



# BRANDON SCHOOL DIVISION

## Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee

Monday, January 13, 2014  
1:30 – 3:00 pm  
Board Room / Administration Office

### Present:

Trustee Pat Bowslaugh; Greg Malazdrewicz, Associate Superintendent; Amie Martin, Aboriginal Education Consultant, Brandon School Division; Kevin Tacan, Aboriginal Elder, Brandon School Division; Erla Cyr, Social Worker, Brandon School Division; Constable Aldyne Stevenson, Dakota Ojibway Police Service; David Ironstand, City of Brandon; Leah LaPlante, Manitoba Metis Federation; Suzie McPherson, Adult Education Tutor Instruction, Brandon Friendship Centre; Randa Nadjiwon Cancade, Stepping Out on Saturdays FASD Coordinator, Brandon Friendship Centre; John Mayer, Aboriginal Health Advisor, Prairie Mountain Health; Constable Dave Scott, Brandon Police Service; Constable Dana McCallum, Brandon Police Service; Janet Mousseau, Team Leader, Dakota Ojibway Child and Family Services; Chantelli Bradford, Valleyview Centennial School Parent Representative

### Regrets:

Tammy Hossack, Little Teaching Lodge; Tracy Dumas, Betty Gibson School Parent Representative; Pamela Roulette, New Era School Parent Representative; Pauline Cameron, King George Parent Representative

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### **1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm by Trustee Bowslaugh. Trustee Bowslaugh welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **2. REVIEW OF NOVEMBER 4, 2013 MINUTES**

Trustee Bowslaugh reviewed the minutes of the November 4, 2013 meeting. The minutes were accepted as reviewed.

Discussion ensued of the role of the AAA and BSSAP Workers. Mr. Malazdrewicz and Amie spoke to the positions.

AAA Worker – a funded position in each of the high schools. There is a staff person at each school that provides support and opportunities/activities to Aboriginal students. The programs vary depending on what the site needs. The AAA workers' day has been extended this past year to make the staff members more accessible to the students.

Brandon School Division will look at having the workers start a few weeks before school start up in the 2014/2015 school year to have them transition in non-resident students or new Aboriginal students.

BSSAP Worker – developed a PATH with workers in November. In December, the group met to focus on a parental engagement plan (attached Appendix 1).

The BSSAP worker connects cultural activities throughout the schools. The worker strives to connect cultural activities through the schools and to increase parental engagement, to have parents see the school as a safe environment for them to go to.

BSSAP is funded through the Province for one program site at New Era School. Over the past four or so years, additional BSSAP workers have been funded at Betty Gibson, George Fitton, King George and Valleyview School by the School Division.

### **3. STUDENT TRANSITIONS**

Amie handed out Appendix 2 – Student Transition Plan. This plan discussed how students from outside of the Division transition into the Brandon School Division. How do we meet the needs academically and socially of students coming into our city? We need to facilitate connections to other programs in the community.

Amie discussed how she is in her second year with the program. She has had a hard time connecting with staff. She had conversations with students who say that they don't feel connected.

The transition plan has been shared with a Senior High Principal. It has also been shared with other Principals and the Aboriginal Advisory Steering Committee.

Amie shared a report with the Committee – attached Appendix 3.

Leah LePlant, Vice Chair Urban Aboriginal People's Council, thanked Amie for her report. Leah gave the background of her position. She appreciates all of the positive things that the Brandon School Division has done. The work that needs to be done can't all be laid on the Brandon School Division to provide the supports students need. Metchief language is being taught at Brandon University and will start to be taught at Red River College. Teachings have to be done by parents and grandparents as well. Inuit and Metis people are put under the same umbrella as First Nations. Instead of using the term Aboriginal, Metis, First Nations, and Inuit should be used. Leah can offer different resources. She commends the School Division and Amie for the work that has been done.

Other responses to Amie's report included:

- see a lot of Amie's challenges in their own work. Need to accurately define the three groups as Leah discussed to support them as best possible. Teachers need to be given clear definitions to help them understand. A definition for each group: Metis, First Nations, and Inuit will be discussed at the next meeting;
- students need to be identified by their proper title;

- Cultural Competencies really haven't spoke to a policy on culture. Policy statements give a strong direction – how do we help our Metis;
- there is a lot of resentment amongst the Aboriginal people in Brandon. Aboriginal people believe that it took EAL people coming to Brandon for Brandon citizens to start looking at other cultures;
- there needs to be a move from Cultural Awareness to Cultural Proficiency. Teachers need to get more professional development and learn about Metis, First Nations and Inuit;
- would like to understand what is currently being done – how does the role of the Community members integrate with Amie's work? Do we need a strategic plan;
- need something for the students to keep them engaged. It is difficult to share cultural activities as they can then be copied and mass produced.

#### **4. COMMUNITY SUPPORTS**

Deferred to next meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Trustee Bowslaugh thanked everyone for their active participation and input.  
The meeting adjourned at 3:10 pm.

#### **NEXT REGULAR COMMITTEE MEETING**

Monday, March 10, 2014

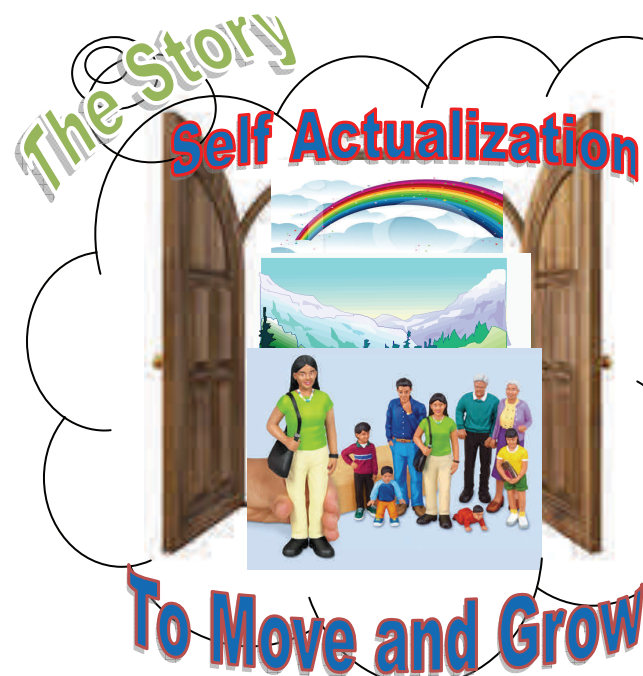
1:30 – 3:00 pm

McLaren Room, Brandon School Division Administration Office

Respectfully submitted,

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P. Bowslaugh



| Who                               | Action   | By When          |
|-----------------------------------|--|------------------|
| Erla, Amie, Veronica, Kevin, Gail | To be the voice of the MAP meeting for the Aboriginal Education Steering Committee | Oct 30/13        |
| Amie                              | Will Attend Parent Advisory Committee– will ID possible supports                   | Nov 4/13         |
| Amie, Administrator               | Initiate regular meetings with BSSAP & AAA (3 X per year?)                         | Before Christmas |
| Amie, Rana, Melissa,              | Meeting with Resource/Guidance   | Nov 3, 13        |
| Kelly B                           | Sharing Best Practices/  |                  |



## MAP for:

Aboriginal Education—School Initiatives, Provincial Priorities, and Educational Trends

Supported By:

**Bonnie:** Planning for Aboriginal Achievement  
**Erla:** New Ideas  
**Veronica:** Graduation & Belonging  
**Denise:** Creating a home, Graduation  
**Delona:** Improving School Environments  
**Barb:** Strategies to actively engage students and Achievement  
**Kevin:**  
**Bruce:**  
**Amie:**

**Melanie:** Making connections, cultural activities  
**Robin:** Here to learn & gather ideas  
**Sherry:** Increase engagement & success  
**Gail:** Student achievement, ideas for school, classroom  
**Shawna:** Encourage parent involvement  
**Mary:** Success of Aboriginal students, keeping in touch with graduates to build success.

## What it takes

### Family

Engagement/Involvement  
 Be open minded  
 Roles & Responsibilities

### Community

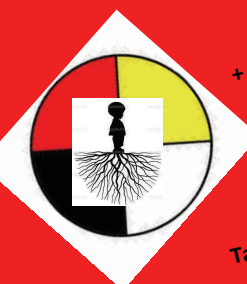
Meaningful Engagement in our schools  
 Meeting Community needs through coordinated efforts

### BSD/SSP

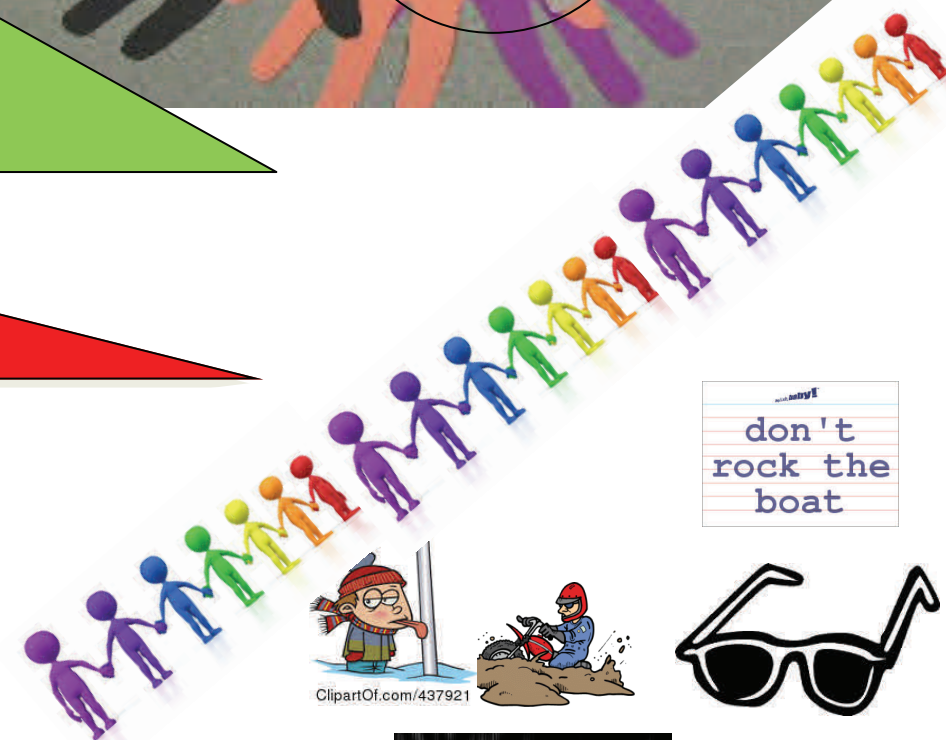
Clearer vision of What Aboriginal Ed is.  
 Expand Alternative Programs DI/Proactive

## Contributions

Cultural Awareness  
 + Role Models  
 Compassion/Empathy  
 Acknowledgement  
 Giving Students a voice



+ Relationship between Staff and Community  
 Staff that Care  
 Communication  
 Talk, Listen, Care  
 Encouragement  
 Empower by Listening



THE

Nightmare

## Parental Engagement

The goal of the Parental Engagement in the school system is to increase in parental presence in school and direct teacher contact with parents.

| Objectives<br><i>Specifics statements about what we want to accomplish in the following areas</i> | Actions<br><i>Specifics actions to be taken as part of each objective</i>   | Timeline<br><i>Date for implementation</i> | Responsibility<br><i>Who is responsible for doing each action?</i> | Indicators<br><i>How we will know we have reached our objective (based on S.M.A.R.T. criteria</i>   | Follow Up<br><i>Did it happen? When?</i> |
|---|---|--|--|---|--|
| Make the school a welcoming environment for parents   | <p>There will be numerous social events in the school i.e. parent/teacher evenings, gym activities, concerts, elders day, language and cultural day etc.</p> <p>A monthly assembly will be established to honor students, parents will be invited</p>   | Throughout the school year                 | School staff   | <p>Attendance sign in sheets will be kept for all get together events</p> <p>The assembly will be standard monthly activity and will be placed in the school calendar</p>   |  |
| Establish a parent volunteer program  | <p>Provide a parent room in the school</p> <p>Utilize support workers to promote parental engagement in the school.</p> <p>Information will sent out and placed at key places at the beginning of the school year and throughout the year by administration letting parents know where volunteers are needed. These notices could be timely allowing parents the time to prepare their schedules. Solicit potential volunteers by personal contact, email, phone, etc.</p> <p>Training should be provided for particular events.</p> <p>Parental engagement in the school will be recognized by certificates for all volunteer and a final feast at the end of the year to thank all who have volunteer throughout the year</p> | Throughout the school year                 | Administration and school staff                                    | <p>There is space allocated for the parent room.</p> <p>Their assignments include parental engagement promotion.</p> <p>Number of parents signing up for school activities More volunteers will be visible in the school at all times throughout the school year</p> <p>Number of training sessions.</p> <p>Have master list of volunteers for the year</p> |  |

|                             |   |                                 |              |   |  |
|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--------------|---|--|
| Parent/Teacher Relationship | <p>Early in October hold an Open House for teacher for teachers to meet with respective parents to outline the grade expectations and programs.</p> <p>On the first day of school, a letter of introduction should be sent home with each student, introducing the teacher, and his/her interests, hobbies and some of the activities that are planned for the year based on attendance and participation in all class activities. This can act as a first letter home and be a positive way to start the year.</p> | Three times throughout the year | Teachers     | Schedule in the yearly calendar.  |  |
| Publish Parent Pamphlet     | <p>Develop a parent/student pamphlet with relevant information about TIPS for parents to help their children succeed in school. This should be sent home during the first week of school.</p>   |                                 | School Staff | <p>The letter will be on file in the office.</p> <p>The pamphlet is developed and sends home.</p> |  |
|                             |   |                                 |              |   |  |
|                             |   |                                 |              |   |  |

## **Developing an Aboriginal Student Transition Plan**

**Purpose:** To support the transition of Aboriginal students into Brandon School Division high schools and the City of Brandon and foster school success

There is a need to provide both school and community based supports to facilitate the academic and social transition experienced by the students that are often find the challenges too great and feel that they have no recourse but to become truant or drop out and return to their community.

### **A Need for Intervention**

- Communication between the school, the families, First Nation education Authorities and the home parents.
- Strategies develop to deal with the most pressing issues related to supporting these students and ensuring the long term viability of the program.

### **Improving Outcomes**

- Tracking of data on attendance, academic needs and other significant learning needs as in literacy and numeracy.
- Supports to contribute to student retention and achievement

### **Key Components**

- Community Liaison: A school and community based resource person to be in place to respond the needs of students, families and home parents.
- Home Placements: Students board with supportive and welcoming families. Home parents are kept to date on the students' school activities and also the sponsoring agency.
- Cultural Connections Workshops; to heighten cultural awareness to both students and staff.
- Community Partnerships: A close working relationships with organizations and agencies.
- Student Support Services: Academic supports to support skill development in literacy and numeracy.
- Aboriginal Language Labs: Upon successful completing the labs, they are provided with an opportunity to challenge for the Special Language Credit exam.

## Developing an Aboriginal Student Transition Plan

Aboriginal Student Transition Planning has the goals of increasing student engagement and promoting attendance and eventually graduation rates in public schools. This planning process seek to bring together key people from Aboriginal communities sending schools and their partner receiving high school to co-develop a Student Transition Plan that reflects current research and best practices to address potential barriers to student success and establishes a timeline of events that can better help students transition from an Aboriginal school to the public school system. For First Nation School, the Student Transition Plan will be part of their overall School Plan. Research shows that it is a clear benefit to both school systems when students are transitioned more effectively and can enjoy more success in their new school.

A Student Transition Plan is an agreement that is co-developed between the First Nations Education Authority and the Principal of a public school.

The Transition Plan looks to address potential barriers and established a timeline of events that will be more effectively transition students from a First Nation school to public school.

The goal of the transition Plan is to sustainability increase the numbers of First Nation students success in staying in school and graduate from high school.

When developing a **Transition Plan** the following strategies should be considered:

- Have supportive relationships – The receiving school and its staff cares for all students. The staff to explore ways at increasing the students' sense that "I Can Do This" (Self-efficacy)
- Promote a sense of belonging - The school provides a cultural perspective in each classroom. The staff comfortable using documents reflecting Aboriginal studies.
- Promote alignment of practice especially in Literacy and Numeracy. This implies that staff share ideas on best practices and have opportunities for shared workshops and resources. Possible PLG's and Teacher Walkthroughs.
- Have sufficient resources (tutors, counselors, mentors) to assist in addressing any gaps in student knowledge and skills – Teachers talk to each other about the students they are sending to the next grade and how to help the students who may speak English as a second language.
- Have an attendance and behavior plan to address the top 2 indicators of student's success. The staff aware that in Manitoba, the law says children must attend school. Effective schools find ways to keep students in school and suspensions are rare.
- Measure, track and share relevant data is crucial for success (attendance, engagement, and graduation even dropout rate).
- Students care about what the teachers are teaching – The students are thinking, planning, doing. The purpose for learning is known and meaningful.
- There is a focus on making the world of work relevant to each student. The staff to believe student drop-rate can be prevented.



- There is clear communication in the school system – All parties felt that they are heard and that everyone has a chance to speak. This process takes time, but is worth it.

### **Can Our Students Do Better in School?**

We want our Aboriginal students to have a Good Life. We think that for many of them, their lives will be harder if they do not finish school. We know that without a high school certificate, our younger generation face higher chances of incarceration, poorer health outcomes, lower income and shorter life expectancy. Aboriginal students are expected to have success in school. And school systems have a responsibility to fulfill this need.

### **Reasons that can contribute to a lack of success at school are:**

- A lack of supportive relationships – school staff need to recognize and understand student's needs.
- A knowledge and skill gap – How do we help students who speak English as a second language?
- Are teachers competent and knowledgeable in cultural perspectives?
- Do the students care about what the teachers are teaching?
- Student has poor attendance and behavior in school – What are the factors?
- Low parental involvement – What can parents/house parents/foster parents can do?

## Student Transition Plan

The goal of the Student Transition Plan is to increase student success which will be seen in increased rates of attendance, course completion, and high school graduation.

| Objectives<br><i>Specifics statements about what we want to accomplish in the following areas</i>        | Actions<br><i>Specifics actions to be taken as part of each objective</i>   | Timeline<br><i>Date for implementation</i>                    | Responsibility<br><i>Who is responsible for doing each action?</i>          | Indicators<br><i>How we will know we have reached our objective (based on S.M.A.R.T. criteria)</i>  | Follow Up<br><i>Did it happen? When?</i> |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| To provide sufficient time for incoming students to visit new school (early contact, enrollment, visits) | The principal of the receiving school will visit the incoming class.<br><br>Students will visit the high school in April. | Before end of June. —<br><br>As arranged and by end of April. | Receiving School principal<br><br>Sending First Nations Education Authority | The visit will take place by end of April.-<br><br>Student visits will take place by arranged dates |  |
| To develop a sense of Belonging in new school (cultural perspective)                                     | Staff members of receiving school receive cross cultural training.<br><br>The school reflects Aboriginal cultural motifs. | By March break  | Receiving School Principal<br><br>Guidance counselor                        | Training will take place.<br><br>The school will reflect Aboriginal cultural motifs by opening day  |  |
| To assess and share the results of all student assessments   | Each Aboriginal student is assessed in literacy and numeracy and data is shared with receiving school.                    | March   | Sending School Principal  | Aboriginal students are assessed and data is shared with receiving school                           |  |
| Statement of resources – counselors, supplies, tutors, mentors   | Receiving school will outline how they will support each First Nation learner.  | June  | Receiving School Principal  | Receiving resource staff will outline student support with First Nation resource and principal      |  |
| To develop a sense of student efficacy: I can do this'.  | Both schools will give statements of support and belief in the success of Aboriginal students.                            | Throughout the school year                                    | Both principals   | Supporting statements will be given on an ongoing basis.  |  |

|   |   |                            |                                  |   |  |
|---|---|----------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|
| To encourage interaction with other students and participation in outside activities to prevent cultural shock. | Students from public schools will be invited to Gathering of Friends.           | April and September        | Receiving School Principal       | Invitations to the gathering will be made to student council/ parents/house parents/foster parents. |  |
| To collect and share information – attendance, academic success and other pertinent information                 | The information will be shared by both resource and counseling support services | Throughout the school year | Resource and Guidance Counselors | The information will be shared  |  |

Brandon School Division – Aboriginal Education  
AMIE MARTIN – Aboriginal Education Learning Specialist  
January 2014

This report represents a change of format from the usual practise of reporting monthly activities that are related within the scope of responsibilities as an Aboriginal Education Learning Specialist. Because Aboriginal students face tremendous challenges, they have a higher potential that to fail in the system as do the educators who are teaching them. As stated in one of the Brandon Student Achievement Summary Reports, the factors contributing to this dilemma are culture shock, lack of supportive relationships, the presence of cultural/class division, and of lack of basic communicative competencies in reading, writing and numeracy. Then there are the teachers who are facing challenges in identifying ways to ensure that academic success of these students is provided but who are simply not prepared, by either their experiences or teacher prepared programs. Therefore, it would make sense for the Brandon School Division to respond and correct the problematic situation through necessary educational adjustments to accommodate the diverse needs of Aboriginal students.

Educating for diversity - the Division and schools involvement on Aboriginal education - Are the strategies culturally appropriate? Are the initiatives aligning with provincial priorities and other educational trends? Is there a need for diversity training?

The contents of this report were gathered from various sources, including feedback from consultation meetings with school administration, teachers, support staff, parents and different organizations. All sources convey the importance of incorporating Aboriginal content, perspectives and word views into all subject areas, grade levels and to be taught in classrooms. If the total integration of Aboriginal perspectives in all areas of the curriculum is implemented then it means acknowledging the legitimacy and the significance of Aboriginal culture and moving it from the margins to the centre of the curriculum. Example: a full integration of Aboriginal novelists, dramatists, etc. into the English literature curriculum.

It is, also, an expectation that strategies and student learning activities are carried out by building safe and respectful classroom environments where Aboriginal students feel welcome supported and represented as the general school culture. Despite the efforts made to make Aboriginal students feel welcome, there is still a feeling they don't belong which causes them to disengaged from the system.

This report is intended as a way to build collaborative relationships of educational stakeholders in their abilities and capacities to facilitate and describe relevant obstacles that are crippling the educational successes of Aboriginal students, and how to address these obstacles by using creative solutions. The current Aboriginal educational programming, policy and procedures may need to change in order to reflect priorities, the pace and the direction of Aboriginal education. The purpose of the report is not to evaluate the present system activities on Aboriginal education or to make recommendations for an immediate school development planning nor to celebrate prematurely, as there is so much work yet to be done.

In September 2012, the Brandon School Division recognizes the need to establish the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee and the Aboriginal Education Learning Specialist positions as a response to concerns expressed by the Brandon Urban Aboriginal community. It is also the Division's on-going obligations as a public educational institution to provide proper supports and services to students including Aboriginal students. These positions were created to provide expertise and support for:

- Organizations to work in partnerships to strive to better educational experiences encountered by Aboriginal students and to eliminate potential barriers to successes.
- Staff through professional development opportunities and material/resources acquired for their use.
- Administrators, the educational leaders, in the development of a long term comprehensive plan focusing on Aboriginal education in which Aboriginal cultures are fully acknowledged, respected and represented.
- Families to be consistently involved in their child's education.

Learning cannot take place unless the needs of the whole child are met and considering the core curricula three levels of development – elementary, middle year and senior high level, in which the adaptive dimension facilitates individual learning needs, in terms of content, instruction and learning environment. The student acquire a learning environment in which they will feel at ease: be taught in a manner compatible with his or her background and learning style. The student also needs to see his worldview reflected in a subject matter and in content. In this respective of reality, Brandon schools need to ensure that Aboriginal students are educated in a manner consistent with their wide range of needs and motivations, and thus allowing students to feel safe enough to trust the school system and build competencies necessary for successful learning.

In addition, student success cannot exist without the involvement of Partners in Education which is perhaps the single most determinative factor when providing enhanced services for Aboriginal students. Some of these partners may be more or less involved in different stages at program planning and delivery which then would bring us to consider the interagency approach. With the school as the common ground, providers can co-ordinate their services to meet the needs in areas such as mental health, social services, nutrition, recreation, parenting education and family literacy.

The Brandon School Division Educational Initiatives focus on quality teaching, quality support services and quality learning and are indicators that are driven by a mission that states, to enable each student to achieve maximum intellectual, emotional, social, and physical growth through the provision of with programs and services that will serve the needs of students. Example: French Immersion schools have been established to provide students with authentic, real-life experiences using the French language. Spanish language courses are delivered in high schools. Aboriginal languages are ignored.

The English as Additional Language program provides New Canadian students with specialized programming, teachers and services that are not otherwise available for Aboriginal students. The right of Aboriginal students to know their language and culture is protected by the UN Convention on the

Rights of the Child as well as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Manitoba's new Aboriginal Language Recognition Act also recognizes seven Aboriginal languages.

The Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee has had three meetings to date with the Aboriginal Education Learning Specialist reporting on the development and implementation of Aboriginal educational programming. The members' agencies purpose and description of their programs and services and means of access should be available as resources to schools and staff. The development of a long term, comprehensive plan supporting Aboriginal languages and culture programs that is needed for inclusion in classroom teachings requires input from the committee. It is to be remembered that Aboriginal students are children of peoples whose cultures are – many ways different from those who established the school system. These differences which may include learning styles, languages and world views as well as the curriculum, teaching methods and classroom climate.

The Division has taken a number of important steps within the last few years. These include the hiring of Aboriginal staff, the off-site campus high school and teaching units with Aboriginal content. Yet so much to do, so little time... priorities on Aboriginal education can only have important positive impacts for the children and future generations of Aboriginal students.

Many Aboriginal students do not find schools in Brandon to be culturally affirmed places. The life experiences and cultural values are not adequately reflecting in their everyday world. Some are feeling alienated simply because they are Aboriginal. It is by these experiences that the system needs to change to address the ever continuing diverse needs of Aboriginal students. It is also because Aboriginal content and perspectives are not fully implemented in all of the schools, however, it should be noted that there is certainly more awareness on the availability of Aboriginal education strategies and resources. Some schools and staff are beginning to explore how to use these materials for classroom teachings.

An Aboriginal Education Steering Committee consists of Principals, a Counselor, Elder, Aboriginal Education Learning Specialist and the BSD Associate Superintendent is in place to work on the Aboriginal Education Strategic Plan. Examples that will be considered for discussion are:

- What new processes can be put in place to fully support Aboriginal programming?
- What unique programs need to be developed?
- What best practices can be implemented to support the diverse need of Aboriginal students?
- How curriculum, assessment, and evaluation process will be taken into account as respect to learning styles, language and culture views?
- How classroom climates need to change to reflect cultural differences?
- How are the Joint Task Force – City of Brandon and Brandon School Division support the development of Aboriginal education?

To fully incorporate Aboriginal perspectives in all of the schools, it must evolve in three stages – resistance, acceptance and implementation. Presently It is difficult to conclude which stage level has been achieved. Staff had ample opportunities to participate in Aboriginal content in services and

materials, resources and support have been made available. Although there is an indication that some teachers have the desire to teach Aboriginal perspectives but do not always have the knowledge needed to support the true intention. They do not have Aboriginal cultural backgrounds or the knowledge of Aboriginal historical events; it does very little for the student because there is so much to the Aboriginal culture and most Aboriginal students do not learn this at home, therefore that certain things need to be taught in the classroom. Should there be more Aboriginal teachers? As important as it would be, it is not just a matter of putting Aboriginal teachers in a classroom; they must understand and be able to teach Aboriginal history and culture. Another significant problem to point out is that Aboriginal content or perspectives in the curriculum are not mandatory. It is available, but it is optional.

As reported in the Brandon Sun 2012-2013, the BSD Aboriginal Student Achievement Summary Report stated that few Aboriginal students are meeting expectations in reading, writing and numeracy. The schools are not doing too well in meeting the educational needs of Aboriginal students that are in the current system.

The data report contained valuable evaluative information which is an indicator that tells parents and the public that Brandon schools are short changing their Aboriginal students by not providing adequate instructional staff, support staff or appropriate programming that could enhance and strengthen Aboriginal education. This may be achieved by developing a curriculum integration program development and initiatives at the school level.

It cannot truly be said that an adequate representation of Aboriginal voices are present in various committees organized by the division. These people would perceptively identify culturally appropriate learning activities that address the educational and curricular needs of Aboriginal students. A balance in traditional and public education could be the very key to positive changes.

The Division Aboriginal Education program does not have the staff to provide necessary assistance to Division staff administration and school staff in the development and implementation of initiatives to support Aboriginal education throughout the Brandon School Division. An Aboriginal Education Department would be an excellent opportunity in which staff is comprised of:

- Aboriginal Education Divisional Principal/or Aboriginal Education Director
- Clerical Secretary
- Aboriginal Lead/Support Teachers

The program and services from this department would be supportive and strong which is a requirement for assisting students to achieve success in school. It would be through collaboration with school administration and staff, student support services to build an effective, accountable and responsive Aboriginal education program. The program would serve as a centre of educational excellence, build on community partnerships, effective leadership and exemplary practices. (BSD Board of Trustees vision and mission).

While there are a significant percentage of Aboriginal students in the division, there is a lack of representation in sport activities, student councils, clubs, mentorship, and in the Youth Revolution Movement. In this case an all Aboriginal designated school for Kindergarten to Grade eight would make a positive difference in the student school life with full potential, engagement and confidence accomplishments. In the senior high level, the existing course programming could expand to accommodate Aboriginal Land-Based accredited education, recognizing and understanding the value of Aboriginal connection with the land.

Many of our Aboriginal students do not seem to have an equal opportunity to practice and learn their Aboriginal culture and language when they are in public schools. Research shows when educators value different worldviews and more responsive to diverse perspectives, the students become more engaged in school and experience greater educational success.

There are Aboriginal education initiatives that are funded to give certain schools an opportunity to promote activities example: A pow wow club, beading and the making of star blankets are some evening activities that have been implemented while some perspectives are being discussed to Grades 7 & 8 students on borrowed time, the activities appears to be satisfying, what the community said what's being done is not enough, the genuine craving of our youth is to know themselves. It is an understanding that Aboriginal education initiatives were to be woven throughout Kindergarten to Grade 12 curricula; to help teachers bring Aboriginal perspectives into classrooms and promotes parental engagement activities that aim to improve student success at school. Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students have not had adequate opportunity to learn, dialogue, and cooperate in constructing a shared future. This is a missed opportunity and a significant problem for students who feel disconnected in what should be a shared society. The services, benefits and intended outcomes of the Elder program are not fully utilized in the schools. Perhaps a scheduled classroom visits could be developed so the teachers gain a greater appreciation of Aboriginal culture and traditions. Both the Division Elder and the Aboriginal counselor could probably work more closely together in support of a common vision for a Healing program; result from residential school trauma, as an Aboriginal education initiative.

A commitment to Aboriginal education need to be articulated through policy changing and through further consultations with the Urban Aboriginal community and other stakeholders. The growing of Aboriginal student representation in the division schools is increasing and development of new initiatives are required to enhance the education of Aboriginal students as well as be of benefit to non-Aboriginal students. Now is the time to make a difference in the lives of our learners, propel them into the world as beacons of success and hope. They need us to help shape their futures otherwise we are responsible and accountable in some way when they fail to thrive.