

## Community-Based Teacher Education Program

### **Q: What is the *Community-Based Teacher Education Program*?**

A: The *Community-Based Teacher Education Program* is an initiative to increase the number of First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) teachers in the workforce. The initiative supports Alberta Education's Business Plan Goal 3 (Success for First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students). The program provides a tuition and cost-of-living subsidy for FNMI students to complete an education program to become teachers in northern Alberta school divisions.

### **Q: What is the goal of the *Community-Based Teacher Education Program*?**

A: The goal of this initiative is to increase the attraction and retention of FNMI teachers in northern Alberta communities. Research shows that FNMI student achievement increases when teachers understand the culture and language of FNMI students, and the community in which they live. Currently, there are few FNMI teachers working in Alberta schools.

### **Q: How will the *Community-Based Teacher Education Program* be funded?**

A: Alberta Education will provide \$4.5 million over four years to provide a cost-of-living subsidy for up to 40 students, including a group of 30 in Northland School Division and about 10 additional teacher education students from other Northern school divisions. A cost-sharing formula between Education and the school boards will provide program participants with 70% of their para-professional salary and benefits.

### **Q: Which organizations are involved in this initiative?**

A: Alberta Education, Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, Northland School Division, the University of Alberta and Northern Lakes College have all been involved in planning and implementing this teacher education program.

### **Q: Where will the program be located?**

A: In the first two years, participating students will be enrolled in Northern Lakes College or another acceptable university transfer program through community-based distance education, technology-mediated instruction and on-site satellite campus programming. Students who successfully complete the two-year university transfer programming will have the opportunity to transition into the University of Alberta's Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (ATEP) cohort or other acceptable teacher preparation institutions for years three and four of their teacher education program. The ATEP cohorts are scheduled for Wabasca and Grouard in 2011.

**Q: Why does this initiative focus only on northern Alberta?**

A: Research shows that northern Alberta faces the greatest demand for FNMI-trained teachers and faces the most significant challenges in annual teacher attrition.

**Q. How many individuals can access the program?**

A. The program will be available for 40 individuals — 30 FNMI candidates will be identified by Northlands School Division and 10 spots will be available by application from other northern school divisions.

**Q: Why does Northland School Division have access to 30 spots, while all other northern school divisions have to share only 10 spots?**

A: Northland School Division has historically been challenged to attract and retain educators due to its northern and geographically remote service areas. In addition, Northland School Division has the highest proportion of FNMI students compared to all other school divisions in the province. By focusing the program primarily on teacher candidates within Northland School Division, Education can assist in building and stabilizing the teacher workforce in this area.

**Q: Will there be more spots available next year for northern school divisions?**

A: No. The *Community-Based Teacher Education Program* is a pilot program that will begin in September 2009 and will end in 2013 resulting in its first a graduate class. The province may consider expansion of the program to other areas once an evaluation has been completed to determine the success of the pilot.

**Q: Who is eligible to receive support through the *Community-Based Teacher Education Program*?**

A: The program is currently available to applicants living in designated northern Alberta school divisions who are interested and prepared to enroll in a teacher education program. Northern school boards believe that many FNMI adults already working in the community (including teacher support professionals in schools) have the skill set to become excellent teachers who would remain committed to service in their local communities.

**Q: How can school divisions apply to participate in the *Community-Based Teacher Education Program*?**

A: Interested school superintendents or boards should forward the names of qualified candidates to Randy Clarke [randy.clarke@gov.ab.ca](mailto:randy.clarke@gov.ab.ca) or Dan Ferguson [dan.ferguson@gov.ab.ca](mailto:dan.ferguson@gov.ab.ca), Workforce Planning Branch, Alberta Education. Participants will be accepted into the program on a first-come, first-served basis.

**Q: How can individuals apply to participate in the program?**

A: FNMI individuals who are interested in the program should contact the school superintendent within their community. If individuals are approved for participation by the school board, they must apply directly to the university transfer program in their area for admission.

**Q: What are the education requirements for entry into this program?**

A: Students must meet the post-secondary enrolment requirements for the institution to which they apply.

**Q: Do individuals need to have FNMI ancestry to qualify for support?**

A: Preference will be given to FNMI individuals. Non-FNMI individuals who are interested in teaching FNMI students in northern schools may be accepted if there are not sufficient numbers of FNMI individuals to fill the available training spaces.

**Q: Will any funding assistance be provided to program participants for tuition and books?**

A: The cost-sharing subsidy provided by government and participating school boards will include reimbursement to the student for tuition, books, travel and other cost-of-living expenses.

**Q: Is there any obligation on the part of the program participant, in exchange for the supports provided by Education and the school division?**

A: Participants will enter into a four-year agreement with the school division, committing to provide at least four years of teaching service within the division's school setting.

**Q: How will this initiative be evaluated?**

A: The *Community-Based Teacher Education Program* is a pilot program that will be evaluated by Alberta Education and school divisions. The initial four-year group of students, beginning in the fall of 2009, will be monitored annually and evaluated before the conclusion of the four-year period. Alberta Education will evaluate the impact of this initiative on a number of fronts, including, but not limited to:

- number of adult participants in the program and the percentage of these students that demonstrate successful performance in each term of post-secondary study;
- increased retention rates of teachers and school administrators;
- parent and community satisfaction with the performance of the school and system in providing quality educational services to children;
- improved student attendance, reduced drop-out rates, and increased high school completion rates;
- improved academic performance of students;
- participation rates on provincial achievement tests and high school student results on diploma examinations; and
- annual report prepared by the school division, the overall success of the program and including an audited statement regarding the expenditure of program supports.

**Q: Who should school divisions contact for more information?**

A: School divisions should contact Randy Clarke, Director of the Education's Workforce Planning Branch, by phone at 780-644-3774 or by email at [randy.clarke@gov.ab.ca](mailto:randy.clarke@gov.ab.ca). You can also contact Dan Ferguson, Education Manager of the Workforce Planning Branch, at 780-422-4604 or by email at [dan.ferguson@gov.ab.ca](mailto:dan.ferguson@gov.ab.ca).