

Native Education Advisory Committee

Inaugural Meeting **Red Rock Inn, November 23, 2005**

Present: Cindy Fisher, Terry Ellwood, John Robart, Rachel Taggart, Patti Pella, Xavier Thompson, Kelly Angecombe

Regrets: Bette Bartlett, Andy Graham

The meeting began with a Smudge and a reading on "Perspectives" by Cindy Fisher.

1.0 Introductions

Rachel Taggart: Red Rock Band. Rachel is looking for cooperation to give our students what they need to succeed. She sees this committee as a place to have discussions about issues and to get ideas and solve problems together.

Patti Pella: Superintendent of Education is looking forward to regular communication and to sharing board initiatives with this committee for perspective and insight. She is excited at the potential this committee will have on impacting the lives of students.

Xavier Thomson: 3rd term as Band Counsellor and has found there to be a lack of communication between bands and sees this as an opportunity to come together and communicate.

Kelly Angecombe: Recently returned to the position of Education Counsellor. Has a good relationship with the school and could not figure out why there wasn't a committee sooner.

Cindy Fisher: Appointed by the Chiefs to sit as a First Nation Trustee on the Superior-Greenstone District School Board. She would like this committee to take a look at how that process will unfold so that representation is shared around the First Nation communities in the Superior-Greenstone School Board area. Cindy's question to the committee is "As First Nations how we support our kids?"

Terry Ellwood: Director of Education feels that First Nation kids of Canada have been disadvantaged by schools and has looked for ways throughout his whole career on how to change this. Over the last five years he feels there is a bit of light shining through and there are some success stories and what we have to do is to work together to make positive changes for students.

John Robart: Student Success Leader sees this committee as an opportunity to share the exciting projects and initiatives that are happening for students and help the success of all students JK-12. We have an open door policy and are looking to work together, so please feel free to call with your ideas for projects to help students.

2.0 Purpose of Meeting

Name of Committee: First Nation Advisory Committee

- Improvement in Achievement for all Aboriginal students
- SGDSB will report on the achievement of all Aboriginal students to this committee
- Communication between First Nations and schools in SGDSB are generally good but we can always improve

- Cindy described the success of having a First Nation Counsellor available to students in the High School; the Counsellor provides a secure base for students in the school. The Counsellor supports students and acts as a liaison between parents, students and school personnel. The Counsellor has helped students to work through difficult issues and find ways to succeed.
- Kelly and Xavier pointed out the difficulties of providing a Counsellor with very small numbers.

3.0 Presentations

Terry and Cindy gave an overview of the NOEL (Northern Ontario Educational Leaders) Aboriginal Education Forums and projects. The purpose of the Forums is to look at how First Nation students are being served and to find ways to better support them. One indicator of success is the EQAO data which shows that Aboriginal Student Achievement is below the board and provincial levels.

The next Forum will be held in January and all First Nations will be invited.

John Robart presented the Learning to 18 Projects: PASS (Pathway to Aboriginal Student Success Project activities include:

- Later Literacy Support- 1 to 1 support for struggling readers
- Credit Recovery
- Alternative Education

John highlighted the fact that all of these programs are monitored by student data.

Terry talked about NOEL Communication/Research Project

The Aboriginal Student Data Collection project showed that about 70% of students get all of their grade 9 credits but for Aboriginal students only 30% are getting all of their grade 9 credits.

Rainy River Board did a project on "Profile of a Successful Student" and found that home support/supervision and joining sports activities and feeling "at home" in the school had a big impact on graduation rate.

Terry talked about the impact of the Later Literacy Project on students, specifically on their self esteem because most kids were able to raise their reading level by 2 grades.

4.0 Voluntary Self-Declaration Policy

Three Boards in the NOEL group have already passed this policy, they include: Fort Frances-Rainy River DSB, Keewatin-Patricia DSB and Kenora Catholic DSB. The other 5 boards are considering this policy.

Cindy: Shared the experiences of boards who have gone through with this policy. She talked about the fact that Voluntary Self-Declaration would allow for a true picture of the number of First Nation students in our schools. There are potential funding dollars available when the data is collected for these students.

John gave the example that the data we are using is based on Tuition Agreement numbers, but that doesn't accurately reflect the number of ALL First Nation students in our schools.

Cindy suggested that we need to read over the policy and think about how this would affect the students in your area. Cindy highlight the fear others have had about racial profiling with this type of policy but is reassured that this hasn't happened so far.

Terry talked about the consultation process in the 3 boards in terms of the First Nation students living off reserve. Basically the concern was

- What are you going to use the information for...will it hurt or help? The reason we want to collect this is to present information to the government to show how the programs we are providing is impacting student achievement. NO PERSONAL information is used.

Feedback to the idea of the policy:

Rachel feels that the realistic population of Aboriginal students in her schools is 60% and she supports the concept of this policy.

Terry suggested that if this idea is supported, the goal would be to get it established so that when we start the school year next year we would get a sheet out to students so that they could self identify.

Terry met with the Deputy Minister last Friday and they want to funnel money because it is becoming very public that the needs of Aboriginal peoples have not been served.

Xavier: NSL in the Catholic School Board and he would like to have **NSL in the High School**. Terry suggested that this issue would be a good one for this committee to deal with.

Terry talked about PPM 110, the requirements are that if there are at least 15 students who want native language offered and if a teacher can be hired, boards can consider offering this program.

Rachel talked about the experience of having a student succeed in NSL in elementary and then not having it available at High School.

5.0 Discussion

Aboriginal Education Forum information will be coming out soon.
Some expenses will be covered.

Cindy talked about the expenses for this committee.
Terry suggested that there are not normally board budgets set aside for this.

6.0 Next Meeting

Will try to meet during the Aboriginal Education Forum at the end of the first day

Tuesday February 28, 2005

Agenda Items:

- Reporting on Student Achievement
- Review Self Identification Policy
- Native Language Courses in Schools