

# **Report of the Athabasca Tribal Council Schools Review**

October 2003



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# Introduction

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The Athabasca Tribal Council and industry have expressed concerns over the small number of students from rural communities completing grade 12, the low educational attainment and readiness for employment of those who did, and the small number of students obtaining post-secondary education required for many jobs in the region.

In Fall 2000, the Minister of Alberta Learning established the Athabasca Tribal Council Schools Review Committee. The Review Committee members include Mr. Wayne Cao (Chair and MLA Calgary-Fort), Honourable Mike Cardinal (MLA Athabasca-Wabasca, Minister of Sustainable Resource Development), Chief Archie Cyprien (Chief of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation in Fort Chipewyan), and Mr. Steve Noskey (Chairman, Board of Trustees, Northland School Division).

## The Review Committee's Mandate

The Review Committee's mandate is to inquire into and report on student academic achievement and high school completion rates within the geographic region of the Athabasca Tribal Council.

Based on community feedback received during the review, the Review Committee has prepared this report to identify some possible strategies that may help the Athabasca Tribal Council communities and the Northland School Division to address the education concerns and goals of learners, parents and community members. The Review Committee has designed these strategies with a focus on assisting the learner – seeking to ensure that strategies are designed in the best interests of the students (e.g., improving student academic achievement and high school completion).

Some concerns expressed during the review went beyond the mandate of the Review Committee, but these concerns have been recorded in the *Athabasca Tribal Council Schools Review Committee: What We Heard Report (June 2001)*, and have been forwarded to the appropriate provincial ministries for consideration.

## Community Meetings

Anzac School, Athabasca Delta Community School (Fort Chipewyan, Alberta), Conklin Community School, Father R. Perin School (Janvier, Alberta), and Fort McKay School participated in the review. General public meetings involving learners, parents, teachers, and other community members were held during May and June 2001:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Monday, May 28   | Fort Chipewyan meeting at Mamawi Community Hall     |
| Thursday, June 7 | Anzac meeting at Anzac Community Hall               |
| Thursday, June 7 | Fort McKay meeting at Fort McKay Band Hall          |
| Saturday, June 9 | Conklin meeting at Conklin Nakewin Centre           |
| Saturday, June 9 | Janvier meeting at Father R. Perin School Gymnasium |

The feedback received provided valuable information about some of the difficulties that young learners in these five communities face and also about several very successful initiatives that communities have undertaken to support their learners. This feedback has been recorded in the *Athabasca Tribal Council Schools Review Committee: What We Heard Report (June 2001)*, and is the foundation for the proposed strategies contained in this report.

## Acknowledgements

Each of the communities that participated in the Review has its own unique goals. However, communities share a similar desire to provide their children with a strong foundation of basic skills and the preparation necessary to begin their adult lives successfully by moving on to further education and/or employment. There was also a recognition among parents, educators, and other community members that helping these children acquire the knowledge and skills to be successful at learning and work begins at an early age, and is a responsibility shared by parents, educators, the local community, the business community, Aboriginal governments, and the provincial and federal governments.

The Review Committee thanks the many individuals and groups who attended the community meetings for sharing their vision, hopes, and suggestions for the best way to address issues. This collaborative approach will help the communities build on the strengths of Alberta's learning system and ensure that the learning needs of the students in Anzac, Conklin, Janvier, Fort Chipewyan, and Fort McKay are met.

This report is submitted to the Minister of Alberta Learning, by the members of the Athabasca Tribal Council Schools Review Committee, for the Minister's information and consideration, and ultimately for the information and consideration of the Northland School Division and the communities of the Athabasca Tribal Council region.

# Background

This section provides information on student academic achievement and high school completion rates for learners in the Athabasca Tribal Council region. The Review Committee agrees that this information indicates that academic achievement and high school completion are issues of concern in this area.

## Student Population

Athabasca Delta Community School and Conklin Community School are the only schools in the review that offer schooling up to grade 12. The other schools that participated in the review provide transportation and/or boarding arrangements to students to attend schools in the region that have junior high and/or high school programming.

### Total Student Population by School 1999/2000, 2000/2001 and 2001/2002

| SCHOOL                                      | 1999/2000 | 2000/2001 | 2001/2002 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Anzac Community (ECS to grade 6)            | 53        | 76        | 94        |
| Athabasca Delta Community (ECS to grade 12) | 265       | 294       | 251       |
| Conklin Community (ECS to grade 12)         | 41        | 45        | 45        |
| Father R. Perin (ECS to grade 9)            | 103       | 113       | 103       |
| Fort McKay (ECS to grade 9)                 | 78        | 82        | 73        |

Source: Alberta Learning.

Note: Student population is based on a count of students with a registration in effect September 30 of the school year.

### Number of Students by School and Grade 1999/2000, 2000/2001 and 2001/2002

| SCHOOL                           | GRADE |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     | Total |
|----------------------------------|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
|                                  | ECS   | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  |       |
| <b>Anzac Community</b>           |       |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |
| <b>1999/2000</b>                 | 9     | 12 | 8  | 10 | 5  | 5  | 4  | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 53    |
| <b>2000/2001</b>                 | 17    | 10 | 15 | 10 | 8  | 9  | 7  | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 76    |
| <b>2001/2002</b>                 | 18    | 18 | 9  | 15 | 11 | 10 | 13 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 94    |
| <b>Athabasca Delta Community</b> |       |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |
| <b>1999/2000</b>                 | 22    | 16 | 28 | 31 | 20 | 27 | 22 | 15  | 11  | 21  | 29  | 17  | 6   | 265   |
| <b>2000/2001</b>                 | 26    | 30 | 21 | 22 | 31 | 20 | 31 | 25  | 20  | 21  | 27  | 13  | 7   | 294   |
| <b>2001/2002</b>                 | 9     | 35 | 27 | 19 | 18 | 27 | 22 | 23  | 23  | 16  | 16  | 14  | 2   | 251   |
| <b>Conklin Community</b>         |       |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |       |
| <b>1999/2000</b>                 | 2     | 9  | 3  | 5  | 0  | 6  | 2  | 3   | 4   | 4   | 1   | 2   | 0   | 41    |
| <b>2000/2001</b>                 | 4     | 3  | 6  | 5  | 5  | 1  | 4  | 5   | 1   | 8   | 0   | 1   | 2   | 45    |
| <b>2001/2002</b>                 | 7     | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 6  | 2  | 7   | 3   | 2   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 45    |

Source: Alberta Learning.

Note: Student population is based on a count of students with a registration in effect September 30 of the school year.

## Number of Students by School and Grade 1999/2000, 2000/2001 and 2001/2002 (continued)

| SCHOOL                 | GRADE |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     | Total |     |
|------------------------|-------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-------|-----|
|                        | ECS   | 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  | 8  | 9  | 10  | 11  |       | 12  |
| <b>Father R. Perin</b> |       |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |       |     |
| <b>1999/2000</b>       | 13    | 14 | 16 | 18 | 10 | 6  | 3  | 9  | 7  | 7  | N/A | N/A | N/A   | 103 |
| <b>2000/2001</b>       | 11    | 14 | 13 | 16 | 17 | 11 | 6  | 5  | 16 | 4  | N/A | N/A | N/A   | 113 |
| <b>2001/2002</b>       | 9     | 10 | 15 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 10 | 5  | 3  | 12 | N/A | N/A | N/A   | 103 |
| <b>Fort McKay</b>      |       |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |       |     |
| <b>1999/2000</b>       | 9     | 8  | 10 | 9  | 8  | 10 | 7  | 6  | 10 | 1  | N/A | N/A | N/A   | 78  |
| <b>2000/2001</b>       | 7     | 12 | 12 | 7  | 8  | 9  | 9  | 7  | 8  | 3  | N/A | N/A | N/A   | 82  |
| <b>2001/2002</b>       | 6     | 7  | 12 | 8  | 6  | 7  | 9  | 10 | 6  | 2  | N/A | N/A | N/A   | 73  |

Source: Alberta Learning.

Note: Student population is based on a count of students with a registration in effect September 30 of the school year.

## High School Completion

The number of high school graduates in this Review may include students who attain a high school diploma or other formal credential (e.g., Graduate Equivalency Diploma or an Integrated Occupational Program Certificate), or who are non-credentialed completers (e.g., directly begin a post-secondary program without a high school diploma but are accepted on the basis of their high school transcript).

## Number of High School Graduates by Community\* 1997 to 2002

| COMMUNITY/PREVIOUS SCHOOL                          | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Anzac Community (ECS to grade 6)</b>            | 4    | 4    | 9    | 5    | 12   | 5    |
| <b>Athabasca Delta Community (ECS to grade 12)</b> | 2    | 2    | 0    | 0    | 3    | 1    |
| <b>Conklin Community (ECS to grade 12)</b>         | 2    | 3    | 2    | 1    | 1    | 0    |
| <b>Father R. Perin (ECS to grade 9)</b>            | 7    | 8    | 6    | 7    | 6    | 4    |
| <b>Fort McKay (ECS to grade 9)</b>                 | 2    | 3    | 1    | 4    | 4    | 0    |

Source: Northland School Division.

\* With the exception of Athabasca Delta Community School and Conklin Community School, other communities do not offer schooling up to grade 12. In these cases, the numbers report the graduating students' home community/previous school.

# Provincial Achievement Test Results

The following table identifies the percentage of students in a class who have met the Acceptable Standard for the year on the provincial achievement test. Since the difficulty of an achievement test varies slightly from year to year, Alberta Learning adjusts the cut-scores that define Acceptable Standard each year. This adjustment makes it possible to identify trends in the percentages of students meeting standards across the five years of 1997/1998 to 2001/2002 for school subjects where the curriculum and standards have remained the same. For 1997/1998, the standards for mathematics in grades 3, 6 and 9 were adjusted using standard-setting procedures.

## Interpretation of Test Results

When reading the table, the number of students who wrote the examination should be noted. The fewer the students, the more carefully the results must be interpreted. The overall results for small groups of students can be greatly influenced by the scores of one or two students.

Results on provincial assessments for individual students and for groups of fewer than six students are not publicly released.

## Number of Students Writing the Achievement Test (#) and Percentage of Students who have met the Acceptable Standard (%) by School and Test Level 1997/1998 to 2001/2002

| SCHOOL/TEST LEVEL                       | 1997/1998 |      | 1998/1999 |      | 1999/2000 |      | 2000/2001 |      | 2001/2002 |      |
|---|-----------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|
|   | #         | %    | #         | %    | #         | %    | #         | %    | #         | %    |
| <b><u>Anzac Community</u></b>           |           |      |           |      |           |      |           |      |           |      |
| Language Arts 3                         | 8         | 87.5 | 6         | 66.7 | 10        | 50.0 | 10        | 80.0 | 16        | 56.3 |
| Math 3                                  | 8         | 62.5 | 6         | 50.0 | 10        | 90.0 | 10        | 70.0 | 16        | 56.3 |
| Language Arts 6                         | 10        | 90.0 | 7         | 28.6 | 5         | N/A  | 6         | 83.3 | 13        | 61.5 |
| Math 6                                  | 10        | 70.0 | 7         | 28.6 | 5         | N/A  | 6         | 100  | 15        | 13.3 |
| Science 6                               | 10        | 70.0 | 7         | 57.1 | 5         | N/A  | 6         | 100  | 15        | 26.7 |
| Social Studies 6                        | 10        | 80.0 | 7         | 28.6 | 5         | N/A  | 5         | N/A  | 13        | 15.4 |
| <b><u>Athabasca Delta Community</u></b> |           |      |           |      |           |      |           |      |           |      |
| Language Arts 3                         | 17        | 17.6 | 14        | 71.4 | 29        | 48.3 | 17        | 23.5 | 16        | 37.5 |
| Math 3                                  | 16        | 6.3  | 14        | 35.7 | 29        | 24.1 | 17        | 5.9  | 15        | 73.3 |
| Language Arts 6                         | 7         | 14.3 | 11        | 18.2 | 14        | 35.7 | 20        | 20.0 | 18        | 22.2 |
| Math 6                                  | 8         | 25.0 | 10        | 0.0  | 15        | 13.3 | 20        | 10.0 | 18        | 44.4 |
| Science 6                               | 6         | 0.0  | 11        | 9.1  | 16        | 18.8 | 19        | 10.5 | 17        | 23.5 |
| Social Studies 6                        | 6         | 0.0  | 11        | 9.1  | 17        | 17.6 | 16        | 12.5 | 17        | 23.5 |
| Language Arts 9                         | 11        | 72.7 | 17        | 29.4 | 7         | 28.6 | 7         | 28.6 | 7         | 14.3 |
| Math 9                                  | 10        | 10.0 | 15        | 0.0  | 8         | 0.0  | 6         | 16.7 | 7         | 0.0  |
| Science 9                               | 13        | 7.7  | 12        | 16.7 | 8         | 0.0  | 7         | 14.3 | 6         | 0.0  |
| Social Studies 9                        | 8         | 25.0 | 14        | 14.3 | 8         | 0.0  | 6         | 16.7 | 6         | 0.0  |

Source: Alberta Learning.

N/A = Results on provincial assessments for individual students and for groups of fewer than six students are not publicly released.

**Number of Students Writing the Achievement Test (#) and Percentage of Students who have met the Acceptable Standard (%) by School and Test Level 1997/1998 to 2001/2002 (continued)**

| SCHOOL/TEST LEVEL               | 1997/1998 |      | 1998/1999 |      | 1999/2000 |      | 2000/2001 |      | 2001/2002 |      |
|---------------------------------|-----------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|-----------|------|
|                                 | #         | %    | #         | %    | #         | %    | #         | %    | #         | %    |
| <b><u>Conklin Community</u></b> |           |      |           |      |           |      |           |      |           |      |
| Language Arts 3                 | 5         | N/A  | 1         | N/A  | 5         | N/A  | 3         | N/A  | 5         | N/A  |
| Math 3                          | 5         | N/A  | 1         | N/A  | 5         | N/A  | 3         | N/A  | 5         | N/A  |
| Language Arts 6                 | 4         | N/A  | 1         | N/A  | 2         | N/A  | 5         | N/A  | 1         | N/A  |
| Math 6                          | 4         | N/A  | 1         | N/A  | 2         | N/A  | 5         | N/A  | 1         | N/A  |
| Science 6                       | 4         | N/A  | 1         | N/A  | 2         | N/A  | 5         | N/A  | 1         | N/A  |
| Social Studies 6                | 4         | N/A  | 1         | N/A  | 2         | N/A  | 5         | N/A  | 1         | N/A  |
| Language Arts 9                 | 4         | N/A  | 4         | N/A  | 0         | N/A  | 3         | N/A  | 1         | N/A  |
| Math 9                          | 5         | N/A  | 4         | N/A  | 0         | N/A  | 3         | N/A  | 1         | N/A  |
| Science 9                       | 5         | N/A  | 4         | N/A  | 0         | N/A  | 3         | N/A  | 1         | N/A  |
| Social Studies 9                | 5         | N/A  | 4         | N/A  | 0         | N/A  | 3         | N/A  | 1         | N/A  |
| <b><u>Father R. Perin</u></b>   |           |      |           |      |           |      |           |      |           |      |
| Language Arts 3                 | 8         | 12.5 | 8         | 25.0 | 18        | 16.7 | 13        | 23.1 | 12        | 58.3 |
| Math 3                          | 8         | 25.0 | 9         | 66.7 | 18        | 16.7 | 10        | 70.0 | 12        | 75.0 |
| Language Arts 6                 | 12        | 0.0  | 8         | 0.0  | 3         | N/A  | 4         | N/A  | 9         | 33.3 |
| Math 6                          | 12        | 0.0  | 8         | 0.0  | 3         | N/A  | 6         | 16.7 | 9         | 44.4 |
| Science 6                       | 12        | 0.0  | 8         | 12.5 | 3         | N/A  | 4         | N/A  | 9         | 22.2 |
| Social Studies 6                | 11        | 0.0  | 8         | 0.0  | 2         | N/A  | 6         | 16.7 | 8         | 37.5 |
| Language Arts 9                 | 6         | 16.7 | 8         | 12.5 | 5         | N/A  | 3         | N/A  | 5         | N/A  |
| Math 9                          | 4         | N/A  | 8         | 25.0 | 4         | N/A  | 3         | N/A  | 5         | N/A  |
| Science 9                       | 6         | 0.0  | 8         | 12.5 | 5         | N/A  | 3         | N/A  | 5         | N/A  |
| Social Studies 9                | 3         | N/A  | 8         | 12.5 | 5         | N/A  | 3         | N/A  | 4         | N/A  |
| <b><u>Fort McKay</u></b>        |           |      |           |      |           |      |           |      |           |      |
| Language Arts 3                 | 9         | 88.9 | 7         | 100  | 7         | 85.7 | 8         | 50.0 | 6         | 16.7 |
| Math 3                          | 9         | 44.4 | 7         | 14.3 | 7         | 57.1 | 7         | 57.1 | 6         | 16.7 |
| Language Arts 6                 | 7         | 57.1 | 1         | N/A  | 6         | 50.0 | 7         | 14.3 | 7         | 28.6 |
| Math 6                          | 8         | 37.5 | 3         | N/A  | 6         | 16.7 | 8         | 12.5 | 7         | 0.0  |
| Science 6                       | 8         | 62.5 | 1         | N/A  | 6         | 16.7 | 6         | 0.0  | 7         | 0.0  |
| Social Studies 6                | 8         | 37.5 | 1         | N/A  | 6         | 16.7 | 7         | 14.3 | 7         | 0.0  |
| Language Arts 9                 | 2         | N/A  | 3         | N/A  | 0         | N/A  | 3         | N/A  | 3         | N/A  |
| Math 9                          | 2         | N/A  | 3         | N/A  | 0         | N/A  | 3         | N/A  | 3         | N/A  |
| Science 9                       | 3         | N/A  | 3         | N/A  | 0         | N/A  | 3         | N/A  | 3         | N/A  |
| Social Studies 9                | 3         | N/A  | 2         | N/A  | 0         | N/A  | 3         | N/A  | 1         | N/A  |

Source: Alberta Learning.

N/A = Results on provincial assessments for individual students and for groups of fewer than six students are not publicly released.

# Priority Issues and Proposed Strategies

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The Review Committee suggests the following strategies as priorities in terms of their potential impact on the goals of the review (improving student academic achievement and high school completion rates).

The feedback received from community members during consultations is identified below as the “community issue or observation”. The proposed strategies, designed to help communities and the Northland School Division address these issues, are based on initiatives that a number of communities and the Northland School Division have identified as being successful in supporting their learners.

There are two broad processes that help to support the individual learner and facilitate successful learning. The first process involves “push” factors such as community involvement or parental involvement that motivate students to engage in learning and to stay in school. The second process involves “pull” factors such as culturally relevant programming or extra-curricular school activities that create a welcoming, safe and caring school environment. Both are essential in improving student academic achievement and high school completion.

## Parental and Community Involvement

| Community Issue or Observation   | Proposed Strategy  |
|--|--|
| <p>Strong school-community relationships create a welcoming, safe and healthy learning environment for both parents and students.</p> <p>Parents need encouragement and assistance to become meaningfully involved in and responsible for the education of their children during pre-school and in-school years.</p> | <p>1. Parents/community members should feel a sense of “community ownership” of their schools, and should view the school as an integral part of their communities. The Northland School Act provides for each school to have its own elected Local School Board Committee to make decisions on specific programs.</p> <p>Community members and Local School Board Committees might identify a school/community level contact person to help strengthen the advisory role of parents, elders, and community members.</p> <p>A continual basis of parental involvement and support should be encouraged. Local School Board Committees should enhance parental involvement on Boards, and schools should involve local elders and other community members in school activities/events and decision-making.</p> <p>Northland School Division (NSD) and Local School Board Committees might work to ensure that community support personnel including Native liaison workers, social workers, school counselors, mental health therapists, and community health nurses are locally accessible to assist families and promote pre-school and in-school learning opportunities.</p> <p>Schools might be made available for the use of other community agencies or groups.</p> |

## Parental and Community Involvement (continued)

| Community Issue or Observation  | Proposed Strategy  |
|---|--|
| <p>Liaison workers strengthen the bonds between schools and communities. Liaison workers provide valuable support to students and are positive role models.</p> | <p>2. Positive community role models, including liaison workers and certificated teachers who have Aboriginal backgrounds, should continue to be recognized.</p> <p>Community resource banks might be developed to assist in identifying community role models.</p> <p>NSD should ensure maximum use of provincial funds and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada funds to support school liaison positions.</p> |

## Early Childhood Development

| Community Issue or Observation   | Proposed Strategy   |
|--|---|
| <p>A child's early environment is very influential in shaping his/her future opportunities for success in school. Children must have the opportunity to begin school ready to succeed.</p> | <p>3. Enhancing school readiness must remain a priority for communities.</p> <p>NSD should continue working with Local School Board Committees and parents to identify priority community needs (e.g., an Aboriginal Head Start program). NSD and Local School Board Committees might promote the sharing of best practices for enhancing school readiness.</p> |

## Student Attendance

| Community Issue or Observation   | Proposed Strategy  |
|--|--|
| <p>Athletic activities, in-school support networks, and recognition/reward programs help students stay focused.</p> <p>The Hot Lunch program that NSD provides has a positive effect on attendance and learning.</p> | <p>4. Initiatives that strengthen broad community involvement, including private sector support, for extra-curricular activities, mentoring programs, and recognition/reward programs might be further explored.</p> <p>NSD should promote the sharing of best practices (e.g., physical education implementation, athletics programs, and reading clubs) among schools for implementation of incentive and recognition/reward programs.</p> |
| <p>Some students may need coordinated and multiple supports for a variety of health, family, and career issues at school.</p>  | <p>5. NSD should continue to work with communities in implementing the K-9 Health and Career &amp; Life Management programs.</p> <p>Aboriginal people must be involved in developing and implementing these programs.</p> <p>Community resources should be utilized to develop relevant content for communities.</p>   |

## Student Attendance (continued)

| Community Issue or Observation  | Proposed Strategy   |
|---|---|
| <p>Students need opportunities to appreciate their identity.</p>  | <p>6. Aboriginal learner strengths and cultural knowledge must be recognized and validated.</p> <p>NSD should ensure that students at Athabasca Delta Community School have access to Aboriginal Studies 10, 20 and 30 as part of their high school program. Fort McMurray school boards should ensure that students from Anzac School, Conklin Community School, Father R. Perin School, and Fort McKay School have access to Aboriginal Studies 10, 20 and 30 as part of their high school program.</p> <p>Alberta Learning should continue work on the Social Studies (K-12) Curriculum to include more perspectives and knowledge of Aboriginal culture and history.</p> <p>Schools should continue to hold community cultural events that increase awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal cultures such as Aboriginal Days, dances, etc.</p> |
| <p>Students need educational programming and opportunities necessary to gain meaningful employment.</p> | <p>7. Students must receive a strong foundation of basic skills and the preparation necessary for success in post-secondary education and employment.</p> <p>NSD should continue to promote the value of apprenticeship and trades at the junior high level among communities. Schools, if not already doing so, might access Trade Up, a video produced by Alberta Learning, showcasing apprenticeship and trades as viable career options for junior high and senior high students.</p> <p>Schools and communities might further promote awareness of possible career opportunities for students (e.g., organize industry presentations on the work world, invite role models such as the RCMP to school, and provide career information to students at all grade levels).</p>  |

## Student Assessment

| Community Issue or Observation   | Proposed Strategy   |
|--|---|
| <p>There is a need for modified performance assessment tools (e.g., culturally relevant assessment methods). Students need more credit for what they actually achieve. Student achievement should not be measured by achievement test results alone.</p> | <p>8. NSD should continue its Performance Assessment Project through the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement, and the inclusion of Aboriginal community members and professionals. Classroom assessment methods must be culturally relevant.</p> <p>NSD should continue to examine student achievement results school by school in order to take into account the uniqueness of each school in relationship to small numbers of students.</p> |

## Student Transitional Supports

| Community Issue or Observation   | Proposed Strategy  |
|--|--|
| <p>The negative experiences of young adolescents who are sent to live and learn in distant schools and communities, often boarding with strangers, causes a number of problems, including culture shock and loneliness.</p> <p>Racism and discrimination in neighboring communities is also a factor in lack of student successes.</p> | <p>9. It is important to provide education supports for students in their home communities. But, where students are unable to pursue their education in their home community and are as a result boarded over in Fort McMurray, NSD should continue to assist schools, communities and parents with transition plans for students (e.g., school entry, between levels of schooling, and upon secondary school completion).</p> <p>Schools and communities might develop a school twinning or buddy system to facilitate students' transition. NSD should continue to encourage orientations, and student and teacher exchanges/visits between rural and urban communities to increase cultural awareness. Orientations might be made available to host families to assist Aboriginal awareness.</p> <p>Communities should continue efforts to identify needs and develop strategies to acknowledge, respect and validate Aboriginal world views.</p> |

## Supports for Teachers and Staff

| Community Issue or Observation  | Proposed Strategy   |
|---|---|
| <p>There is a high demand for Aboriginal counselors and instructors who can play an important function in mentoring and role modeling. Teacher participation in community activities is highly valued.</p> <p>NSD has a bursary program to encourage students to pursue education as a career and to return to the community to teach. The provision of low cost on-site housing and pedagogical supervisor support for all teachers are beneficial for retaining teachers. NSD also has a teacher assistant training course that they partner with Grant MacEwan College to provide on-site.</p> | <p>10. Specific teacher recruitment and retention strategies (e.g., an advertising/marketing strategy, a financial incentives strategy, an orientation program) should be explored further.</p> <p>In addition to the strategies already in place, NSD might also consider creating entry-level positions with flexibility for local community residents to assist in teaching and/or tutoring. Employee mentoring for Aboriginal people to assume administrative, instructional and maintenance positions should be considered.</p> <p>Communities and Local School Board Committees might further develop meaningful cross-cultural orientation session(s) for new teachers. These sessions could be voluntary for current teachers and mandatory for all first year teachers in the community.</p> <p>Community awareness of opportunities (e.g., bursaries) for teacher preparation should be enhanced.</p> |

## Supports for Teachers and Staff (continued)

| Community Issue or Observation  | Proposed Strategy   |
|---|---|
| <p>Successful programming for students must include education, professional development, and support for teachers, teaching assistants, and other service providers who work with students. Community awareness of cross-cultural issues is also important (e.g., cultural awareness and sensitivity for Aboriginal learners, their families and issues they may face).</p> <p>NSD has a “new teacher” in-service program each Fall that is beneficial.</p> | <p>11. NSD should continue to make use of provincial funds to provide professional development opportunities (e.g., release time and travel time, joint professional development days with other divisions such as Fort McMurray, High Prairie, Grande Prairie, Peace Wapiti, etc.). Education faculties need to include Aboriginal awareness in their teacher preparation.</p> |

## Funding

| Community Issue or Observation  | Proposed Strategy  |
|---|--|
| <p>The provincial funding formula should be revisited. Funding should be increased to reflect higher program costs and retention issues in a rapidly growing community.</p> | <p>12. Alberta Learning’s Framework Funding (K-12) Review needs to be completed as a priority. As part of the Framework Funding (K-12) Review, funding for NSD needs to be considered in light of its unique circumstances (e.g., high maintenance costs, housing expenditures, transportation costs, subsidies for low enrolment schools operating in isolated areas).</p> <p>NSD currently receives additional provincial funding for its unique circumstances, including funding for school food services, and for the additional costs incurred due to distance and isolation.</p> |

# Issues for Possible Future Consideration

The Review Committee's focus is on the learner and, in particular, identifying strategies that can improve student academic achievement and high school completion within the geographic region of the Athabasca Tribal Council.

During the general public meetings, community members raised various concerns, some of which are outside the mandate of the Review Committee. While these concerns have been recorded in the *Athabasca Tribal Council Schools Review: What We Heard Report (June 2001)*, the Review Committee has also identified some of these concerns in this section as issues that may warrant future consideration by the Northland School Division and the communities of the Athabasca Tribal Council region.

## Community Support

| Community Issue or Observation   | Proposed Strategy   |
|--|---|
| Quality sport, recreation, and youth development programs should be designed and implemented.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Communities might access Alberta's Future Leaders program (Alberta Community Development) to bring sport, recreation, and youth development programs to Aboriginal communities. The program includes: (i) the provision of qualified summer youth workers who create a summer sport camp/recreation experience, and (ii) a youth leadership/mentor program which is continued through the fall or winter. Anzac, Conklin, Fort Chipewyan, Fort McKay, and Janvier have previously participated in the program.</li> </ul>  |
| Recreation and community facilities should be constructed.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Communities might access the Community Facility Enhancement Program (Alberta Gaming) that provides financial assistance for the expansion and upgrading of Alberta's network of community use facilities. The program provides matching grants to municipalities, First Nations, Métis Settlements, and registered community non-profit groups to build, purchase, repair, renovate or improve family/community wellness facilities.</li> <li>◆ First Nations on Reserves might also apply for federal support for community infrastructure projects.</li> </ul> |
| Community resources (e.g., people and funding) should be brought together with a common goal/vision. This includes parents and guardians. A joint community vision through the collaboration of all community leaders should be developed (e.g., through a facilitated workshop, identify similar concerns and differences, and find ways to work together). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Communities might work with Alberta Community Development in creating and implementing their community vision. Ministry staff are available to assist communities to identify and achieve their goals, and to provide workshops in areas such as planning, fund raising, organizational development, partnerships and collaboration building, and conflict management.</li> </ul>  |

## Governance and Administration

| Community Issue or Observation   | Proposed Strategy   |
|--|---|
| <p>There is uncertainty about the type and effectiveness of services provided by the NSD Central Office. It is unclear how Central Office directly benefits/affects students.</p> <p>Administration costs should be reduced and more funds should be distributed directly to the school.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Insights gained through NSD's performance assessment project should help schools identify ways to improve learning opportunities for students, and NSD services to schools and communities should be adapted accordingly.</li> <li>◆ Communication regarding the function of Central Office should be improved. The role of the Local School Board Committees and Central Office in setting local priorities should be clarified.</li> </ul> |

## School Programs

| Community Issue or Observation  | Proposed Strategy  |
|---|--|
| <p>Students should have a strong foundation of basic skills and the preparation necessary for success in post-secondary education and employment.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Amiskwaciy Academy (Edmonton Public Schools), the Rainbow Spirit Project (Edmonton Catholic Schools), and projects supported by Alberta Learning's First Nations, Metis and Inuit Education Grants should be evaluated for effectiveness.</li> <li>◆ The possibility of developing similar programming and facilities in Fort McMurray, complete with accommodations for other supports for Aboriginal youth attending from surrounding areas, should be examined.</li> </ul> |

## Student Wellness

| Community Issue or Observation                        | Proposed Strategy   |
|---|---|
| <p>Improve medical and support services.</p>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Communities might work with regional health authorities on Aboriginal Health Strategy projects.</li> </ul>   |
| <p>Encourage students to lead healthy lifestyles.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Communities might access information promoting health and well-being. Information and resources are available from AADAC, and also from Fort McMurray's Be Fit for Life Centre, to assist communities in promoting healthy active lifestyles.</li> </ul> |