



Background

Language is an important vehicle for the transmission of a culture and its values from one generation of people to the next. Supporting and developing native language programs with personnel and curricular resources recognize the values, cultural knowledge, and skills the child brings to the school. Recognition of a child's language and culture are vital to his/her positive growth and educational development.

Procedures

1. A request for a native language program must come from the community to the Local School Board Committee.
2. Should the Local School Committee approve of the request it shall pass a resolution stating its support and request that native language program staff make a presentation to the members of the committee and the staff of the school.
3. The presentation by the native language program staff shall outline the following:
 - 3.1 The type of native language programming available.
 - 3.2 The provincial requirements and regulations governing language programming.
 - 3.3 A research base relative to language instruction and programs.
 - 3.4 Administrative and financial provisions and considerations of the implementation of a native language program.
 - 3.5 The process required to prepare a native language program to need the needs of the community.
4. The community and the staff of the division must be supportive of the implementation of the native language program in the school.
5. Divisional staff will provide the necessary administrative, personnel, program material and training support necessary to implement the native language program.



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Native Language Programs

6. A minimum of 120 minutes per week should be allocated to the native language program at the school level.
7. The native language program will be provided in one of the following two alternatives:
 - 7.1 The native language program is a subject in the regular program of the school and all students will participate unless the program is viewed as being a detriment to a student.
 - 7.2 The native language is provided as a language option and students will decide as to whether they wish to enroll or not.
8. Alberta Education commits to proactive collaboration and consultation with First Nations, Métis and Inuit parents and communities, and other key education, government, and community stakeholders to implement learner-focused strategies that will:
 - 8.1 Increased and strengthen knowledge and understanding among all Albertans of First Nations, Métis and Inuit governance, history, treaty and Aboriginal rights, lands, cultures, and languages.
 - 8.2 Provide First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners with access to culturally relevant learning opportunities and quality support services.
 - 8.3 Develop ministry capacity to address First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner needs effectively.
 - 8.4 Report progress on the achievement of expected long-term outcomes for First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, and other Albertans.



Goal 1: Increased Cultural Awareness

Objectives:

Benchmark then set annual goals to increase cultural awareness, knowledge and understanding of First Nation, Métis and Inuit history, lands, rights, languages and cultures and contemporary perspectives on governance, education, science, wellness, and other issues, yearly.

Suggested Strategies:

Schools can consider strategies that are relevant and meaningful to their community. These can include but are not limited to students being able to:

1. Identify different First Nations within Northland School Division/Canada
2. (Identify First Nations, the Métis, and Inuit in Canada)
3. Be proud of their heritage and identity
4. Tan hide, make dry meat, cook over an open fire
5. Develop and understand the significance and the protocol of a Cultural Feast
6. Learn traditional dancing, Native Dancing
7. Learn Métis Fiddle Music
8. Learn traditional fish net making
9. Learn safety in outdoor camping
10. Increase cross cultural observation and appreciation on field trips
11. Increase their knowledge of their own community
12. Learn about the values taught by our ancestors
13. Understand the importance of the extended family
14. Understand the importance of traditional hunting, fishing and trapping
15. Traditional arts and crafts
16. Embedding history, lands, contemporary perspectives on governance, science, wellness and other issues into the curriculum taught at the school – Social Studies, Aboriginal Studies, Science, Mathematics, Health and Physical Education and Language Arts.
17. Storytelling
18. Traditional Clothing
19. Traditional Games



Resources:

1. Native Language Instructors
2. Elders/Parents
3. Storytellers, grandparents
4. Hunters/Trappers/Fishermen
5. Traditional dancers
6. Métis dancers
7. Museum Curators Historian
8. Student extended families
9. Alberta Education Curriculum, Edmonton Public Aboriginal Infusion into core subject areas.

Evaluation:

1. Report student success in overall academic achievement
2. Document and report cultural events held
3. Document and report Elders' involvement
4. Document and report number of parents who volunteer at these cultural events
5. Document and report number of field trips taken within and outside the community where students have participated in cultural activities
6. School collections of family histories
7. Report to School Division annually on results.



Goal 2: Increased Student Literacy

Objectives:

Benchmark and then set targets to increase literacy opportunities yearly.

Suggested Strategies:

Students will:

1. Increase reading in Aboriginal Languages using Roman orthography and/or Cree syllabics
2. Enjoy and relate to Aboriginal literature
3. Increase vocabulary in Aboriginal Language
4. Focus on Aboriginal Languages and their influences on second language literacy
5. Explore linkages to knowledge of Métis, First Nation Language and literacy programs.

Resources:

1. Native Language Instructors
2. Literacy programs and student assessment
3. Native Language Supervisor
4. Examine resources on language acquirement and literacy.
5. Distance Learning Cree programs for fluent speakers.

Evaluation:

1. Benchmark community fluency levels of students and report annually on improvements



Goal 3: Increased Linkages Between Education and Employment

Objectives:

Benchmark then increase the linkages between education and employment including working with stakeholders to provide relevant career and labour market information and resources to First Nation, Métis and Inuit students, parents and communities yearly.

Suggested Strategies:

Schools may consider:

1. Field trips to local employment sites, vocational schools, colleges and universities
2. Career fairs at the school
3. Tracking of student courses and achievement through High School with a focus of employment and post-secondary education
4. RAP and YAP programs where possible

Resources:

1. Post-Secondary education institutions
2. Local employers
3. School Community Liaison Workers
4. School Counselors
5. Careers – Next Generation
6. NADC – Northern Links Program
7. Local resource agencies
8. Corporate entities such as Syncrude, Conoco-Philips

Evaluation:

1. Report post-secondary institutions visited by students
2. Report number of students involved
3. Report students in Registered Apprentice Program
4. Report field trips to work sites
5. Report career fairs school in which the schools were involved
6. Report annually to Northland School Division #61



Goal 4: Increased Student Attendance and Grade 12 Graduation

Objectives:

Increase the attendance, retention and graduation rates of First Nation, Métis and Inuit learners attending provincial schools.

Suggested Strategies:

Schools should consider:

1. Providing support for students and families through the employment of School/Community Liaison Workers
2. Initiating incentive measures to encourage students to improve attendance
3. Revising attendance policy to give clear guidelines to teachers and administrators to encourage attendance and assist students at risk
4. Encouraging partnerships between parents and school to improve supports for students
5. Tracking and monitor attendance, early school leaver, and graduation data
6. Providing support to students at risk of leaving school early
7. Providing training to School/Community Liaison workers to assist students at risk.

Resources:

1. School/Community Liaison Workers
2. School guidance counselors where available
3. School Staff: At Risk Committees, Homework Clubs,
4. Attendance and retention strategies employed in other Alberta communities
5. Northland School Division Attendance Committee

Evaluation:

1. Benchmark and report improved attendance
2. Benchmark and report number of Early School Leavers
3. Benchmark and report number of Northland School Division Grade 12 graduates annually and over five year



Goal 5: Increase First Nations, Métis and Inuit Teachers and School Personnel

Objectives:

Increase the number of First Nation, Métis and Inuit teachers and school personnel.

Suggested Strategies:

1. Support education training within the communities and in the North
2. Provide bursary and scholarships for Northland students and employees receiving education training and University courses

Resources:

1. Northern Lakes College, Grande Prairie Regional College, University of Alberta
2. Northland School Division #61 provides a salary bonus for teachers with proficiency in Cree or Chipewyan Language as determined by the superintendent or designate. The current bonus is \$1472.82 annually.

Evaluation:

1. Benchmark and report numbers of paraprofessionals taking courses, numbers of Northland students and paraprofessionals enrolled in Bachelor of Education courses



Goal 6: Increase Parent Involvement With The School

Objectives:

Increase parent involvement at the school.

Suggested Strategies:

Schools should consider:

1. Native Language Instructors and administrators inviting parents to school events
2. Christmas concerts / Festivals
3. Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Days
4. Parent/Teacher Interviews
5. Winter Carnival Days
6. Field trips outside the community
7. Mothers' Day Tea
8. Fathers' Day Tea
9. Graduation Exercises
10. Easter Celebrations
11. Oratory Sessions
12. National Alcohol Awareness Week
13. Aboriginal Entertainment
14. Student's Awards Day
15. Parent/Teachers Breakfast
16. Remembrance Day
17. A project to identify parental involvement best practices in Northland School Division #61. Creation of a handbook on best practices to share between schools
18. Parent volunteers
19. Parent – staff workshops



Resources:

1. Native Language Instructors
2. School Staff
3. NAAW Personnel
4. Parents
5. Local resources - parenting programs and information for parents
6. FCSS
7. Native Education Ad Hoc Committee
8. NSD School Principals
9. A.T.A.

Evaluation:

1. Benchmark and report number of parents that attend activities held at the school
2. Report on parent involvement in their children's education through school visits, home contacts, family conferences, parent initiated meetings
3. Report on activities held at the school each year geared to the community
4. Board member participation



Goal 7: Create a Sub-committee of the Education Committee for In-School Cultural Development

The Education Committee and the Superintendent or designate shall assist:

1. Identifying participants for the committee including Northland Board volunteers
2. Providing direction to the working committee

Working with the Native Programs Supervisor the Ad-Hoc Committee should develop its terms of reference, goals and planned activities.

Suggested Strategies:

1. Begin with a common understanding of the intent and purpose of this committee
2. Promote cultural activities within the Division
3. Plan Cultural Displays from schools
4. Focus on Aboriginal Awareness Day or a cultural focus during Education Week
5. Organize a cultural fair for the Division
6. Recommend guest speakers for Professional Development within the Division and at the schools
7. Identify a manner by which evaluation takes into consideration both cultural perspectives and combine this into one approach.
8. Assist communities to identify their own definition of culture and activities to reflect this.
9. Promote best practices throughout the Division
10. Consider pilot projects on promoting programs with parents, Cree immersion in primary grades where possible

Evaluation:

1. Report meeting dates and agendas
2. Report successful cultural activities in Northland schools
3. Report best practices throughout Division



Goal 8: To consider Professional Development Opportunities

Objectives:

Consider professional development opportunities for aspiring and existing school administrators, teachers and school personnel on First Nations, Métis and Inuit history and culture.

Suggested Strategies:

Schools may arrange:

1. Elder visits
2. Transportation for Elders
3. Elders' Annual Supper
4. Elders' Monthly Teas
5. Elders to teach handicrafts
6. Aboriginal Veterans Dinner

Schools may plan:

1. School-community based professional development activities
2. Divisional professional development for beginning teachers within the Division, at Northland School Division Development Day and at in-services already offered for administrators, professional and paraprofessional staff

Schools may arrange:

1. Cultural Events including: Métis dances, NAAW speakers, Career Days, Role Models, storytellers, drama productions
2. Family Dinners
3. Open House
4. Talent Shows
5. To invite local guest speakers
6. Multi-Cultural Feasts
7. Aboriginal Awareness
8. Cultural Camp Events
9. Sharing circle



Resources:

1. Native Language Instructors
2. Elders Coordinator
3. Elders (Veterans)
4. School Staff
5. Community Workers
6. Inter-Agency Group
7. Alberta Post-Secondary Institutions
8. Aboriginal Speakers for Professional Development Days
9. ATA (Equity and Diversity)
10. Native Language Instructors
11. School Staff
12. Political Leaders
13. Elders
14. Community Workers
15. Parents
16. Inter-Agency Groups

Evaluation:

1. Document Elders' stories
2. Report frequency of Elder involvement
3. Document the protocol and respect for the Elders
4. Report on professional development activities involving First Nations, Métis and Inuit history and culture both at the school and divisional level
5. Report on activities annually