

FINAL REPORT NATIVE EDUCATION POLICY REVIEW TRIBAL CHIEFS INSTITUTE

1. INTRODUCTION

- In February 1999, Alberta Learning requested that Tribal Chiefs Institute enter into an agreement to assist the department in conducting a provincial Native Education Policy Review.
- The review would be conducted between April 1, 1999 – March 31, 2000.
- The contract was prepared by the Alberta Native Education Project but was not ready for signing until July 16th 1999.
- Originally, the review was to be limited to grades K-12, but was extended to include post-secondary institutions when the two education departments combined to form Alberta Learning.
- Due to the late signing of the contract, Tribal Chiefs Institute was not able to begin the review until mid-September, 1999.
- At the request of Alberta Learning, Tribal Chiefs Institute sub-contracted the policy review meetings which were to be conducted with the 8 Metis Settlements, to the Metis Settlement General Council.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

- To determine and define the role, responsibilities and jurisdiction of Alberta Learning in the education of Metis, First Nation, Inuit and other Aboriginal learners.
- To establish directions in legislation, policy and regulations in the delivery of programs and services to Metis, First Nation, Inuit and other Aboriginal learners.

Work To Be Done

- To conduct the review by holding meetings with all First Nation communities in Treaty #6 as well as with communities throughout Alberta, excluding the First Nation communities in Treaty #7 and Treaty #8.
- To conduct meetings with students, parents, school jurisdictions, Administrators, in provincial school systems and post-secondary institutions.
- To provide representation on the Alberta Learning Native Education Policy Review Advisory Committee.
- To submit two progress reports. (completed)
- To complete the review by February 2000 and submit the final report by March 31, 2000.

2. TRIBAL CHIEFS INSTITUTE OF NORTHEASTERN ALBERTA

Our Vision

Our members will retain their culture and language and appreciate their contributions to society;
Our members will be professionals at all levels work and at the same time retain their cultural identity;
Our members will be honest, kind, sharing and determined to do the best they can;
Our members will work in harmony with everyone in this country;
Our members will ensure that our Treaties are honored and maintained.

Our Mission (Our purpose)

Tribal Chiefs Institute will work in partnership with the member First Nations, private industry, and each level of government to ensure that all development will be of high quality The focus is to empower all members so that they are able to make choices in their lives that reflect the vision of their communities. Furthermore, the Institute will strive for excellence in all areas of educational development, including retention of language and culture, so those members will take pride in their heritage.

Our Guiding Principles

- Collaboration .We believe we can work together;
- Consensus .We know we can succeed;
- No Fault .We do not blame.

Our People/Places

- Tribal Chiefs Institute of Northeastern Alberta is responsible directly to Tribal Chiefs Ventures, the Tribal Council comprised of the seven Cree communities in northeastern Alberta;
- Tribal Chiefs Institute has a mandate to work in partnership with the following:
First Nation communities represented by Tribal Chiefs Ventures;
- First Nation communities in Treaty #6 (17 communities) All levels of government, both provincial and federal.

Rationale for Involvement

The overall mandate for Tribal Chiefs Institute is to work in partnership with First Nation communities, federal and provincial governments, provincial school boards and agencies for the betterment of First Nation members in education and related areas.

Tribal Chiefs Institute has, on numerous occasions, worked in partnership with Alberta Learning in the development of learning resources for the Cree language and Social Studies curriculum. Given that

the current Native Education Policy is almost 15 years old, and that many changes have taken place with Native people over that period, a review of existing and new policy is essential.

3. IDENTIFICATION OF LEARNING NEEDS

What is working?

- Alberta Learning's policy to work in partnership with First Nations in the development of Learning resources.
- The change in assigning copyright to Metis and First Nation groups developing learning resources.
- Alberta Learning's emerging practice to consult with First Nation people on current curriculum initiatives, including those of Western Protocol.
- The legislation of the *Northland School Act* which gives First Nation and Metis people the right to be represented on a provincial school board and giving them decision-making powers.
- The Native Liaison worker program that is funded under the Native Education Grants. This program provides First Nation and Metis children with an advocate in the school. It has also helped to improve student attendance and increase parent involvement.
- Until 1993, regulation for provincial school boards accessing Native Education Grants to establish Native Parent Councils. This gave First Nation and Metis parents some input into the kind of local projects would be beneficial to their children. The regulation was removed in 1993 when the government Block-Funded grants to school jurisdictions.
- Increased delivery of programs by post-secondary institutions to communities situated in close proximity to the institution e.g. Keyano College delivers programs in the communities of Anzac, Janvier, and Ft. Chipewyan.

What is not working?

- Recent changes to the Native Education Project. When the project operated as a unit there was much better coordination of activities including in-service, curriculum and learning resources development, monitoring of local projects etc. The project was also an excellent vehicle to advocate on behalf of Aboriginal people on issues they faced with Alberta Learning and school jurisdictions.
- First Nation students are still achieving far below the provincial average on Provincial Achievement Tests.
- Parent involvement in the education of their children has improved, but is still below acceptable standards.
- Racism is still an everyday fact of life that First Nation and Metis students have to face.
- Teachers are ill prepared to teach First Nation and Metis children.
- Lack of language resources in Cree, and none in Dene.
- The process of negotiating tuition agreements with provincial school jurisdictions without adequate provincial policy, legislation and regulation.

- The lack of commitment by schools to keep First Nation and Metis students in school beyond the September 30th student count.
- The increasing numbers of First Nation and Metis students that are identified as special education students.
- Dropout rates are high.
- Inadequate financial assistance for post-secondary students, especially those of Metis ancestry.

Major Barriers Preventing Successful Learner Outcomes

- Low socio-economic standards.
- Lack of job opportunities in many of the Northern communities.
- Low rate of parental involvement.
- High illiteracy rates.
- Lack of appropriate role models in school settings.
- Few teachers of Metis Ancestry
- Insufficient funding for support services e.g. Metis Liaison Workers and councilors.
- Language difficulties for students whose first language may not be English.

Areas That Need To Be Addressed

- **Decision making and consultation:** To provide opportunities for Metis people to enhance their involvement in decision-making relative to the education of their children at the provincial, school board, school level.
- **Reducing dropout rates:** To provide the necessary programs and support services to school boards and schools designed to assist students to stay in school.
- **Delivery of programs:** To improve the delivery of programs and services by increasing the number of Metis teachers and paraprofessionals, and to improve the quality of instruction by providing pre-service and in-service of school personnel.
- **Improving curriculum content:** To provide all students the opportunity to study about Metis people in all subject areas
- **Increasing Post-Secondary Enrollments:** To provide those First Nation and Metis students that are not eligible to receive financial support from other levels of government, with sufficient bursaries and scholarships in order for them to go to school.
- **Improving the Tuition Agreement Process:** Providing adequate legislation and regulations to have First Nation representation on school boards and school councils.

Vision of Education by First Nation Leaders and Parents

- Education should prepare students to gain the skills needed for successful living and to contribute to community, province and country.
- Education should reinforce the student's cultural identity
- Education should promote and support life-long learning in addition to the academic areas of study
- Education should prepare all people to live in harmony
- Education should be made more relevant to First Nation students in order for students to experience success within the educational system.

ACHIEVING OUTCOMES/ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS **GRADES K -12**

4.0 TO IMPROVE FIRST NATION, METIS AND INUIT SUCCESS IN ECS TO GRADE 12. ISSUE(S) IDENTIFICATION RECOMMENDATION(S)

4.1 Jurisdiction & Responsibility

The Government of Alberta and Canada must continue to honor, respect and recognize that jurisdiction for First Nations education is a federal responsibility and control of First Nations Education on reserves lies with First Nation governments and/or the Government of Canada.

Rationale

First Nation education is an Aboriginal and treaty right. Education for First Nations is also an inherent right and must be respected. The "Indian Act" places education of treaty First Nation students under the jurisdiction of the federal government and/or First Nation governments.

4.2 Funding Responsibilities

Funding of First Nation schools should remain the responsibility of the federal government.

Rationale

First Nation education is a treaty right and the federal government is obligated to fund it..

The provincial government in partnership with First Nation governments should negotiate with the Government of Canada to ensure that the federal government assume responsibility for funding Treaty First Nation student living off-reserve and attend provincial schools.

Rationale

Treaty First Nation students retain their treaty status whether they live on or off-reserve. It has been the practice of the federal government not to provide funding to support First Nation students living off-reserve attending provincial schools. This practice by the federal government has been a way of off-loading responsibility for the education of First Nation students on to the province.

First Nation students living off-reserve are still considered as

Band members. However, once the student moves off the reserve, funding is discontinued and so are many benefits that First Nation schools have to offer to those students. Federal funding of off-reserve students through tuition agreements would assist students in retaining many of the benefits that they would lose (e.g. Books, supplies, etc.). It would also provide a vehicle for First Nation communities to ensure that their members would receive the best possible education in provincial schools.

4.3 Aboriginal Controlled Schools

4.3a On-Reserve Schools

The Government of Alberta should continue to recognize that First Nation governments have complete jurisdiction of education of their children in First Nation schools.

Rationale

Jurisdiction for control of education in First Nation schools falls under the “Indian Act”.

4.3b Off-Reserve Schools

Aboriginal schools established by provincial school jurisdictions to serve First Nation and Metis students should be jointly funded by the provincial and federal government on a pro-rated basis.

Rationale

A provincial Aboriginal school serving First Nation students should be considered as an extension of the reserve community for those First Nation students that wish to attend it. Also, a provincially operated school that meets the academic and cultural needs of First Nation students warrants federal funding, and provincial funding to support Metis and other Aboriginal students.

The Government of Alberta should enact enabling legislation to allow First Nation and Metis people to establish, control and operate a school for First Nation, Metis and other Aboriginal students in the major urban centers in Alberta and funded jointly by the provincial and federal governments

Rationale

The Government of Canada’s policy on Aboriginal Self Government provides the possibility for Aboriginal self government in urban centers. Should this become a reality, a school to serve First Nation and Metis students is not out of the question. It is also possible that through land claim agreements, Reserve Land could be established in urban centers. This has already happened in the city of Saskatoon, where the Saskatoon Tribal Council has Reserve Lands in that city.

4.4 Curriculum

4.4a Resources Center

The Government of Alberta in partnership with the federal government should fund and establish a central resource library of Aboriginal materials and cultural artifacts for and about First Nation, Metis and other Aboriginal people.

Rationale

For the past 160 years, resources for and about First Nation and Metis people and their cultures have been researched and developed by non-Aboriginal people. Furthermore, learning resources have not portrayed First Nation and Metis people in a positive light. The Decore Report, sponsored by Alberta Learning that evaluated the portrayal of Aboriginal people in approved learning resources, found that over 60 % of the resources did not portray First Nation and Metis people in a positive light. A resources center controlled and staffed by First Nation and Metis educators would be a positive step in developing resources for and about Aboriginal people from an Aboriginal perspective.

4.4b Programs of Studies

Alberta Learning should involve First Nation and Metis teachers on provincial curriculum review committees for all Programs of Studies.

Rationale

Historically, teachers of Aboriginal ancestry have not been involved in the review process of provincial curriculum. For the most part, curriculum review has been conducted by teachers who are not members of a visible minority, including Aboriginal people. This practice has somewhat changed in the last few years, largely due to the curriculum work initiated by Native Education Project. Aboriginal teachers have recently been involved in several Western Canadian Protocol initiatives, Aboriginal Studies 10,20,30 and in Native language curriculum development. Given the burgeoning Aboriginal population in provincial and First Nation schools, Aboriginal teachers should be involved in all provincial curriculum initiatives.

Alberta Learning should ensure that all curricula addresses the need for inclusion of Aboriginal culture with non-Aboriginal contemporary academics.

Curriculum units that portray First Nation and Metis people in a positive way should be available to all learners in all Alberta schools.

Rationale

There is a need to integrate and balance Aboriginal content with western academic curricula. The First Nation or Metis student who learns about his heritage will become proud of it. A child with a positive self-concept will stand a better chance to learn his lessons well. Non-Aboriginal learners will develop positive attitudes and understandings of Aboriginal people by studying the cultures of Aboriginal people.

4.4c Learning Resources

Alberta Learning should continue to work in partnership with First Nation and Metis people by providing funds to develop learning resources for and about Aboriginal people in all subject areas, including Aboriginal languages.

Rationale

Historically, non-Aboriginal authors have been responsible for developing learning resources for and about First Nation and

Metis people. In large measure, those resources did not portray the Aboriginal point of view, nor did they portray Aboriginal people in a positive light.

Alberta Learning is to be commended for its effort to correct this. The Native Education Project in partnership with First Nation and Metis people have developed a significant number of social studies and Aboriginal language resources that are written from the Aboriginal point of view. Alberta Learning should be extending this process to other subject areas.

Alberta Learning should continue its policy of transferring copyright to First Nation and Metis organizations that develop the learning resources.

Rationale

First Nation and Metis people hold the view that because it is their culture and language, that they should own copyright on all learning resources that they develop and publish. To them, it is a feeling of ownership.

4.4d Analyzing Resources

Alberta Learning should continue to conduct Tolerance and Understanding Audits and Native Content Analysis on learning resources that are being considered for authorization.

Alberta Learning should utilize teachers that represent First Nation and Metis people in the review of resources for and about Aboriginal people.

Rationale

On the basis of findings in the Native people in the Curriculum Survey, it is essential that a proper review and analysis be conducted on resources for and about Aboriginal people to ensure that they are portrayed in a positive and accurate manner.

Teachers of Aboriginal people representing those cultures should conduct the review of resources for and about First Nation and Metis people. Non-Native reviewers do so from a non-Aboriginal perspective. Alberta Learning should assume responsibility for the training of those teachers.

4.4e Aboriginal Languages

Alberta Learning should make Aboriginal language education a provincial priority in order to complement and support language preservation and retention efforts by First Nation and Metis communities. This should include:

- Developing Aboriginal Language and Culture Programs of Studies for all major language groups in the province.
- Developing appropriate learning resources to teach first or second-language instruction.
- Recognizing Aboriginal language competence for all First Nation and Metis language groups in Alberta.

- Involving Elders and other fluent speakers in language programs to enhance Aboriginal language fluency and acquisition.
- Encouraging and rewarding language teaching as a career path through certificated language programs at the post-secondary level.

Alberta Learning should continue to work in partnership with First Nation and Metis organizations in the development and publication of Aboriginal language learning resources.

Rationale

The retention and acquisition of the Aboriginal Mother tongue is one of the most pressing issues facing First Nation and Metis people. In some of the language groups, the Mother tongue is almost extinct. The waning of Aboriginal languages can be traced to historical government policies that forbade the use of the Mother tongue in Alberta's schools. First Nation and Metis people were made to feel that their language hindered their educational success rather than help it.

Unlike ethnic minorities in Alberta and Canada whose languages continue to exist in the countries they emigrated from, North American Indigenous people do not have that option. Once an Aboriginal language is lost, it will be lost forever.

There is a wealth of research to indicate that students coming to school not speaking and communicating properly in at least one language, do not do well in their studies. In many First Nation and Metis communities, children fall into this category. There is also evidence to suggest that those students that are able to speak their Mother Tongue well, usually have a good self concept about themselves and perform much better in school.

The Government of Alberta should provide the necessary legislation to allow for language immersion in First Nation and Metis community schools.

Rationale

French immersion schools are a reality in Alberta because Canada is viewed as a bilingual speaking country. Yet, the First people in this country are not able to enjoy the same benefits as those that immigrated to Canada from France. This is not fair treatment of First Nation people.

Alberta Learning should provide language instructional grants to school jurisdictions to offer instruction in an Aboriginal language.

Rationale

Currently, only some school jurisdictions offer instruction in an Aboriginal language that their students speak. School jurisdictions report that one of the reasons for not offering Aboriginal language instruction is because costs of hiring an instructor has to come from general revenues. In most cases, costs of language instruction are covered by grants received through the Native Education Grant Fund. However, Native Education Grants are insufficient to

meet the many different needs of Aboriginal students. The result has been that Native language instruction is at best, offered on a limited basis.

4.5 Teachers and instruction

4.5a In-service

Alberta Learning and provincial school jurisdiction should implement a comprehensive in-service initiative for teachers by offering staff training on Aboriginal and cross-cultural sensitivity, communications and instructional strategies.

Rationale

Teachers graduating from Teacher Education Programs have little or no knowledge of First Nation and Metis people and their cultures. Other than the University of Lethbridge, teacher education B.Ed. degree programs do not require mandatory courses in Aboriginal studies. Many first year teachers end up teaching in Northland School Division or First Nation schools. Those teachers just not have the knowledge or understanding of Aboriginal people to do an adequate job of teaching Aboriginal children.

4.5b Aboriginal Education Consortium

The Government of Alberta should consider establishing an Aboriginal Education Consortium that would serve provincial school jurisdictions and First Nation schools in providing in-service workshops to teachers teaching First Nation and Metis students.

Rationale

Teacher awareness and understanding is a major concern of parents that send their children to provincial and First Nation schools. Parents indicate that the lack of understanding leads to intolerance and often time's discrimination. Alberta Learning in partnership with the First Nations, the Metis Nation and the Alberta Teacher's Association could implement an in-service program that would parallel the existing Regional Education Consortia established by Alberta Education to meet local in-service needs.

4.5c Certification of Teachers

The Governments of Alberta and Canada should ensure that all teachers teaching in First Nation schools have the opportunity to be evaluated and recommended for Permanent Certification.

Rationale

Alberta Learning has given the responsibility of recommending teachers for permanent certification to Directors of First Nation Education Authorities, provided that the individual meets provincial qualifications. For those First Nation Education Directors that cannot meet the provincial qualifications, are permitted to utilize approved signing authorities from the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada or by hiring an approved signing authority on a contractual basis. There have been occasions where First Nation Education Authorities have not been able to provide teachers with evaluation services. In

those cases, the provincial and federal government has an ethical and moral obligation to ensure that every teacher can access evaluation services for permanent certification.

4.6 Funding-Support Services

4.6a Indian and Northern

The Government of Alberta should negotiate an agreement with the Government of Canada to provide complimentary funding to First Nation schools to support provincially initiated support programs for provincial schools.

Rationale

There have been many instances where the Government of Alberta has introduced student support programs for provincial schools and provides the necessary funds to support those programs. Most often, First Nation schools are excluded from those programs. The rationale is that funding of First Nation schools is a federal government responsibility. In most cases, the federal government does not provide supplementary funding to its schools for programs that the province supports. The result is that First Nation students that are in need of the program cannot access it.

The Government of Alberta should assume responsibility for funding First Nation schools for provincially initiated complimentary programs, and recover costs from the federal government.

Rationale

All First Nation students are citizens of the Province of Alberta, including those that attend First Nation schools. Both the provincial and federal government has a responsibility to ensure that all Alberta students have access to equitable programs and services. Due to historical reasons, First Nation students are under the jurisdiction of the federal government, but should not be penalized for something beyond their control.

4.6b Native Education Grants

Alberta Learning should provide Native Education Grants to all provincial school jurisdictions serving First Nation and Metis students.

Rationale

Currently, not all school jurisdictions serving Aboriginal students receive Native Education Grants for local programs and services. This is due to the inadequate amount of funds that were originally allocated to the program. In 1987, the total grants amounted to four million dollars, not nearly enough to meet the funding requirements for all school jurisdictions that were eligible to receive the grants. Grants were distributed on a first come-first served basis. Although there have been modest increases in the grants, it has not been nearly enough to meet the needs of all school jurisdictions.

Alberta Learning should provide sufficient grant monies to school jurisdictions in order that reasonable local Native education programs and services can be implemented to meet local needs.

Rationale

The current amount of Native Education Grants is insufficient. Some jurisdictions serving a significant Aboriginal student enrollment receive only a \$30,000 grant. This can barely pay the salary of one paraprofessional staff let alone any cultural programming. As a result, some local Native education projects have minimal impact on student achievement and success.

4.6c Home-School Liaison

Alberta Learning and school jurisdictions should continue and expand the Aboriginal Liaison Worker Program.

Rationale

The Liaison student worker service funded through Native Education grants has had phenomenal success. Parents, school administrators and teachers indicate that the program has improved student attendance, student behavior and parental involvement. Most school jurisdictions report that the current service that is provided with the limited funding cannot meet student and parental needs.

Alberta Learning in partnership with school jurisdictions should ensure that liaison workers receive adequate monetary compensation for the work that they perform.

Rationale

School jurisdictions have not addressed the problem of pay equity for work performed by liaison workers. In large measure, it is because Native Education grants are inadequate. Liaison workers report that many work for minimum wage and in their view this is not acceptable. Some liaison workers indicated that they feel that they are being discriminated against.

4.6d School counselors/ Elder in Residence

School jurisdictions and First Nation schools should provide students with adequate counseling and guidance to prepare them to enter the workforce and to prepare them to live in multicultural society.

School jurisdictions should be encouraged to employ counselors of Aboriginal ancestry to work with students that are experiencing difficulties in school as a result of problems at home.

Rationale

Most school staff that Aboriginal students encounter are non-Aboriginal. Aboriginal students tend to be shy and are reluctant to share some of their more serious problems with non-Aboriginal staff members. A counselor that is Aboriginal would be much better accepted by student and parent.

School jurisdictions should implement an “Elder in Residence” program to counsel students, especially in those schools that do not have a qualified counselor on staff.

Rationale

School jurisdictions should implement an Elder in Residence program to counsel students, especially in those schools that do not have a qualified staff member on staff of.

4.6e Other Role Models

School jurisdictions should provide as many role models for First Nation and Metis students as possible, including:

- Teachers;
- Teacher Aides;
- Aboriginal Language instructors;
- Liaison workers;
- Successful Aboriginal people as speakers.

Rationale

All children need successful role models. Non-Aboriginal children youth have many role models including teachers, parents and even movie stars. Aboriginal youth do not have the extent of role models that other children may have. Programs to bring in role models for all youth should be part of the school program.

4.7 Early Intervention

Alberta Learning, in partnership with Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada, should provide funding to school jurisdictions and First Nation schools for early intervention programs in the three R's.

Rationale

It is well documented that First Nation and Metis students do not fare well in basic skills acquisition as compared to non-Aboriginal students. One of the reasons is that many students are not well rounded in the English language. A second reason is that their growing up experience is very different from their non-Aboriginal counterpart. Early intervention designed to improve basic skills acquisition, will improve student achievement and success.

4.8 Special Education

Alberta Learning should extend its special education services to First Nation schools, relative to student assessment, program development and implementation.

Rationale

The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada is not able to provide services in special education, nor in any other program area. First Nations have been forced to either buy the service from private contractors or not provide the service. Due to insufficient funds allocated to the special education area, many schools cannot afford to buy consultative services. In order that First Nation students have access to equitable special education services, it is essential that Alberta Learning provide consultation services to First Nation schools.

Alberta Education should negotiate with Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada, to ensure that the federal government keeps pace with the province in funding special education initiatives.

Rationale

Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada has not been keeping pace with that of the provincial government in funding high needs students attending First Nation schools. This is a very critical issue. First Nation students, in general, are having difficulty in the schooling process. Without adequate special education programming, First Nation students in need of special education assistance don't stand much chance in succeeding in school.

4.9 Provincial Achievement Tests

The writing of Provincial Achievement Tests in Grades 3,6&9 should continue to be left to the discretion of First Nation schools.

Rationale

First Nation schools have the right to decide on which provincial educational initiatives they wish to participate in. Some First Nation people view the Achievement Tests as inadequate to meet the cultural differences of First Nation students. This is especially so with students from communities whose first language is the Mother tongue.

Alberta Learning should work with First Nation schools that choose to do so, to improve student performance on Provincial Achievement Tests.

Rationale

Most First Nation students now allow their students to participate in the writing of the Provincial Achievement Tests. Records indicate that, although many of the schools allow their students to write the test, many choose not to do so. It is likely that the reason for this is because students already know they will do poorly on them. Assisting First Nation schools to improve student performance on Provincial Achievement Tests will likely enhance student participation in writing them.

4.10 Hot Lunch Program

The Government of Alberta should extend the Hot Lunch Program to other schools in communities that educate First Nation and Metis students.

Rationale

Many Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children living in communities experiencing social problems and a poor economic base come to school undernourished. It is difficult, if not impossible, for these children to do well in school. The provincial government should expand the current Hot Lunch Program that is being administered by Northland School Division, but was formerly administered by Alberta Learning.

5.0 ACCOUNTABILITY

5.1a Alberta Learning

Alberta Learning should require provincial school boards serving First Nation and Metis students, to develop and implement a comprehensive Aboriginal education strategy in their Three-Year

Business Plans.

5.1b School Jurisdictions

School jurisdictions should develop and implement an Aboriginal education strategy in partnership with Native parents, and school staffs. The strategy should include:

- Goals and objectives for the school year.
- Hiring of Aboriginal staff.
- Hiring of Aboriginal people in leadership roles.
- Involvement of Elders in the teaching of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.
- Language classes in Aboriginal languages.
- Parent and community involvement mechanisms.
- Aboriginal content in all subject areas.
- Achievement tests and student graduation.
- Programs that combat stereotyping, racism and prejudice.
- Accountability indicators.
- Outcomes

Rationale

Historically, provincial school systems have not done a good job in educating First Nation and Metis students. There are many reasons for this, but one of the major reasons is that school jurisdictions target the general school population with regard to student achievement and success. There has been a lack of focus and attention and a systematic plan to deal with achievement issues faced by students of different cultural backgrounds that are having difficulty adjusting to an education designed for middle class non-Aboriginal students.

The Three-Year Business Plan introduced by the Government of Alberta has made significant changes to the way school jurisdictions do business. The Three-Year Business Plan is outcomes-based and forces school jurisdictions to produce results. There is every indication that since the introduction of the Business Plan, there has been significant growth in the general student population, as it pertains to achievement. It is suggested that school jurisdictions be required to pay special attention to meeting the needs of Aboriginal students, parents and community in their Business Plans.

6.0 TO RECOGNIZE AND INCREASE PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF FIRST NATION, METIS AND INUIT LEARNERS

6.1 Parents on councils

6.1a Aboriginal Parent Councils

Alberta Learning should mandate that those school jurisdictions receiving Native Education Grants, establish Aboriginal Parent Advisory Councils to assist the jurisdiction in determining the nature of programs and services best for their children.

Rationale

When Native Education grants were first introduced in 1987.

school jurisdictions receiving the grant were required to establish a Native Parent Councils to assist the school jurisdiction and schools in determining how money should best be spent. Jurisdictions were required to have the Parent Council until 1993, at which time earmarking of the grant was removed and replaced by Block Funding. Most jurisdictions let the Parent Advisory Councils die. Although, several jurisdictions continued with the Parent Council, the practice of having a Council never did really recover. The Native Parent Council was a most effective way to involve parents in the education of their children. It also involved parents in the decision-making process as to the kinds of programs or services were best for their children.

6.2b School Councils

Alberta Education should mandate that provincial schools include First Nation and Metis parents on School Councils.

Rationale

First Nation and Metis parents tend to be very reserved in their dealings with the education system. It is highly unlikely that many of these parents would ask to be involved on a School Council. It is more likely that they would wait until asked. It is a responsibility that the school jurisdiction should assume, if it is to be responsive to community needs.

6.2c Other Avenues of Involvement

Schools should involve parents in volunteer programs and in-class presentations.

Parents should be involved in organizing events and cultural themes.

Schools should consider alternate methods for parent-teacher interviews.

School jurisdictions and schools should hold regular meetings and workshops for Aboriginal parents in order to keep them abreast of what is happening in the school.

6.3 Community Schools

Alberta Learning should provide additional resources to schools that serve predominantly Aboriginal students, in order to establish the Community School.

Rationale

The Community School concept is an excellent vehicle to involve parents and the rest of the community in the education of children. The success of the community school was demonstrated in the Community School program funded by Alberta Education in the 1970's and 1980's but was discontinued due to government cut-backs in education.

6.4 Community Literacy

6.4a Role of Governments

The Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada

should respectively support and fund community literacy programs for parents and other community members in order to increase literacy rates, and to raise the awareness of the importance of education with parents.

6.4b Integrated Services

Governments and government departments should recognize that literacy must be accountable and responsive to community needs and be developed as an integral component of a larger community development process.

Literacy program funding and delivery should involve all provincial and or federal government departments that have responsibility for improving community living standards.

Basic literacy has to be shifted away from volunteerism, and to establish it as an integral factor of Adult Education and fund it without discrimination.

Literacy programs should involve First Nation and Metis people in the development and implementation of the programs in their respective communities.

Literacy programs should be centered in provincial schools and post-secondary institutions in the community.

Rationale

Improving literacy is not the responsibility of any one department in the provincial and or federal government. The problem of illiteracy cuts across and affects many departments including Community Development, Social Services and Alberta Learning. Because the dropout rates are so high in Aboriginal communities, the problem has not improved to any significant degree. As dropouts become parents, the problem continues. It is time that governments recognize that band-aide solutions are not be successful.

7.0 TO FOSTER A GREATER APPRECIATION AND UNDERSTANDING BY ALL ALBERTANS OF FIRST NATION, METIS AND INUIT PEOPLE.

7.1 Mandatory Studies

Alberta Learning should provide opportunities for all students to study First Nation and Metis people and their cultures in all Programs of Studies.

Alberta Learning should complete the development of the Aboriginal Studies 10, 20, 30 Program of Studies.

Aboriginal Studies 10 should be a mandatory course for all students in all Alberta schools.

Rationale

The current Programs of Studies provide few opportunities for students to learn about First Nation, Metis and Inuit people. In those instances where curriculum provides that opportunity, it is

most often left to the discretion of the teacher whether the topic will be dealt with. The study of Aboriginal people is usually incidental to the overall unit of study. Given the serious problem of racism and lack of understanding of Aboriginal people, Alberta learning should take steps to rectify this through increased opportunities for all students to study Aboriginal people and their cultures.

7.2 Developing Learning Resources

Alberta Learning should continue its policy to fund and work in partnership with First Nation and Metis organizations to develop and publish learning resources for and about Aboriginal people for use by all students in all Alberta schools.

Alberta Learning should ensure that appropriate learning resources for and about Aboriginal people are developed for all curriculum subject areas, including Aboriginal languages.

Rationale

First Nation and Metis children attend provincial schools and it should be the responsibility of the provincial government to provide all students with appropriate learning resources for and about Aboriginal people. Historically, content presented in learning resources about Aboriginal people were developed by non-Aboriginal people. Many of those resources were less than adequate in their portrayal of Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people should become and integral part of the learning resource development process.

Alberta Learning should identify, compile and publish a bibliography of learning resources that have been evaluated to ensure that Metis and First Nation people are adequately portrayed.

Rationale

There is a problem with school libraries in this province. Many resources found in libraries are out-dated by many years. These materials do little to provide a positive image of First Nation and Metis people. Schools should be encouraged to remove them from their libraries and replace them with current materials.

7.3 In-service

The Governments of Alberta and Canada should provide the necessary funding to school jurisdictions and First Nation schools respectively, in order to keep teachers abreast of curriculum changes and new initiatives for and about First Nation and Metis people and their cultures, lifestyles, learning styles and teaching styles.

Rationale

It is recognized that Alberta Learning funds 6 Regional Consortia to provide teacher in-service training for provincial school jurisdictions. One of the problems is that the existing Consortia are not necessarily advocates of Native education. There has to be some serious and systematic advocacy on behalf of Aboriginal people to meet in-service needs of teachers.

8.0 TO STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FIRST NATION AND METIS PEOPLE, SCHOOL JURISDICTIONS, ALBERTA LEARNING AND THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

8.1 Aboriginal Education Advocacy

The Government of Alberta should establish an 'Aboriginal Education Advocates Office' whose function would be to assist First Nation and Metis people in resolving issues they encounter in grades K-12 and post-secondary schools.

The Aboriginal Advocates Office should be established as an independent unit, and not subject to the same regulatory functions of Alberta Education.

Rationale

First Nation and Metis people report that often, their people do not have the knowledge, skills and expertise to deal with officials representing school jurisdictions, schools, Alberta Learning, Indian and Northern Affairs and other government departments. Since 1985, the Native Education Project assumed the advocacy role. To some extent the Project still retains that role, but the focus and nature of its mandate has changed.

Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people that attended the many community meetings indicated that since the Native Education Project de-centralized its functions to other branches of Alberta learning, there has been less contact and interaction by Aboriginal people with Alberta Education. The Office of the Advocate should assume a pro-active approach in working with Aboriginal people school jurisdictions and government departments.

8.2 Provincial Aboriginal Steering Committee

Alberta Learning should establish an Aboriginal Steering Committee that would provide the vehicle that Alberta Learning could use to consult with First Nation and Metis people on matters of policy, programs and services in Aboriginal Education.

Rationale

The current Native Education Policy states that Aboriginal people should be consulted on matters affecting the education of their children. Alberta Learning and school jurisdictions have not always practiced this policy. The department should involve First Nation and Metis people in the education system through a systematic consultation process. There has been a history of government decision-making on behalf of Aboriginal people, and results have been disastrous. Such unilateral decision-making leads to mistrust of government intentions.

8.3 Northland School Division #61

The Government of Alberta should continue to support the *Northland Act*, which gives communities within the Northland School Division the opportunity to elect First Nation and Metis people to local school boards.

The Government of Alberta should leave the Northland School Division #61 as is or until such time those communities and the Government of Alberta can find a mutually acceptable alternative.

Rationale

Tribal Chiefs Institute held two meetings with the Corporate Board of the Northland School Division with regard to the needs of the communities served by the Northland School Division. Without question, members of the Northland School Division Corporate Board expressed concern that the Government of Alberta has on several occasions attempted to restructure and/or eliminate the Northland Act and the School Division. The board indicated that a unilateral government decision to do this would be unacceptable to the First Nation and Metis communities within Northland School Division.

Members of the Board indicated that several communities did send their children to neighboring school jurisdictions but that kind of arrangement was less than satisfactory.

8.4 Tuition Agreements

8.4a Representation on School Board

Section 46 of the *School Act* should be amended to make it easier for First Nation representation on provincial school boards.

Rationale

Section 46 of the School Act does allow for First Nation representation on provincial school boards. However, the decision to allow such representation rests with the school board. First Nations can only request representation on the school board. Only three school boards have First Nation representation. Other boards just simply refuse to take advantage of Section 46. This has created ill will between many school boards and First Nations. First Nation people perceive this as being unjustly treated in spite of the massive tuition dollars that flow into school jurisdiction coffers. For example, one school jurisdiction receives over \$4.5 million each year through tuition payments; yet, the school board refuses to agree to First Nation representation on the board.

8.4b Parent/Student Rights

First Nation students living in First Nation communities should have the right to be educated in a provincial school system if their parents so choose, and that a provincial school system cannot refuse to provide that service subject to appropriate funding arrangements.

Rationale

Currently, provincial schools jurisdictions have the right to refuse to educate First Nation living on reserves. First Nation people indicate that this policy discriminates against First Nation children who are citizens of the Province of Alberta..

8.4c Reciprocal Tuition Agreements

The reciprocal tuition regulation should be amended to ensure that all non-treaty students attending First Nation schools are eligible to receive provincial instructional grants from neighboring school jurisdictions.

Rationale

The current regulation permits school jurisdictions to collect instructional grants on behalf of non-treaty students attending First Nation schools and pass the grants to First Nation education authorities. However, only two or three school jurisdictions have agreed to participate in this venture with First Nations.

8.5 Responsibility

Primary responsibility for negotiating tuition agreements should remain with school jurisdictions and First Nation education authorities.

First Nation education authorities and school jurisdictions should be able to request assistance from Alberta Learning and Indian Affairs and Northern Development to facilitate the resolution of tuition agreement negotiations that are deadlocked.

Rationale

Alberta Learning has taken a hands-off approach with tuition agreement negotiations between school jurisdictions and First Nation education authorities. The department's policy has been to leave negotiations to the two levels of local government. Meetings with administrators representing First Nations in Treaty #6 and school jurisdictions indicate that there are many problems with the tuition agreement process. First Nations are concerned that legislation and policy favors the school jurisdiction. First Nation education authorities indicate that they do not have the leverage to negotiate a mutually acceptable tuition agreement. The process would improve if Alberta Learning would lay some basic ground rules for school jurisdictions and provide a facilitator to resolve tuition agreement stalemates, if assistance is requested.

8.6 Capital Expenditures

Alberta Learning should not penalize school jurisdictions and First Nation students by refusing to provide Capital funding for school expansion due to inadequate space to accommodate an increase in resident student enrollment.

Rationale

Many First Nations have had long-standing tuition agreements with school jurisdictions. The funding received by school jurisdictions over those years helped to build schools, school jurisdiction infrastructures and provided employment opportunities for many Alberta teachers. In some cases, First Nation communities that do not have a school, have no choice but to send their children to the neighboring school jurisdictions. However, it is the policy of Alberta learning not to provide Capital expenditures to accommodate the resident students if the school is serving treaty First Nation students attending school through a tuition agreement. In a recent case, a school jurisdiction was instructed to deny services to First Nation students if the

jurisdiction expected to receive Capital funding to accommodate resident students. That particular issue was resolved satisfactorily but a policy is required to eliminate the possibility of the problem re-occurring.

8.7 Role of: Alberta Learning, Alberta Learning and Northern Development

The departments of Alberta Learning and Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada should become ex-officio observers in tuition agreement negotiations.

Rationale

The two departments that have overall jurisdiction over the education of resident students and First Nation students respectively, can assist in facilitating the agreement process and provide expertise on government policy and regulations to both First Nations and school jurisdictions.

9.1 Per-student funding

9.1a Provincial Funding Formula

The Government of Alberta should adopt a Native education funding formula which would provide school jurisdictions with an additional 25 percent of the Instructional Grant for every Aboriginal student that the school jurisdiction can identify in partnership with First Nation and Metis people.

Rationale

The Band-Aid approach that has and is being used to improve student achievement and parent involvement in education has not been successful. It is time for government in partnership with school jurisdictions and Aboriginal people to place a high priority on the education of First Nation and Metis students. This will require a firm commitment by government and it will cost money. However, the piece-meal approach that has been used to address some of the issues identified through the policy review, should be replaced with an integrated and comprehensive program to address all Aboriginal student needs.

The Government of British Columbia has recognized the diversified and complex problems that school jurisdictions and Aboriginal people face. To meet the need for adequate financial resources, school jurisdictions in British Columbia receive an additional grant of \$1,000 for every Aboriginal student that the jurisdiction identifies. This type of approach is needed in the Province of Alberta.

9.1b Federal Funding Formula

The Government of Canada should match the proposed provincial funding formula for treaty First Nation students attending Federally and First Nation operated schools.

Rationale

The Government of Canada has been devolving the control of First Nation education to First Nation governments. Like provincial school systems. First Nation schools are experiencing funding shortages. Federal government funding covers basic services that a school should offer. However, funding is

insufficient to address the many needs of First Nation students addressed in this policy review.

ACHIEVING OUTCOMES/RECOMMENDATIONS **POST SECONDARY**

1.0 TO IMPROVE FIRST NATION, METIS AND INUIT LEARNER SUCCESS IN POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS.

1.1 Jurisdiction & Responsibility

1.1a First Nations

Post-secondary colleges established by First Nations must be First Nations-controlled and a federal funding responsibility.

1.1b Other Aboriginal People

Responsibility for post-secondary training and adult basic education for Aboriginal people attending school in provincial post-secondary institutions should remain the responsibility of the provincial government.

1.1c Aboriginal Urban Post-Secondary Institutions

The Government of Alberta should enact enabling legislation that will allow the establishment of First Nation and/or Metis post-secondary colleges and institutes in urban centers in the province.

Rationale

First Nation and Metis post-secondary education institutions located in urban centers are not a new initiative in western Canada. The province of Saskatchewan has several First Nation-controlled and operated post-secondary education colleges and Institutes. The Metis Nation of Saskatchewan operates the Gabriel Dumont Institute. All institutions offering programs at their colleges and are also affiliated with provincially operated educational institutions.

1.2 Student Admission

1.2a Application Procedures

Colleges in rural Alberta should simplify application procedures and application forms for students seeking entrance to post-secondary institutions.

Rationale

Staff and students both agree that the application process for admitting students is extremely difficult and discourages many students from applying for further studies.

1.2b Student assessment

Colleges should improve student selection procedures by implementing a pre-screening process to evaluate prospective students.

Rationale

A better screening process should be implemented to identify student health related problems such as eyeglasses, hearing aids, etc.

1.2c High School Students

Alberta Learning should, in some cases, accept students that are still of high school age, into adult programs.

Rationale

There are several instances in northern Alberta where high school aged students are taking adult upgrading courses because the students have not adapted into the grades K-12 system. When these students turn nineteen years of age, the current regulation restricts student funding until they are out of high school for one year. In many cases, this waiting period is enough for the student not to return to school after that year is over.

1.3 Fundraising

1.3a Skill Development Program

Student grants under the Skill Development Program fund should not be limited to up-grading but should be extended to support students in career path certificate programs.

Rationale

The Skill Development Program is an excellent one and should be continued. However, Alberta Learning should consider extending the funding for one or two years in a career certificate program. In many cases, where students have successfully completed upgrading, some students do not continue because of the difficulties in obtaining adequate funding from other sources to support a career certificate program. Alberta Learning must recognize that the majority of Aboriginal students do not have the family circle that is financially capable of assisting the student for several additional years of schooling.

**1.3b Pre-apprenticeship/
Employment**

Alberta Learning should provide funding for a pre-apprenticeship training program.

Rationale

The current apprenticeship program was designed for students that live in the more populated areas of Alberta and mainly for non-Aboriginal people. The program did not take into account the cultural differences of Aboriginal students and the difficulty that many face in being hired by non-Aboriginal employers. A pre-employment or pre-apprenticeship program with on the job training would assist many students in finding long-term employment.

1.3c Student Finances

Alberta Learning should increase the availability of bursaries and scholarships for Aboriginal students that do not fall under policies of the federal government.

Alberta Learning should simplify the student loan application process and provide more bursaries and scholarships to Aboriginal students.

Rationale

Metis and other Aboriginal students are not able to access financial support as treaty First Nation students can. Also, most of these students come from families that live below the poverty line and family support is minimal, at best. An increase in bursaries and scholarships would assist students in completing post-secondary programs and would place them in the work force.

1.4 Support Services

Alberta Learning in conjunction with colleges and universities should introduce and/or increase support services for students attending their institutions including:

- Student liaison workers to assist students in adjusting to a new environment and new experience.
- Community liaison counselors to assist students with career path choices, to help them deal with the complex admission procedures and to assist students to access financial support.
- Addictions counselors to assist those students encountering difficulties with addictions.
- Tutoring assistance for those students that need additional help with academic subjects.
- Daycare services for students with children.
- Elders in residence to provide counseling support to the regular counseling services.

Rationale

Most First Nation Metis and other Aboriginal students, especially from northern Alberta, encounter and experience a variety of problems when they move into an urban center to attend school. One of most difficult is the absence of family support. Culture shock is another problem that many students encounter.

College life is a difficult adjustment for any student but more so for Aboriginal students that have not experienced the fast pace of “city living” and the problems that it may bring. Students need the support of other Aboriginal people that have learned to adjust to the dominant culture.

1.5 Accountability

1.5a Strategic Planning

Provincial post-secondary institutions should develop a comprehensive Aboriginal education strategy as part of the institution’s Three-Year Business Plan. The strategy should include:

- Goals and objectives to be achieved.
- Hiring policies of Aboriginal professional and paraprofessional

- staff.
- Curriculum modifications and Aboriginal content.
- Family and community involvement mechanisms.
- Program to combat stereotypes and racism.
- Involvement of Elders, liaison workers, tutors counselors and other support workers.
- Accountability indicators tied into funding allocations.
- Others

1.5b Increasing Graduates

Post-secondary educational institutions should demonstrate a commitment to increasing access for First Nation and Metis people by allocating resources within the institutions base funding, including the submission of a strategic plan identifying measures and outcomes related to increased participation and success rates.

Rationale

Unless there is a concerted effort by colleges and universities to pay extra attention to improving student retention and success, the number of student graduates will not increase in a significant way.

1.6 Teacher Training

1.6a Aboriginal Teachers

Increasing participation of Aboriginal people in teacher training programs at all Alberta colleges and universities should be an integral part of the institutions strategic plan and Three-Year Business Plan.

1.6b Aboriginal Teacher Education Program

Alberta Learning in partnership with Alberta's universities and colleges should establish a teacher-training program for First Nation and Metis students.

First Nation colleges in partnership with Alberta Learning and universities should be allowed to establish Aboriginal teacher training degree programs at their institutions.

Rationale

Alberta lags far behind other provinces in the number of Aboriginal people that have graduated from teacher training programs. One reason for this can be attributed to a lack of effort by universities to increase the number of Aboriginal students enrolling in their education faculties. A second reason is that Alberta is the only province without an Aboriginal Teacher Education Training Program. In Western Canada, Manitoba and British Columbia each have one, and Saskatchewan has three.

A supply of Aboriginal teachers can improve high teacher turnover in many of the First Nation and Metis communities in Northern Alberta. They would also become excellent role models, and would bring a greater understanding of Aboriginal youth to the

classroom.

1.7 Adult Basic Education/Literacy

1.7a Jurisdiction

Adult Basic Education programming in First Nation communities should be First Nation-controlled and a federal government funding responsibility.

Adult Basic Education programming in communities other than First Nations should be a provincial responsibility

1.7b Delivery

First Nation and Metis people must be involved with basic literacy programming and delivery to ensure materials, resources and instructional processes are culturally sensitive. Other characteristics:

- Programs are community-based.
- Programs should be student-centered with student input.
- Programs are culturally relevant.
- Programs recognize and accept the learner's language.
- Programs are linked to the economic, social, political and spiritual development of the community
- Programs are linked to life-skills.
- Programs where instruction reflects a whole language approach.

Rationale

Literacy levels in First Nation and Metis communities must improve if Aboriginal people are to be successful educationally, economically, socially and politically. Community-based literacy programming is one of the avenues to improving literacy standards. Literacy programs that are community-based and community-controlled are designed to empower adult learners to take greater control of their lives. In this way they can become more effective as individuals in making informed choices with regard to their lives.

1.7c Funding

The Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada should provide sufficient funding to Metis and First Nation communities respectively, for Basic Adult Literacy programs.

Program funding should include costs for:

- Needs assessment;
- Curriculum development;

- Developing learning resources;
- Instructor training and in-service;
- Life-skills coach;
- Daycare;
- Tutoring;
- Facilities and equipment;
- Administration costs.

Student funding should include:

- Tuition;
- Supplies and books;
- Transportation allowances;
- Living allowances.

2.0 TO DEVELOP AND FOSTER A GREATER KNOWLEDGE, APPRECIATION AND UNDERSTANDING BY TEACHERS WHO TEACH FIRST NATION, METIS AND INUIT STUDENTS

2.1 Knowledge and Understanding

2.1a Pre-service of Teachers

All teacher- training programs should include Aboriginal Studies courses for all prospective teachers.

Rationale

Every teacher in this province will come into contact with students of First Nation and Metis heritage. It is imperative that all teachers have a basic knowledge of First Nation and Metis cultures in order to provide quality instruction to those children.

2.1b In-service of Teachers

Alberta Learning in partnership with school jurisdictions and the Alberta Teachers' Association should provide comprehensive in-service training to teachers. instructors and professors that teach Aboriginal students. In-service should include:

- First Nations and Metis history and culture;
- Aboriginal learning styles;
- Teaching styles best suited for Aboriginal students;

- Community dynamics;
- Parental involvement;
- Community participation.

Rationale

All teaching staff should have a basic understanding of First Nation and Metis people, if they are to have a positive impact in the education of Aboriginal students. The lack of knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal people and their communities was one of the major concerns expressed by Aboriginal people at Policy Review meetings.

2.1c New Programs

New programs should be developed beyond the traditional areas of social sciences to better meet the needs of today's labor market.

Rationale

Units of study relevant to the history and culture can be integrated into all curriculum areas. All learners, not just teachers, should be able to enter and exit unit options on Aboriginal people including medical people, engineers, law and other professions that will be working with Aboriginal people.

3.0 TO STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN FIRST NATION, METIS AND INUIT PEOPLE AND, POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS, PROVINCIAL SCHOOL JURISDICTIONS, APPRENTICESHIP PROVIDERS, INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT.

3.1 Partnerships

3.1a Advisory Committees

Alberta Learning and all post-secondary colleges and universities should establish Aboriginal Advisory Committees to provide liaison with the Aboriginal community. Other functions would include providing guidance with regard to:

- Student recruitment;
- Program promotion and public relations;
- Curriculum design;
- Cultural issues and content;
- Program evaluation including employment relevance for different regions of Alberta.

Rationale

First Nation and Metis people have always been excluded from participating in government decisions that affect Aboriginal people. These decisions have usually been made by non-Aboriginal people who believe that as experts, they can make better decisions

about meeting educational needs of Aboriginal people. This decision-making practice has not yielded very successful results. A decision-making partnership is required.

3.2 Affiliations

3.2a Course Transfers

Public post secondary institutions and First Nation colleges should develop affiliated relationships reinforced through mutually accepted agreements that would address course transfers from one institution to another.

3.2b Granting Degrees

First Nation colleges should be given the “Degree Granting Status” for degree programs determined in partnership with Alberta Learning and provincial post-secondary institutions.

Rationale

First Nation colleges funded by the federal government provide a very valuable service in improving educational standards of First Nation people. Most First Nation colleges also accept non-First Nation people into their programs. Several First Nation colleges are affiliated with public institutions by buying the service from the provincial institution. However, affiliation agreements should be established, so that the First Nation colleges can offer programs that lead to degrees, and can be transferred to public post-secondary institutions.

3.3a Provincial Government

The Government of Alberta should introduce a per student funding formula for all Aboriginal students identified by the post-secondary to support the additional support programs and services identified, as a result of this review.

3.3b Federal Government

The Government of Canada should match the per-student funding formula of the provincial government for additional programs and services required by First Nation students attending First Nation colleges.

Rationale

Colleges and universities have indicated that the base funding for their institutions is inadequate to meet the many needs of First Nation and Metis students attending their schools. Both students and staff indicate that the success rate for First Nation and Metis students would improve dramatically if colleges and universities would implement support programs and services designed to assist students to adjust to a new experience and a strange environment.

MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS TO GOVERNMENT

Government of Alberta

Consultation Process

The Government of Alberta should adopt the consultation process used by Alberta Learning for the Provincial Native Education Policy Review and to ensure that the process is used by other provincial government departments on policy initiatives for and about First Nation and Metis people.

Government Support

The Government of Alberta should seriously consider adopting most, if not all of the recommendations in this report in consultation with First Nation and Metis people.

Writing Committee

Alberta Learning should establish a “Policy Writing Committee” comprised of representatives of the contractors that conducted the policy review.

Validation

Alberta Learning should establish a process for validating changes to legislation and policies and as a result of the Native Education Policy Review.

Alberta Learning should provide the necessary financial support to contractors in order to validate proposed legislation, policy and regulations.

Department Structures

Alberta Learning should establish an Aboriginal Education Advocates Office to assist Aboriginal people in resolving issues in the education of their children.

Alberta Learning should establish an Aboriginal Education Branch and staff it with First Nation and Metis Managers and support staff, to monitor policy implementation.

Alberta Learning should establish two Aboriginal Advisory Councils to the Department of Alberta Learning, one each at grades K-12 and post-secondary level, in order to provide direction to the department on initiatives in Aboriginal education.

Funding Implications

Alberta Learning should establish a funding formula for grades K-12 students, which would provide school jurisdictions with an additional 25 Percent of the Instructional Grant for every Aboriginal student that the school jurisdiction can identify in partnership with First Nation and Metis parents.

Alberta Learning should establish a similar funding formula at the

post-secondary level in order that colleges and universities can provide badly needed support programs and services to First Nation and Metis post-secondary students.

Consultation Process

Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada (INAC) should adopt the partnership consultation process used by Alberta Learning for the Provincial Native Education Policy Review to ensure that grassroots Aboriginal people have input into government decisions affecting First Nation people.

Validation Process

Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada should be an integral part of the policy validation process, to ensure federal participation in meeting its obligations to First Nation people.

Department Structures

The education department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada should establish a Advisory Council to provide input and direction on matters relating to the education of First Nation students.

Funding Implications

Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada should match any additional funding to First Nation K-12 school as a result of provincial government funding initiatives to school jurisdictions as a result of the policy review.

Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada should match any additional funding to First Nation colleges as a result of provincial government funding initiatives to provincial post-secondary institutions for support programs and initiatives, as a result of the Native Education policy Review.

Indian and Northern Affairs, Canada should match funding of all current provincially initiated programs to ensure equity of programs and services for First Nation K-12 students attending First Nation school e.g. Health Initiative.

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

Alberta Learning work in partnership with school jurisdictions, post-secondary institutions, First Nations and the Metis Nation of Alberta in the implementation of the new policy directions and initiatives.

First Nations and the Metis Nation monitor the implementation of new legislation, policies and regulation in their respective communities and school jurisdictions.

LIST OF MEETINGS

Alexander First Nation (16)
Alexis First Nation (12)
Athabasca Liaison Workers (2)
Beaver Lake First Nation (17)
Blue Quills College (27)
Bonnyville (13)
Calgary Friendship Center (NEP) (16)
Calling Lake (7)
Cardston (8)
Conklin (25)
Drayton Valley (8)
Edmonton (33)
Edmonton AVC (15)
Edmonton Catholic School District (30)
Edmonton Friendship Center (32)
Edson (9)
Elk Point (6)
Enoch First Nation (11)
Ermineskin First Nation (15)
Frog Lake First Nation (11)
Ft. McMurray (48)
Ft. Vermillion (14)
Ft. Vermillion School Division (5)
Goodfish First Nation (5)
Grande Cache (3)
Grande Prairie (15)
Grant McEwan College (14)
Grimshaw School (5)
Grouard (12)
Heart Lake First Nation (6)
High Level Friendship Center (21)
High Prairie School Division (14)
High Prairie S.D. Administration (3)
Joussard (11)
Kehewin First Nation (4)
Keg River (9)
Keyano College (11)
Kinuso (5)
Knowing our Spirits Conference (20)
Lac La Biche (12)
Lethbridge Friendship Center (NEP) (15)
Louis Bull First Nation (12)
Manning (3)
McLennan (4)
Medicine Hat (14)
Montana First Nation (14)
Mother Bear Children's Services (14)
Muskwachese Cultural College (17)
Northern Lakes College (5)
Northland School Division (2) (60)
O'Chiese First Nation (7)
Paul First Nation (8)
Peace River (20)
Ponoka (9)
Red Deer (16)
Red Earth (20)
Rocky Lane School (14)
Saddle Lake First Nation (17)
Sampson First Nation (7)
Slave Lake (22)
Smallboy Camp (8)
Social Services, Tribal Chiefs Ventures (12)
St Andrews School, High Prairie (17)
St. Paul (16)
Students, Frog Lake (16)
Students, Goodfish Lake (12)
Students, Heart Lake (5)
Sunchild First Nation (8)
Suza Creek (18)
Taber (6)
Treaty #6 Directors of Education (2) (16)
Treaty #6 Teacher Institute (35)
Tribal Chiefs Teacher Committee (9)
Tribal Chiefs Ventures (12)
University of Alberta Aboriginal students (15)
Valleyview (7)
Vilna (5)
Wetaskiwin (23)
Yellowhead Tribal Council (UCEP) (8)

*** Approximately 1100 people attended meetings**