



"Accepting the Challenge"

Divisional Futures & Community Relations Committee Minutes

Tuesday, January 4, 2010 – 7:00 p.m.,
Board Room, Admin. Office Building

Present: M. Snelling (Chairperson), P. Bowslaugh, K. Sumner, G. Kruck
(alternate), Dr. D. Michaels.

Invited Guests: Little Teaching Lodge: Tammy Hossack, Lara Thompson
Brandon Friendship Center: Darlene Paquette, Gail Cullen,
Richard Grees, Frank Tacan, Sr.

Regrets: Representatives from Manitoba Métis Federation and Dakota
Ojibway Child and Family Services.

1. CALL TO ORDER:

The Divisional Futures and Community Relations Committee Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson, Mr. Snelling.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Divisional Futures and Community Relations Committee Agenda was approved.

3. COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE GOAL ITEMS

NIL

4. OTHER COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE MATTERS

A) Equity and Sustainability in Education (Meeting with various representatives of Aboriginal Organizations).

Chairperson, Mr. Snelling, thanked all in attendance for their participation and reviewed the role of the Brandon School Division Board of Trustees' Divisional Futures and Community Relations Committee. He circulated a copy of the Brandon School Division Annual Education Results Report – 2009/2010 to each of the guests in attendance and provided a brief overview of the report. Discussions were held regarding Brandon School Division staffing practices; the success of the Off-Campus program; involvement in pre-school programs; communication with families and aboriginal organizations; the need for identity and inclusion of culture in all areas of a child's schooling; professional development days; and continuing discussions on a regular basis. A summary of these discussions is attached to the Minutes as Appendix "A".

It was agreed that the Committee would meet with the various Aboriginal organizations on a regular basis. A follow-up meeting was set for Tuesday, April 5, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at the Brandon Friendship Centre, 205 College Avenue. At that meeting an inventory report of what is happening at each school regarding aboriginal education as well as information regarding aboriginal staff hires would be brought forward. Director of Human Resources, Ms. Becky Switzer, would be invited to attend this meeting.

5. OPERATIONS INFORMATION

The Manitoba Association of Parent Council (MAPC) – Fall 2010 Newsletter was received as information.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

M. Snelling, Chair

P. Bowslaugh

K. Sumner

G. Kruck (Alternate)

Meeting with various Aboriginal Organizations

Board Room, Admin Office

Tuesday, January 4, 2011

Topics

1) BSD Staffing:

- "Need to see more aboriginal role models in the school – not just teachers but all staff".
- "There is the perception the present number of aboriginal employees is very low".
- "BSD needs to look at their hiring process".
- "People will not self-declare if they do not feel it is a 'safe' environment or fear what the consequences will be".
- "Professional Development Days on Aboriginal Issues – would that be helpful?"
- "Is it possible to meet with people who did not get hired? Or better to meet with people who did get hired and discuss the barriers they faced."

2) School Environment

- "Off-campus school is a success because the model works – success at school snowballs into other areas of a student's life."
- "Transiency and the challenges students face at home can make every day seem scary".
- "What is being done for new students and new families who experience a huge culture shock when they come into a new school from the north?"
- "Transportation can be a big issue and needs to be more flexible".
- "Full day Kindergarten would be better than half day, especially if lack of transportation is an issue".
- "EAL students from the north – nothing is done to address the barriers. It is done for the Maple Leaf workers, but not for the aboriginal people".
- "Parents feel intimidated by schools. They haven't had a good experience themselves and pass it on to their children".
- "Need to do something prior to Grade 6 as we lose the students at the Grade 6 and 7 category".

3) Early Years

- "The pre-school speech program partnership with the School Division is a wonderful project".
- "Learning Canada bags are in some schools but need something like it in all schools".
- "Invite the pre-school people who work with these kids to the intake meetings, it helps to make everyone involved more comfortable".
- "Open up communications between schools and the daycare workers – they are the ones who prep children for Kindergarten".
- "We send out reports regarding pre-school programs but never hear back from the Kindergarten teachers".
- "Seedlings program does not get same help that Head start program gets – could start sooner with Seedlings".
- "The more that is done earlier, the more kids will stay in school later".

4) Identity

- "Need to teach students about who they are".
- "Teach students their own language – Cree, Dakota, etc."
- "Use more elders – have people volunteer who have lived the culture".
- "Teach about love/honour/respect".
- "Make grad rates something to be proud of, but celebrate the little accomplishments too".
- Students have a need for connections and without they look elsewhere for identity such as gangs.
- "Talk about impact of residential schools with the older children".
- "Students need to know they are not responsible for their parents' behaviour".

5) School Culture and Curriculum

- How does the division teach students about their identity: who they are and where they come from?
- Students learn about their culture through the Friendship Centre, but it seems to stop once they reach Kindergarten".
- "Schools need to have visual symbols around such as flags, colours, elders."
- "Need to educate and encompass all the Division through such events as feast ceremonies and prayer ceremonies".
- "Incorporate the colour ceremony and the seven sacred teachings".
- More Community Schools are needed. Use of schools after hours for community engages the community in the school.

6) Follow-up

- What ever happened to ANDE?
- Tracking Forward/Tracking Backward – is there a final report?
- Schools need to be involved in Aboriginal Events outside of the classroom – ie: Aboriginal Day – June 21, 2011.
- BSD and Aboriginal Organizations will meet on a regular basis – possibly every three months.
- BSD will undertake a comprehensive review of what is going on in the Division with respect to aboriginal learning and inclusion of culture and provide it for the next meeting.
- BSD will determine the number of employees on staff who have self declared.

7) Big Picture Issues

- Affordable and safe housing is a big issue and leads to increases in transiency.
- Aboriginals are painted with the same negativity by media and society.