcasts available through Curriculum.org and the fact that teachers are enjoying the opportunity to access professional development via technology.

4.7 Making a Difference in Student Lives

Terry pointed out that the purpose of these meetings is to make a difference in the lives of students and so John has provided the data to give us a picture of where we are right now. John outlined the data:

- Average number of credits for SGDSB students is 10.3
- Average number of SGDSB Tuition Agreement student credits is 8.15, unless they have a way to recover a credit along the way, they may not graduate
- We offer credit recovery in all of our High Schools which offers the student the opportunity to get two credits in one time slot so they can catch up, we have other solutions as well
- Average number of credits for all students this year is 3.64
- Average number of credits for SGDSB Tuition Agreement students is 2.7
- 37% of Tuition Agreement students successfully completed the OSSLT

Terry pointed out that BC has focused funding and has self identification. It is the graduation rate that we need to be looking at. John asked what type of data this group would like to look at and Terry reinforced this point.

Cindy asked “how many of us are aware of the credit recovery programs are available and which of our students are involved”

As First Nations, what type of support are we providing to ensure our students access these programs? She suggested that the First Nations meet with INAC and make a tour with Andy to see the projects that are happening. Cindy is wondering how we can establish these programs up in each community and build partnerships to sustain the programs.

First Nations want the following data made available:

- How are the students from our community doing?
- Instead of Sylvan, can we use the money to provide programs in our schools?

4.8 Student Achievement Team

Patti gave a presentation about the Student Achievement Team. The Student Achievement Team is currently taking inventory of elementary schools in the Superior-Greenstone District School Board in terms of the Literacy and Numeracy strategies and the impact these strategies are having on student achievement. The Team is mirroring the process that occurred in the Margaret Twomey Public School, which was involved in the Ministry Turnaround project. The board felt a moral responsibility to extend the learning of this project to the other schools in the board and to our partner boards. The team is currently touring schools and collecting data and

will be compiling reports to share with school administrators. The data collected will be reflected in the board improvement plan and in individual school improvement plans. Pic River First Nation has expressed an interest in partnering with us in this process, we will report back to the First Nation Advisory Committee on the progress of this partnership and if other First Nations are interested in partnering we can explore this in the 2006-2007 school year.

Patti invited the First Nations to partner with SGDSB in professional development opportunities including the October 26/27 dates with Barbara Colorosso. Patti will forward more information as it becomes available.

5.0 *Voluntary Self-Declaration Policy*

Success rates of students can be monitored if we know who the students are. BC had a voluntary self identification in place and then their Ministry of Education would support those boards with additional funding for First Nations. The NOEL partner boards are working together to establish Voluntary Self Identification Policies so that they can get a clear picture of who are students are and how well we are serving them. Terry is looking for support from the First Nations Advisory Committee to bring this draft policy to our policy committee meeting.

The question was raised that if a person changed their mind about Self Identification could they de-identify? Yes they could. The information is for statistical purposes and individuals will not be identified. Cindy would like any reports that would come from this data to be brought to this committee.

Would the student have control over how much information they give out? Do they have control over how much they want to say? What they want to give it away? Terry reassured the group that the purpose of this policy would be statistical and would provide us with the ability to look at data specific to our Aboriginal students.

There was consensus of the committee to bring this policy forward to the policy committee. Rose-Marie Joannette will contact each of you to determine a list of important people that we need to contact before we bring this policy to the policy meeting.

Cindy asked about timelines: Next Meeting will be May 10, 2006 at the Red Rock Inn.

Terry suggested that the meetings could be hosted in any community.

Cindy is suggesting that we rename this committee to be called: Native Education Advisory Committee

6.0 *Discussion*

6.1 Common Issues

NOEL and Native Education Council are getting together for a post conference meeting. A project on the go is the seamless integration model and to lend support to the funding issues. Cindy is going to look at the data for the Pic River Elementary School so that they can do a funding comparison between First Nation schools and provincial schools. Cindy will contact everyone to determine what the common issues are.

6.2 Other

John: Positive about the direction and the communication.

Patti: Excited about the partnerships that are developing and the purposeful direction that is coming from these meetings.

Andy: Excited about the self identification policy and the information that will be gained to help students in this area.

Bette: Glad to be a part of the committee and she thinks it is really good to sit together and brainstorm and find ways for all students to succeed.

- Les: Impressed with the way we are moving, we need to proceed with our quest to make our native students more equal to our non native students.
- Xavier: Happy that the information is being shared, this is one of the few times that dialogue is happening and we are working towards common goals and that there is help out there, and that we are opening the doors for the kids.
- Kelly: Likes the ideas that are coming forward and clarified the Later Literacy program questions he had.
- Celine: Happy that we started this committee and she has noticed a drop of students applying for post secondary programs so they know there is an issue, they are really looking at helping their students. The self identification is really helping.
- Rachel: Happy to be here. The gap between native and non native students has gotten bigger and bigger in schools and in society and Rachel feels that this committee can begin to close the gap.
- Cindy: Appreciates the school board and she knows our hearts are in the right place and we need to start working together because we are only as strong as our weakest link. The honour of one is the honour of all. Just as we feel the sadness when we hear of the negative things, we need to feel the joy and the success together, we owe it for seven generations to come. We always need to keep this in mind. We are all working in the same direction. We need to make sure the generation that lifts our children up is strong. Cindy would like to see the meetings extended for the First Nation participants to discuss Terms of Reference.

7.0 *Future Agenda Items*

- Later Literacy with (John Robart)
- Oral Language Project (Patti Pella)
- Early Intervention Program and the Impact on Tuition Agreement Students