
AEEA Notes
Wednesday, March 28, 2007
Kidston Elementary

“Together For the Children”

Next Meeting: April 26, 2007
Place: Fulton Secondary (2301 Fulton Road) - 545-1348

Attendees:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parents	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal Community Members	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal Advocates	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal CEAs
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SD22 Teachers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SD22 Admin	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SD22 Trustees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Community Members

Okanagan phrase for “Together **With** the Children”

Joolus Inalt Scecm’ala?

Cathy introduced Shirley Paul, and stated that because of respect for the OKIB language speakers, the submission is still under discussion and when one is agreed upon and discussed it will be respectfully submitted.

Ojibwe phrase:

Kuhkenuh Ahbenoojenyug Oonje

Spanish phrase:

Juntos Por Los Hijos

The group was asked to submit other language phrases for “together for the children”.

2 Groups were struck:

Group 1. 10 people were selected to review the document “Sharing Our Success – Ten Case Studies in Aboriginal Schooling”. They read the case studies and reported on areas of success sense of belonging, and achievement practices being employed in that school.

Their findings were as follows (as noted in the 10 Case Studies Overview):

- Strong leadership and governance structures, often with long tenure
- High expectations for students
- Focus on academic achievement and long-term success
- Secure and welcoming climates for children and families
- Respect for Aboriginal culture and traditions to make learning relevant
- Quality staff development
- Provision of a wide range of programs/supports for learning
- Highly effective governance structures
- Stable leadership
- Long-term planning
- Strategic alignment of available resources towards the goals they set marked these schools
- Principals at the school for some years
- High levels of trust were evident in these schools
- Special efforts to bring parents into the schools

- Foster trust relationships with parents and community to overcome the lingering multi-generational suspicion of schools
- A sense of community ownership of the schools
- Schools developed productive partnerships with local businesses, community service organizations and other agencies
- A holistic approach was evident
- Schools were proactive in addressing issues of attendance, behaviour and well-being, which are pre-conditions for learning
- Implemented restitution principals
- All schools challenged students to attempt higher levels of achievement
- Schools offered an impressive array of instrumental and extra-curricular programs – many culturally linked
- Teachers believed that each student had the potential to learn and to rise to the expected level of achievement
- Staff members demonstrated a dedication to improving the quality of teaching and learning through ongoing professional development and research
- The employment of up to 85% certified and highly qualified Aboriginal teachers from their own communities was a source of considerable pride at schools
- Aboriginal support staff – critical community liaison role – schools actively encouraged and supported their training
- Variety of tools to monitor student progress and program effectiveness
- Assessment data was utilized for student placements and programming and for strategic planning for improvement
- Transition success rates were tracked by the schools
- Maintaining academic program and culturally relevant learning experiences was well managed
- Each gave special importance to honoring and affirming students' pride in their identity
- Every school offered instruction in all classes in the Aboriginal language of the community
- Most used the local language to exchange greetings, and for ceremonial purposes or to supplement instruction
- In all cases, deep respect was shown towards the local Aboriginal culture and traditions
- Most offered cultural classes
- Importance of the traditions and culture affirmed by visible displays, special events, excursions, the use of local resource people, and the incorporation of cultural content into appropriate curriculum areas
- Special place of honour to the elders and the language/culture teachers, treasured as rich and scarce resources of local wisdom and knowledge
- Despite limitations of sufficient cultural and language teaching materials, schools illustrate the successful integration of local culture into instruction to build academic success, meaningful relevance, and a sense of identity and self-worth.

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SCHOOL	LOCATION	GRADES	SIZE	PERCENT ABORIGINAL	AUTHORITY
Alert Bay Elementary	Alert Bay, BC	K-7	74	76%	SD85, Vancouver Island North
Atikarneg School	Whitefish Lake First Nation Reserve, AB	K-12	345	100%	Whitefish Lake First Nation and Northland SD
Chalo Elementary	Fort Nelson First Nation Reserve, BC	Pk-7	129	100%	Fort Nelson First Nation
Elijah Smith Elementary	Whitehorse, YT	K-7	250	50%	Yukon Dept. of Education
Gift Lake	Gift Lake Metis Settlement, AB	PL-9	205	100%	Northland SD
Merritt Secondary	Merritt, BC	9-12	600	35%	SD58, Nicola-Similkameen
Peguis Central School	Peguis Reserve, MB	PL-12	915	100%	Peguis Band
Princess Alexandra Community School	Saskatoon, SK	PL-8	200	98%	Saskatoon SD
Reindeer Lake	Southend, SK	PL-12	400	95%	Saskatoon SD
Southeast Education Centre	Winnipeg, MB	9-12	140	100%	Southeast Tribal Council

Group 2. Brain-stormed "A Sense of Belonging". Each group was challenged to name something "physical" that a school/community/teacher/student would describe as creating a sense of belonging. Below are notes from each group's discussion.

2. Based on the 10 Case Studies ~ the groups were asked to compare what they had heard from the 10 Case Studies testimonials to what they had written.

Group 1

- Welcome – PAC still difficult
- Fun
- Feeling at home – schools open 7-5 every day, healthy, lodge, clubs, sports, intramurals, assemblies, affective leadership
- Respect – elders, language not becoming extinct, junior chief in council, full time job, vandalism reduced, parenting/teaching

- Ownership – pride, trust, assessment for learning, self-assessment
- Acknowledged – curriculum across the Board including trades, games in PE, celebrations
- Sense of belonging – when you walk into a school – meaningful to an Aboriginal child
- Freedom of expression
- Cultural display - Okanagan artifacts & maps, writing, photos, having adequate space, declaration of Okanagan signs, Cultural outdoor camps
- Talking circles
- Define “success” in own terms
- Post secondary education
- High graduation rate
- Aboriginal school within a school (e.g. Fulton)
- Aboriginal representation at all levels in SD – maintenance, bussing, teaching, admin, support staff, DPAC, PAC, school board
- Immersion schools – all native schools – K-12
- Communication between school and parents
- Listening skills
- Family & friends
- Sense of community – relationship building in any school; personality, personality, personality; attendance
- Safety – support systems, counselling
- Hot lunch
- Fruit & water in every classroom – also a snack program
- Identity as Okanagan – opportunity for leadership; comments in relation to successful schools
- First nations staff

Deleted: dy

Group 2

Physically

- Kids can call home (a lot) with “good news”
- Active participation – visible pride, extensive “attendance” systems – giving allowance or pizza for attending
- Lunch & breakfast programs & snack program
- Visible ‘Aboriginal’ staff in every school
- Inter-murals – i.e. sports, Battle of the Books, Extra-curricular activities
- 10 leadership groups
- Involved teachers (clubs)
- Committed staff & administration
- Smaller class sizes!
- Monthly “family meetings”

Emotionally

- Support systems – extensive “homework” check-in; extensive “attendance” check in system
- Connection to school – friends, peers, adults, parents, mentors/role models

- Students themselves as role models mentors
- “Special Programs” that connect kids – Big Buddies/Little Buddies; peer tutoring
- Cultural assemblies
- Volunteers
- Trust
- Clubs/activities – Lots for kids
- Culture to bring out connection for all children/students – a “special place” to showcase culture (i.e. APE cultural room, JWI Aboriginal Awareness Day); Grade 5 Social Studies, drumming groups, Aboriginal guest speakers
- Knowing ancestry - family tree, coat of arms, shield
- Staff continuity
- Students involved in decision-making

Spiritually

- Language taught at school
- Environmental responsibility/Stewardship – direct teaching through song, dance, drama, “community gardens”, “litter-less lunches”, recycling program, community cleanup

Mentally

- More Aboriginal content – SD22 “plan” to get these resources into every school, availability & dollars for resources, brought in by Aboriginal staff
- High expectations for achievement – extra support for kids
- Sense of acceptance

Group 3

Sense of belonging looks like:

- Participation – not just in class discussions and group work – should include drama, sports
- Comfortable with your surroundings and with your peers. Sense of acceptance.
- Visible native culture - display case, posters, artifacts, murals, activities, school events
- Integrated native curriculum from K-12 – ALL SUBJECTS!!
- Making meaningful contributions
- Aboriginal staff valued as part of the whole – not as add-on
- For Aboriginal parents to be comfortable as part of the school community, grad committees, PAC or as volunteers
- Respect for the Aboriginal culture & traditions
- Ownership
- Pride
- Trust
- Visible Aboriginal staff – all aspects – i.e. principals, teachers, support staff, bus drivers etc.
- A “room” specifically for Aboriginal students – having a couch, chairs, books, computers, crafts, quiet activities
- Groups – drumming, singing, dancing, legends etc.
- Parents involved
- Communication

- Creating a feeling of being welcome – anytime of day
- Trust & respect
- Language taught & spoken

Group 4

- Trust – listened to and heard; personal connections; friendships
- Shared purpose – giving & getting; common values & beliefs
- Common language – H.E.A.T., charge cards, common understanding of each other
- Culture – common history, common experiences, comfort levels, understanding, safety
- Community - Neighborhood, classroom, school, peers, church, sports clubs, family

DRAFT