
**Aboriginal Education Initiatives
in Saskatchewan Education:
1995-1998**

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Preface

This report represents a change from the Aboriginal Education Unit's usual practice of reporting annually or biannually on activity within the Unit. Because activity in the area of Aboriginal education is now widespread throughout Saskatchewan Education, the Aboriginal Education Unit believes it is timely to compile a more complete picture. Information in the report came from various documents and from personnel throughout the Department.

The report presents a picture of Saskatchewan Education's involvement in Aboriginal education between September, 1995 and June, 1998. Many of the initiatives described began before this time period, and many of them are ongoing to the current time. The reader should be aware, therefore, that the report may not describe an aspect or phase of a certain activity if it does not fall within the three-year time frame.

Introduction

For the past two decades Saskatchewan Education, together with its educational partners, has been working to improve the educational experience of Aboriginal students from kindergarten to grade 12. Since 1982, Saskatchewan Education's activities have been guided by the expertise and recommendations of Aboriginal education advisory committees — the Native Curriculum Review Committee, the Indian and Métis Education Advisory Committee (IMEAC) and, currently, the Aboriginal Education Provincial Advisory Committee (AEPAC).

It is now an expectation that Aboriginal content and perspectives will be integrated into all programs related to the education of kindergarten to grade 12 students in Saskatchewan. We now seek to have Aboriginal representation in decision making, recognizing that Aboriginal people, and Elders in particular, are sources of knowledge and can provide answers to questions regarding content and processes for improving education. It is also accepted that in order for learning to take place, unique needs must be addressed through integrated, community-based approaches. We recognize the need for increased understanding about the educational experience of Aboriginal students and teachers, and the need for all students to learn about the cultures and history of Aboriginal peoples.

This report is intended to outline the range of programming, policy and process activities within Saskatchewan Education in support of Aboriginal education. It is not the report's purpose to evaluate each initiative or to make recommendations for future planning. Neither is it the purpose of the report to celebrate prematurely, as there is much work yet to be done.

The report was prepared through a review of existing documents and written material, and consultation with Saskatchewan Education staff and other educational partners with knowledge about Saskatchewan Education programs or activities.

The Needs of the Child

Since 1994, the government of Saskatchewan has had an Action Plan for Children as part of the government's social policy agenda. This plan is designed to give emphasis to community-based preventive actions for ensuring the healthy development of children and youth, and is co-ordinated by an Intersectoral Steering Committee which includes representatives from participating departments, including Saskatchewan Education. The Action Plan has provided a means and funding for community organizations to work together in an integrated manner. The funding for Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Children has grown from \$6.4 million in 1994-95 to \$24.7 million in 1997-98.

Saskatchewan Education has long upheld a principle of commitment to the whole child in its programs, research initiatives, and curriculum development and evaluation activity.

Since the 1984 Curriculum and Instruction Review, Saskatchewan has based its Core Curricula on three levels of development: Elementary,

... Aboriginal people, and Elders in particular, are sources of knowledge and can provide answers to questions regarding content and processes for improving education.

This report is intended to explore the diversity and range of programming, policy and process activities within Saskatchewan Education in support of Aboriginal education.

Saskatchewan Education has long upheld a principle of commitment to the whole child in its programs, research initiatives, and curriculum development and evaluation activity.

We also know that the school cannot exist in isolation from parents and the community, and that if each child's needs are to be met, each child's caregivers and community must be a part of the school community.

Middle and Secondary, with attention given to child development needs at each level. In addition, Core Curricula make allowance for individual needs through the Adaptive Dimension, which facilitates adaptation at the classroom level to meet the learning needs of each child. For the most part, children now stay with their same-age peers, but adaptations are made by teachers and other professionals to meet the child's needs. These adaptations might be to content, instruction, or learning environment.

In addition, we realize that learning cannot take place unless the needs of the whole child are met. This has resulted in partnership arrangements with agencies outside of the school, such as social services, justice, and health agencies in the community. We also know that the school cannot exist in isolation from parents and the community, and that if each child's needs are to be met, each child's caregivers and community must be a part of the school community.

Child development and the needs of the individual child, then, provide a context for all kindergarten to grade 12 education initiatives at the provincial level, including initiatives in Aboriginal education. All Aboriginal education programs, policy and other initiatives are aimed at finding better ways to meet the learning needs of students. There is no one way that this can be achieved. Curriculum guides alone cannot meet the learning needs of Aboriginal students. Neither can policy, nor better materials in the classroom, nor professional development for teachers, if each of these occurs without the others.

The learning and developmental needs of all students have a common characteristic. Students need a learning environment in which they are at ease; they need to be taught in a manner compatible with their backgrounds and learning styles; they need to see their world reflected in subject matter and content; they need to feel that they are a part of a learning community. The work that is now underway in the area of Aboriginal education is aimed at ensuring that all students are educated in a manner consistent with their needs.

History of Saskatchewan Education's Aboriginal Education Initiatives

Saskatchewan Education's current initiatives in the area of Aboriginal education began in the early 1980s. A provincial advisory committee was struck in 1982, called the Native Curriculum Review Committee. The committee was charged with such tasks as recommending a kindergarten to grade 12 action plan; initiating a review of curricula to determine where and how Aboriginal content might fit; and, identifying need with respect to materials and research.

The first action plan was adopted in 1984 and included 12 recommendations. These recommendations covered such topics as policy development, the need for an ongoing Aboriginal education advisory committee, the need for Aboriginal representation on curriculum committees, inclusion of the North, and the education of both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students about First Nations content and perspectives.

Also in 1984, the Minister of Education released *Directions*, the final

The work that is now underway in the area of Aboriginal education is aimed at ensuring that all students are educated in a manner consistent with their needs, and that all students and their families are served by the provincial school system.

report of the Advisory Committee on Curriculum and Instruction Review. This report highlighted the unique needs of Aboriginal students and recommended that the Minister “initiate the formulation of policies and procedures to ensure that the unique needs of Northern and Indian/Native students are met” (p. 50). Specific recommendations referred to the need for Aboriginal content to be integrated into Core Curriculum; the need for Native studies and Aboriginal languages course development; the need for materials evaluation and development; and the need for Aboriginal involvement in decision making.

These committees and their reports were the forerunners for much of the work that has been done provincially in Aboriginal education in the years since, especially in the areas of curriculum development, instruction, evaluation, and materials development. Further, the province established an Aboriginal education advisory committee, currently called the Aboriginal Education Provincial Advisory Committee, in Planning, Evaluation and Children’s Services, to advise the Minister of Education. Both the Curriculum and Instruction Branch and the Planning, Evaluation and Children’s Services Branch of Saskatchewan Education have been heavily involved in Aboriginal education initiatives on many fronts, from curriculum development to policy development to research.

Although this report focuses on Saskatchewan Education initiatives, it is important to note that much activity has also occurred outside of the provincial realm: within classrooms, schools and communities; in post secondary institutions such as the Gabriel Dumont Institute, the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, and the Universities of Regina and Saskatchewan; in the North; in other jurisdictions, provinces and territories. The result is that Aboriginal education initiatives within and outside of Saskatchewan Education are now widespread and diverse.

Guided by Policy

In 1995, Saskatchewan Education adopted the *Indian and Métis Education Policy from Kindergarten to Grade 12*. The Policy’s four principles guide the development of kindergarten to grade 12 education programs for and about Indian and Métis peoples. The principles are:

- Indian and Métis peoples have the opportunity to participate fully in the planning, design and delivery and, where applicable, co-management of the education system at all levels.
- The education system recognizes Indian and Métis students are the children of peoples whose cultures are, in many ways, different from those who established the school system. These differences which may include learning styles, language and world-view, must be reflected in curriculum, programs, teaching methods and climate in the schools attended by Indian and Métis children.
- There is a co-ordination of efforts to meet the needs of Indian and Métis students in the communities in which they live. There is ongoing consultation and co-operation between and among federal and provincial governments and their agencies, local education and community development authorities.
- Programs to improve the success of Indian and Métis students in school are focused primarily at the school community level (*Indian and Métis Education Policy from Kindergarten to Grade 12*, p. 1).

In 1997, the Equity in Education Forum, of which Saskatchewan

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Education is a member, released the document entitled *Our Children, Our Communities and Our Future*. This document contains a policy framework for equity in education. The principles of the equity policy framework can be summarized as follows. The equity partners will:

- respect and nurture the diversity, cultural heritage, life experience, ways of knowing, unique potential, and capabilities of each student
- use inclusive and collaborative processes involving educational partners, students, and family and community members to broaden the base of participation and support
- clearly define expectations and provide students with supports necessary for achievement
- use holistic, comprehensive approaches, and define and deal with issues as a whole rather than as parts
- build upon existing structures and events to make the most of available resources
- be responsive to the diverse peoples of Saskatchewan (*Our Children, Our Communities and Our Future*, p. 11).

The four principles of the Indian and Métis Education Policy, along with the principles of the equity policy framework, suggest many of the questions we can ask to determine progress in Aboriginal education. We can ask questions such as the following:

- What new processes have been put in place for involving Aboriginal people at all levels of the system?
- What partnerships have developed between various jurisdictions?
- How have curricula and assessment and evaluation processes taken into account differences in learning styles, languages, and world views?
- What supports have been put in place so that all students can achieve success in school?
- How have instruction and classroom climate changed to reflect cultural differences?
- How have efforts been co-ordinated within communities to meet the needs of Aboriginal students?
- How have governments and their agencies co-operated for the benefit of Aboriginal students?
- What unique programs have developed at the school and community level, from which other communities can learn?
- What methods have been put in place for evaluating how we are doing and providing information to the diverse peoples of Saskatchewan?

Partners in Education

Saskatchewan Education is one of several partners involved in kindergarten to grade 12 education in the province. Although it is an expectation that Saskatchewan Education will provide leadership, many other agencies, institutions, and jurisdictions also lead the way to improved education for all students.

This report concerns those activities in which Saskatchewan Education is involved. Some activities were initiated by Saskatchewan Education in response to concerns expressed by Aboriginal people, and as a means of meeting its ongoing obligations to all Saskatchewan students. Others have come about as a result of collaboration or partnership agreements,

or of intersectoral initiatives such as the *Action Plan for Children*. The nature of Saskatchewan Education's involvement varies from primary responsibility, to the provision of money or expertise, to support or facilitation. The fact that such a range of activity exists is an indication of the diversity of current initiatives, the widespread recognition of the need for change, and the number of different educational partners working to improve the school experiences of Aboriginal students.

Current Initiatives

The following is a brief survey of those initiatives, programs, or activities in which Saskatchewan Education is involved. The focus of this report is on the years between 1995 and 1998, although in many cases the particular activity or program described was initiated prior to that. Where appropriate, an explanation will be provided of how that activity has changed or evolved in recent years to reflect the current situation.

Curriculum Development and Evaluation

Saskatchewan Education has primary responsibility for providing teachers with curriculum guides containing the required content and processes for each area of study. Curriculum guides act as policy, as they outline what knowledge, skills, and attitudes students are expected to acquire at each grade level. If a grade 5 teacher wants to know what the expectations are regarding Aboriginal content and perspectives in Social Studies, for example, the curriculum guide should provide the answer.

Over the past decade, development and implementation of Saskatchewan's new Core Curricula have been the main focus of the Curriculum and Instruction Branch. Figure 1 displays the components and initiatives of Core Curriculum, and illustrates how Aboriginal content and perspectives fit in the overall plan.

Core Curriculum Components	Core Curriculum Initiatives
Required Areas of Study	Instructional Approaches
Common Essential Learnings	Student Evaluation
Locally-determined Options	Resource-based Learning
Adaptive Dimension	Indian and Métis Content and Perspectives
	Gender Equity
	Multicultural Education
	Special Education
	Identity, Language, and Culture
	Fransaskois schools

Figure 1: Saskatchewan's Core Curriculum

Recently, evaluation of new curricula has begun and subsequent revisions to the guides, along with renewal plans, are forthcoming. This is consistent with Saskatchewan's plans for "curriculum actualization" and its goal that all aspects of Core Curriculum be effectively implemented

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The Inclusion of Aboriginal Content and Perspectives in Curricula

Full implementation of Core Curricula, including curricula developed for Francophone and French Immersion schools, requires that Aboriginal content and perspectives be a part of each area of study in each classroom in Saskatchewan schools, whether or not that classroom has Aboriginal students. All students benefit from knowledge about the Aboriginal peoples of Saskatchewan, and through knowledge misconceptions and bias can be eliminated.

Aboriginal content and perspectives are included in Core Curriculum guides through consultation between curriculum writers, Aboriginal representatives on reference committees, the Aboriginal Education Unit, and Aboriginal teachers at the pilot sites. Subject area implementation workshops with teachers include components or modules on Aboriginal content and perspectives, sometimes in the form of “awareness” workshops.

Most new Core curricula are now complete and in the implementation phase. Some are being revised as a result of recent curriculum evaluations. In general, it cannot be said that Aboriginal content and perspectives are now fully integrated in curriculum guides or effectively implemented in Saskatchewan classrooms. However, Directors of the various units within the Curriculum and Instruction Branch have noted that there is certainly more awareness of the importance of Aboriginal content and perspectives, and more knowledge for curriculum writers to access. One Director summarized the current state as follows:

The incorporation of Aboriginal perspectives will evolve through three stages — resistance, acceptance, implementation. There was poor awareness and much resistance when we first started, even though the human and financial resources were

in place. We’re now at the acceptance stage (generally speaking). The field is asking for help.

The following are examples of some of the activities that have occurred within the various areas of learning. Many of these activities were intended to provide support for teachers in their endeavours to implement Aboriginal content and perspectives in their programs.

- In 1997 Saskatchewan Education funded a research report called “Science and Culture Nexus”. Glen Aikenhead (University of Saskatchewan) and Bente Huntley (SUNTEP, Prince Albert) investigated teachers’ understanding of scientific and Aboriginal worldviews, and the role their understanding played in helping Aboriginal students make the transition between two opposing worldviews. This and other research will guide the process of evergreening the Science curriculum and assist teachers with implementation.
- A resource package for Elementary Mathematics, *Indian and Métis Mathematics Units for the Elementary Level*, was prepared in the past year under the direction of the Aboriginal Education Unit, for

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distribution to elementary schools. Cultural Mathematics units were developed in collaboration with the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College (SIFC) to demonstrate mathematical concepts that underpin cultural concepts and material technologies. SIFC worked closely with its student teachers to determine the content and strategies.

- Social Studies, History, and Native Studies at the 10, 20, and 30 levels were made parallel courses with common themes and concepts. The result is that students may take any combination of the three to fulfill their social sciences requirements. A student so choosing may now take three Native Studies courses. The common themes and concepts also allow teachers to use the courses as resources for each other. A History 30 teacher, for example, can use Native Studies 30 as a resource for incorporating Aboriginal perspectives. Bibliographies contain resources for all three courses, facilitating integration and cross-referencing. The work has been most successful at the 30 level. Further work will be done at the 10 and 20 levels to make the courses more parallel.
- An Arts Education CD-ROM and slide resource package, entitled *Ideas and Inspiration*, was funded and distributed to all high schools. The resource package includes many Aboriginal artists from all regions of Canada.
- A concerted effort was made in Middle and Secondary Level English Language Arts to address issues related to diverse learners, especially issues around first and second language acquisition and the meaning of "standard" English. Significant participation of Aboriginal teachers, Northern schools, and Band schools was achieved during the pilot phase. Collaboration between curriculum writers and Aboriginal representatives on the reference committee and program team resulted in:
 - inclusivity regarding oral language, dialects, accents, and ESL and ESD students
 - much essential discussion about assessment practices
 - inclusion of work by Aboriginal authors (poems, stories, plays)
 - inclusion of learning objectives intended to foster self-esteem and work toward the eradication of racism.

Evergreen Curriculum

The Evergreen Curriculum is Saskatchewan Education's vision for an electronically-available, continuously renewed curriculum. Once the curricula are on-line, they can be enhanced without the expenses associated with reprinting and mailing documents. The evergreening process will provide an opportunity to incorporate new developments in Aboriginal education, such as the *Scope and Sequence of First Nations History, Culture and Values* (see page 12 of this report).

Perhaps one of the greatest advantages of on-line curriculum guides, in addition to the ease with which they can be revised, is the potential for cross-referencing with other documents and Web sites. Links can be created within a curriculum guide to other guides, bibliographies, and Web sites, saving classroom teachers hours of research and preparation time.

Many of these activities were intended to provide support for teachers in their endeavours to implement Aboriginal content and perspectives in their programs.

This has obvious advantages for teachers wishing to incorporate Aboriginal content and perspectives. For example, an Arts Education teacher might wish to find information on Saskatchewan Aboriginal artist Bob Boyer. The teacher could search "Bob Boyer" and receive a list of links to each place in the Saskatchewan curriculum guides where the artist's name appears. When the teacher then goes to an identified location in a curriculum guide, another link may take him or her to a site such as the Mackenzie Art Gallery for more information about the artist.

More than 60 Saskatchewan curriculum guides are now on-line, including Indian Languages K-12 and Native Studies 10 and 30. The Aboriginal Education Unit's homepage includes links to appropriate Web sites in Canada and the United States.

Native Studies Course Development

Native Studies 10, 20, and 30 have all been implemented in schools. Native Studies 30 has recently undergone extensive revision and a new program was made available in the fall of 1999. Nine teachers were accredited to teach Natives 30 in the fall of 1999.

Of the three courses, Native Studies 10 has the highest enrollment, with 53 teachers teaching the course in 1997-98.

Native Studies 10 is also available from the Saskatchewan Government Correspondence School.

Although Native Studies 10 is not scheduled for evaluation until 2003-04, it is evident that revisions are needed to reflect recent developments related to governance issues. In addition, plans are underway to add more about the Métis people and to build in flexibility so that the course can be adapted to reflect the cultures of Aboriginal peoples in the local community.

The overall goal of the Native Studies program is to provide both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students with a better understanding of Aboriginal peoples and their cultures, history, and aspirations. Now that the courses are in place, ways must be found to encourage more students to take them and to encourage school divisions to hire accredited teachers to teach them.

Indian Languages

In 1994, Saskatchewan Education released a new provincial Aboriginal Languages curriculum guide, *Indian Languages: Curriculum Guide for Kindergarten to Grade 12*. Since 1996, through a partnership with the Prince Albert Grand Council, Saskatchewan Education has employed a consultant to provide program support for the new curriculum.

Saskatchewan Education has also been involved in the

development of an Aboriginal Languages curriculum framework currently being prepared by the Western Canadian Protocol, a group comprising representatives from the western provinces and territories. The document, which includes outcomes for both first and second language speakers, was begun in 1996.

Scope and Sequence of Aboriginal Content

The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations is currently developing a document titled *Scope and Sequence of First Nations History, Culture and Values*. Developers are working closely with Elders in the community. The project, which began in 1996, is at the first draft stage. The scope and sequence will become an invaluable reference document for curriculum renewal, course revision, and community development.

Student Assessment

Student assessment refers to the means by which teachers gather information about an individual student's progress. In classrooms such as English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms, the need is obvious for finding various appropriate methods of assessing learning. However, in regular English-speaking classrooms the need is not so obvious, as cultural differences can be subtle and cross-cultural education has not, until recently, been a part of most teachers' and curriculum developers' training.

Most Core Curriculum guides contain suggestions for assessing student learning. In recent years, Saskatchewan Education has concentrated on developing holistic assessment instruments that are free of cultural bias. In particular, Mathematics, Science, and Language Arts have adopted holistic assessment approaches. In addition, holistic scoring has been used in Saskatchewan Education's large-scale assessments. A 1998 province-wide assessment of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills featured holistic scoring techniques that were sensitive to the oral tradition of Aboriginal peoples. Performance and portfolio assessments have also been introduced in large-scale assessments.

The province of Saskatchewan has also set explicit opportunity-to-learn standards, which impact on student assessment. In the past, students have been assessed without consideration given to the fact that not all students have had an equal opportunity to learn. If a student has equal opportunity to learn, according to his or her own needs and learning styles, it then follows that assessment can be more fair and equitable.

Although headway has been made in the area of student assessment, most Saskatchewan Education curriculum development and evaluation staff believe it is only the beginning. One Director stated, "There is a need for an Aboriginal Student Evaluation Handbook, which reflects Elders' views. Appropriate professional development opportunities must be created for all Saskatchewan educators in this area."

Curriculum Evaluation

The Evergreen Curriculum is Saskatchewan Education's vision for an electronically-delivered, continuously renewed curriculum.

Perhaps one of the greatest advantages of on-line curriculum guides, in addition to the ease with which they can be revised, is the potential for cross-referencing with other documents and Web sites.

All Core Curricula have, or will undergo, a process of evaluation once they have been implemented in classrooms throughout the province. Because inclusion of Aboriginal content and perspectives is a Core Curriculum initiative, the evaluations will try to determine whether or not the Aboriginal content and perspectives in the guides are adequate and useful, whether teachers who undertake to teach it have adequate support, and whether it has resulted in increased, authentic Aboriginal content in classroom programs.

The following is a brief summary of what was learned from the three curriculum evaluations that have taken place in 1995-1998:

- The evaluation report for grades 7-9 Social Studies was completed in November of 1996. Revision of curricula and activity guides began in September, 1997. Revised curricula and activity guides were introduced to schools beginning in September of 1999. Based on the results of the evaluation, Aboriginal content and perspectives in these documents are being enhanced. One of the major difficulties is finding suitable resources to support the documents.
- Kindergarten to grade 9 Arts Education was evaluated in 1997-98. Questions about Aboriginal content were asked in the focus group portion of the evaluation. About 56% of teachers reported that they incorporated Aboriginal perspectives into their programs (*Saskatchewan Education Indicators*, 1998, p. 48). However, there was some concern expressed that activities in the classroom were not always authentic. This is an indication that teachers have the desire to teach Aboriginal content but do not always have the knowledge or supports needed for the true intentions of the guides to be realized. Revision of Elementary and Middle Level Arts Education will begin during the next year and consideration will be given to these concerns.
- Grade 1-5 English Language Arts was evaluated in the fall of 1998. The evaluation report is currently being prepared. Preliminary findings indicate that the curriculum encourages student involvement and accommodates a diverse student population. However, teachers want further help with evaluation, resource collections, and methods of responding to diversity.

The overall goal of the Native Studies program is to provide both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students with a better understanding of Aboriginal peoples and their cultures, history, and aspirations.

Saskatchewan Education Indicators Program

The Saskatchewan Education Indicators program has been developed in collaboration with educational partners to monitor the provincial education system. A report has been produced annually since 1994, providing information on such topics as:

- demographic, social, and economic trends
- Saskatchewan students, educators, and schools
- education finance
- students' skills and understanding
- relevance of curricula
- equity and accessibility
- responsiveness of the education system to student and public needs.

These reports contain valuable evaluative data, and are Saskatchewan

The scope and sequence will become an invaluable reference document for curriculum renewal, course revision, and community development.

In recent years, Saskatchewan Education has concentrated on developing holistic assessment instruments that are free of cultural bias.

Education's major response to public accountability. The reports are also a means of evaluating the system's response to the needs of Aboriginal peoples.

Figure 2 provides an example of the kind of data that is found in the Indicators reports.

Aboriginal Education Indicators

In response to IMEAC's request for further information on Aboriginal students in the provincial system, Saskatchewan Education began producing *Aboriginal Education Indicators* as an internal framework for reference and policy decision making. The 1999 document is the third such report and includes the following information:

- demographic information on the Saskatchewan and Canadian Aboriginal population
- social factors
- economic factors
- Aboriginal students and teachers in Saskatchewan
- post secondary education.

Along with the Saskatchewan Education Indicators program, the Aboriginal Education Indicators program is a means of monitoring the school system's performance, identifying its successes and shortcomings in Aboriginal education, and acquiring information for decision making.

Aboriginal Involvement in Curriculum Development and Implementation

Since the early years of Core Curriculum development, the various areas of study within Saskatchewan Education have been trying to ensure the presence of Aboriginal voices on program teams and reference committees, and among pilot teachers. Despite the effort, it cannot be said that adequate representation has been achieved. Within Saskatchewan Education, the Aboriginal Education Unit has not always had the staff necessary to fulfill all requests for assistance in curriculum development, materials evaluation, and implementation workshops. In the field, Aboriginal teachers are often taxed to the limit with requests for their involvement on reference committees and in pilots. In addition, many Aboriginal teachers in the province teach in Band schools, and although Band schools do participate in pilots, there is no mechanism for their teachers to sit on provincial reference committees. However, in spite of the difficulties, Aboriginal representation has been achieved in some cases. The following two examples stand out:

...the evaluations will try to determine whether or not the Aboriginal content and perspectives in the guides are adequate and useful, whether teachers who undertake to teach it have adequate support, and whether it has resulted in increased, authentic Aboriginal content in classroom programs.

....teachers have the desire to teach Aboriginal content but do not always have the knowledge or supports needed for the true intentions of the guides to be realized.

- For grades 10 to 12 English Language Arts development, an all-out effort was made to achieve substantial Aboriginal representation due to the complex cultural issues surrounding language usage. Aboriginal representation was sought for the program team, and Saskatchewan Education requested of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF) that one of their representatives on the reference committee be an Aboriginal teacher. Significant representation was also achieved for the pilot through the participation of individual teachers with expertise, Northern Lights School Division, and several Band schools. The result is a curriculum that respects diverse language needs and includes the works of Aboriginal authors in an authentic manner.
- In the Social Studies area, a unique process developed as part of the effort to make History, Social Studies, and Native Studies parallel courses. Experts in the area of Native Studies were available to advise the History and Social Studies developers, and visa versa. In addition, resources for all three areas were included in one bibliography, allowing for integration and cross-referencing. During the pilot, teachers of Native Studies, Social Studies, and History met as one large group for the implementation workshops. This allowed the pilot teachers to learn from one another, and from presenters for all three subject areas.

Instructional Supports

Teachers consistently report that one of the greatest difficulties they encounter in implementing new curricula and initiatives in the classroom is that of finding suitable resources. We also know that if new curricula are not accompanied by adequate inservice education, they sit on shelves instead of being transformed into classroom programs. In recent years Saskatchewan Education has continued its commitment to identify learning resources for teachers, and to provide inservice education through the Aboriginal Education Unit and the Regional Superintendents of Curriculum and Instruction to accompany new curriculum initiatives.

Learning Resources

The Instructional Resources Unit of Saskatchewan Education works closely with the Aboriginal Education Unit to identify suitable resources that support all curricula. Three particular challenges exist regarding Aboriginal content in resources: finding resources that are accurate and free of bias, finding resources that have been written and/or produced by Aboriginal people, and identifying materials evaluators who have the knowledge and expertise to evaluate resources from an Aboriginal perspective. Although Aboriginal evaluators are sought for all subject areas, special efforts are made to involve Aboriginal people in the identification and evaluation of resources for curricula such as Indian Languages and Native Studies.

Once materials have been approved through the evaluation process they are included in subject area bibliographies, thus ensuring that Aboriginal content and perspectives in all curricula are supported by approved resources. If a resource has been recommended for its Aboriginal content, it receives a designation [IM] in the bibliography so that a teacher

can easily see that it relates to Aboriginal content in the curriculum guide.

In 1995, *Diverse Voices: Selecting Equitable Resources for Indian and Métis Education* was revised in order to assist teachers with identifying appropriate resources.

The *Aboriginal Resource List for K-12*, which compiles recommended resources from all subject areas, was completed and distributed in November of 1999.

When a new resource is being developed by a publisher or other group, Saskatchewan Education sometimes becomes involved in a consultative role to ensure that the resource will meet specifications for inclusion in bibliographies. The following are two current examples:

These reports contain valuable evaluative data, and are Saskatchewan Education's major response to public accountability.

- The federal government is preparing a three-part history in collaboration with other groups: Inuit Culture and History (with an Inuit group from the North), Indian Culture and History (with the Sandy Lake Band of the Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation and the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College), and Métis Culture and History (with the Gabriel Dumont Institute). This history will likely be made available on three CD-ROMs. Saskatchewan Education provided funding support to the Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation and the Gabriel Dumont Institute for the research and development work they did.
- The Saskatchewan Publishers Group is preparing an anthology of Saskatchewan Literature. Saskatchewan Education helped to develop the guidelines, one of which is that 25-30% of the selections will be by Aboriginal authors. This resource is intended to support the English Language Arts 30 curriculum.

Sometimes Saskatchewan Education either purchases or funds the production of new materials for the schools if a special need exists. The following are examples:

- *Aboriginal Peoples in the 21st Century: Social, Economic and Political Changes and Challenges*, published by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, was purchased and sent to each high school in the province in 1997.
- Production of the interactive CD-ROM *Stories in Season* (which contains four children's stories by First Nations authors) was funded by Saskatchewan Education and sent to all elementary schools in the province in 1997. Students can hear the stories in one of six languages: Cree, Dené, Saulteaux, Dakota, French, or English.

SCN Programming

Saskatchewan Education is also involved in the selection of educational programming for SCN (Saskatchewan Communications Network). A concerted effort is made to find Aboriginal programming to support various curricula. In most cases, duplication rights are secured by SCN so that teachers can order their own copy on video for a nominal charge. Rights are usually negotiated for 5-year periods and then new programs

...the various areas of study within Saskatchewan Education have been trying to ensure the presence of Aboriginal voices on program teams and reference committees, and among pilot teachers.

are added. Programs are listed in the *SCN School Telecast Schedule* and the *Educational Video Duplication Catalogue*.

The following are examples of recent SCN programs selected by Saskatchewan Education to support Aboriginal content and perspectives in curricula:

- *From Spirit to Spirit* (series). This 13-part series is a celebration of indigenous peoples on three continents who are reaffirming their cultural identities. (Grades 10-12 Native Studies; Arts Education).
- *War Against the Indians* (series). This three-part series explores the impact of the First Nations of North America on the so-called discovery of the New World. (Native Studies 10, 20, 30; Social Studies/History Grades 10-12).
- *Wisdom Keepers*. Wes Fineday, a well known story teller in Saskatchewan, acts as guide and interpreter at a traditional Aboriginal celebration, commonly referred to as a pow-wow.
- *Child of Ten Thousand Years*. This contemporary dance video was produced by Saskatchewan's New Dance Horizons Company in association with Ironbow First Nations Art Organization. The collaboration involved director Floyd Favel, choreographer/performer Michael Greyeyes, composer/performer Chiyoko Szlavnic, and performer Maariu Plsen.
- *Rendezvous Canada 1606*. The program is a testament to the role of the Micmac, Huron, and Algonquin Indians in shaping New France and Canada.

Diversity in the Classroom Series

Diversity In the Classroom is the title of a series of documents prepared by the Saskatchewan Professional Development Unit and the Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit. *Honouring Diversity in the Classroom: Challenges and Reflections* is the foundational document which provides the framework for six additional documents. The documents are intended to be practical supports, written "by teachers, for teachers".

In 1996, Number Five in the series was released with the title *Aboriginal Cultures and Perspectives: Making a Difference in the Classroom*. The purpose of the document is to "support teachers of First Nations and Métis students by providing a starting point" (p. 3). The document includes practical and historical information for teachers. It is an invitation for teachers to learn more about their Aboriginal students, and encourage all students to learn more about Aboriginal peoples.

Saskatchewan Education was represented on the advisory committee for *Aboriginal Cultures and Perspectives*. Saskatchewan Education also purchased copies of the document and made them available to teachers through the Learning Resource Distribution Centre.

Inservice Education

In recent years Saskatchewan Education has continued its commitment to identify learning resources for teachers, and to provide inservice education...to accompany new curriculum initiatives.

Three particular challenges exist regarding Aboriginal content in resources: finding resources that are accurate and free of bias, finding resources that have been written and/or produced by Aboriginal people, and identifying materials evaluators who have the knowledge and expertise to evaluate resources from an Aboriginal perspective.

The Aboriginal

When a new curriculum is delivered to the field, an inservice education plan is prepared and presented to school divisions through the Regional Superintendents of Curriculum and Instruction. Teacher leaders (usually pilot teachers for the new curriculum) are trained to deliver inservice to their fellow teachers. A module on Aboriginal content and perspectives is usually included as a component of the inservice package. The type of module and means of delivery vary, depending on need. The following are examples of inservice modules delivered in the years 1995-1998:

- Life Transitions 20, 30: During teacher leader training, an Indian and Métis content and perspectives module was delivered by staff of the Aboriginal Education Unit. Because participation in discussions is an important aspect of Life Transitions, the module focused on inclusive instructional and assessment strategies that encourage the participation of Aboriginal students (such as talking circles and small group formats).
- English Language Arts 10. In English Language Arts inservice, it is important for teachers to examine assumptions commonly held about language usage and dialects. During both pilot teacher and teacher leader training, an Aboriginal representative from the program team presented a workshop on dialectical differences and stereotyping.
- Visual Art 10, 20, 30. During teacher leader training Saskatchewan Education's Arts Education consultant demonstrated the CD-ROM and slide kit *Ideas and Inspiration*, which has been sent to all high schools and includes the work of many Aboriginal artists. The consultant selected Aboriginal artists in the demonstration in order to show how Aboriginal content can be used to teach the learning objectives of the curriculum.

Partnership Agreements

No one jurisdiction is wholly responsible for kindergarten to grade 12 education. Partnership agreements enable various partners in education to work together, across jurisdictions. Provincial, federal, municipal, and/or First Nations governments might enter into formal agreements for a specific purpose, as might the provincial government and a school division, or a school division and a First Nation. Some partnerships allow jurisdictions to pool resources for mutual benefit. Others allow a particular initiative to be community-based and responsive to local needs.

Many partnerships are formed for the purpose of funding and/or managing projects. Projects may be undertaken at the provincial level, or they may occur in a shared service area, a school division, or a single school or classroom. Project partnerships play a significant role in Aboriginal education, as much of the expertise in this area exists in the many diverse communities outside of provincial structures. In addition to being directly involved in partnerships, Saskatchewan Education encourages schools and school divisions to establish partnerships in the community (through (IMED) funding, for example; see page 25 of this report).

The following are examples of partnerships in which Saskatchewan Education has been involved in the past three years.

Resource List for K-12, which compiles recommended resources from all subject areas, was completed and distributed in November of 1999.

Sometimes Saskatchewan Education either purchases or funds the production of new materials for the schools if a special need exists.

First Nations Partnerships

- **Indian Languages Partnership.** This is a partnership between Saskatchewan Education and the Prince Albert Grand Council, for the purpose of developing Indian Languages curricula. The partnership allows for the participation of Elders and language specialists from all the language groups in the area.
- **FSIN Scope and Sequence.** This is a partnership between Saskatchewan Education and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations for the purpose of developing a kindergarten to grade 12 scope and sequence of First Nations history, culture, and values. The partnership allows all students access to unique knowledge from many Aboriginal communities.
- **Services Agreements.** A number of agreements have been reached over recent years with regard to Saskatchewan Education services. The following are examples:
 - Bands can register their students for grade 12 recognition and record of accomplishments. For Band students to obtain a provincial grade 12 diploma, provincial requirements must be met (e.g., courses must be based on the provincial curriculum; teachers must be qualified; school year must comprise a certain number of days; supervision must be in place; there must be an approved Director of Education; there must be an evaluation policy).
 - There is now a process of accreditation for Band teachers, which means they can provide their students' final grade.
 - There is a special sitting at the end of May for Departmental exams to accommodate schools on an alternative school year. This is especially beneficial for schools in the North.
 - Band school personnel are involved in provincial curriculum pilots and attend inservice sessions. They also attend monthly school division meetings with other school officials.
 - Band schools and Tribal Directors of Education receive Saskatchewan Education bibliographies.
 - Saskatchewan Education communicates with post-secondary institutions to facilitate First Nations students registering for post-secondary education. For example, Saskatchewan Education has a process in place whereby First Nations students can get recognized high school standing, such as (ABE). Saskatchewan Education also makes arrangements for students to take courses they need, such as Biology 30 for entrance to nursing programs.
 - On-reserve schools and students have access to Saskatchewan Government Correspondence School courses.
- **Tuition Fee Agreements.** These agreements are the result of partnerships between First Nations and school divisions. Tuition fee agreements allow a First Nation to purchase services from a school division, thereby allowing its students to attend a provincial school.
- **Facilities Partnerships.** These are partnerships between First Nations and school divisions, in consultation with Saskatchewan Education. These agreements are instances where two jurisdictions

A concerted effort is made to find Aboriginal programming to support various curricula.

pool resources for mutual benefit. For example, discussion is now taking place between Meadow Lake School Division and Flying Dust Band concerning a new, shared high school. Sask Central School Division and Gordon First Nation have a partnership whereby kindergarten to grade 6 students attend school on Gordon First Nation and grade 7-12 students attend school in Punnichy.

Multi-party Agreements

The unique programs at Joe Duquette High School in Saskatoon and Scott Collegiate in Regina are the result of multi-party agreements.

Scott Collegiate is one delivery point for the School-to-Work Transition Project that was established by the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and Human Resources Development Canada, for the purpose of having students gain high school credit and work site experience. Other parties involved in the School-to-Work Project are Regina Public School Division (Scott Collegiate), Touchwood File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council, and the Meadow Lake Tribal Council. The program at Scott Collegiate has been in place for four years. Saskatchewan Education plays a liaison and curriculum monitoring role.

Joe Duquette High School was established for the purpose of addressing the needs of Aboriginal students who were experiencing difficulty in the regular system. Students have access to culturally significant programming, Elder support, and academic support. Partners are Saskatchewan Education, Saskatoon Aboriginal Parents Council, and St. Paul's Roman Catholic School Division. Saskatchewan Education provides a grant and plays a liaison and curriculum monitoring role.

Project Partnerships

Some partnerships are entered into for the purpose of completing a specific project. Saskatchewan Education might be involved in a primary way, or by providing funding or other resources while the project itself is undertaken outside of the Department — at one of the universities, for example, or in a school division or classroom. The following are descriptions of current projects with application to Aboriginal Education.

- **Nexus Project.** This began as a partnership between Saskatchewan Education and the Regina Public School Division. Saskatchewan Education staff initially spent one day with teachers identifying "Nexus" links across provincial curricula. These were then listed on Saskatchewan education's Web site and linked to on-line curriculum guides. The purpose is to facilitate integration. There are currently several links to Aboriginal content in curricula. The project is ongoing as teachers continue to provide Saskatchewan Education's Learning Technology Unit with links.
- **Community Access Project.** As a result of this partnership between Saskatchewan Education and the federal government, 23 Northern communities with public schools now have satellite down-link access to the Internet. The project is intended to benefit the entire community, but because satellite access is housed in the school the project has particular benefit to teachers and students.
- **Math/Sciences On-Line Project.** This is a partnership between

[Aboriginal Cultures

and Perspectives] is an invitation for teachers to learn more about their Aboriginal students, and encourage all students to learn more about Aboriginal peoples.

A module on Aboriginal content and perspectives is usually included as a component of the inservice package. The type of module and means of delivery vary, depending on need.

Saskatchewan Education's Learning Technology Unit and a federal government program called "Grassroots". It is designed to help Middle Years Science students in the North.

- **Grassroots Projects.** This partnership between the federal government and Saskatchewan Education enables school divisions in 17 shared service areas, and in Regina and Saskatoon, to apply for funding for projects related in some way to learning technology. As the North is one shared service area, many of its projects have particular significance to Aboriginal students. In addition, several projects throughout the province focus on such topics as culture and community, the history of Aboriginal peoples, and oral histories in the community.
- **Computers for Schools.** This project is the result of a partnership between Saskatchewan Education, the federal government, and Northern Lights School Division. Northern Lights School Division operates a workshop and work experience program to train students to refurbish computers. The computers are then used in schools in the North.

IMED Projects

The Indian and Métis Education Development Program (IMED) is an incentive grant program that assists school divisions in supporting Aboriginal students. The program provides seed money to school divisions in order to help them involve the Aboriginal community in developing initiatives affirming the histories, cultures, languages, and perspectives of Aboriginal peoples.

School divisions with one or more schools with a student population that is at least 10% Aboriginal qualify for the program. Saskatchewan Education provides a maximum grant of \$40,000 per project. School divisions and/or their partners must provide matching funding for the project, to a maximum of \$15,000.

In 1996, funding for the IMED program was increased from \$100,000 to \$1.1 million. During the 1997-98 school year, 58 projects were in operation throughout the province. The following page provides examples of the 1997-98 projects.

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As the North is one shared service area, it is expected that its projects will have particular significance to Aboriginal students.

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Examples of 1997-98 IMED Projects

Accelerated Language Experience Program	The program provided language development experiences for language delayed students in kindergarten to grade 4.
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(Yorkton RCSSD #86)	Experiences supplemented the regular Language Arts program.
Gateway Program (Indian Head SD #19)	This program was designed for 16 to 18 year-old students who had trouble fitting into the regular classroom. Students received individualized remedial help and counselling.
Nekaneet First Nation/Maple Creek Building for Success Program (Maple Creek SD #17)	The program included Cree language instruction, an Elder program for the benefit of both students and staff, and instruction in social skill development.
Apprenticeship Program (Sask Central SD #121)	The program was designed to increase attendance and the student success rate by providing apprenticeship programs, timetable adjustments, and changes in instructional strategies.
Healthiest Lifestyles (Regina RCSSD #81)	The program focused on developing students' skills and attitudes to support healthy living. Career counselling was also provided.
Keeping the Circle Strong (Saskatoon SD #13)	This program developed cultural awareness and respect for all people. It focused on the symbol of the Medicine Wheel and physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional development.
St. Louis School Indian and Métis Education Program (Wakaw SD #48)	Aboriginal people were employed in the school to instill pride in and awareness of Aboriginal heritage. The program also included evening workshops and performances.
Hand in Hand (Saskatchewan Rivers SD #119)	This program was designed to develop a network of communication and co-operation between Muskoday First Nation and Birch Hills School.
Multi-faceted Approach (North West RCSSD #16)	One aspect of this program was the hiring of two Aboriginal guidance counsellors — one at the elementary level and one at the secondary level.
School Social Worker (Meadow Lake SD #66)	The Aboriginal social worker hired for this project worked with the students and families of four Meadow Lake schools.
Junior Student Games (Northern Lights School Division #113)	This division-wide program encouraged participation in fine arts, cultural pursuits, and athletics to promote friendship, knowledge, culture, and understanding.

(Summarized from *Indian and Métis Education Development Program: 1997-98 Profiles of School Division Initiatives*, 1999)

Equity

In 1985 the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission issued a report entitled *Education Equity: A Report on Indian/Native Education in Saskatchewan*. The report asserted that Aboriginal students are not getting equal benefit from the provincial school system and drop out of school at a higher rate than the general student population. In 1994, one

“...it is the right of every individual to expect equal access to education and equal opportunity for success in education...”

of the findings of the High School Review was that equity issues were not being dealt with quickly enough. As a result, Saskatchewan Education made a commitment to provide leadership in “moving equity along at a faster pace in the education system”. Also in 1994, Saskatchewan Education adopted a *Policy for Multicultural Education*. The first statement in the policy reflects the province’s commitment to equity in education:

Regardless of gender, race, ethnic origin, religion, economic or social status, it is the right of every individual to expect equal access to education and equal opportunity for success in education in an atmosphere free of discrimination, racism, prejudice and intolerance.... (p.1)

Since that time, a number of actions have been taken, aimed at ensuring that all students receive fair and equal treatment in the school system.

Equity Plans in Schools

As a result of its 1985 report, the Human Rights Commission requested that schools with a 5% or higher population of Aboriginal students develop equity plans. The plans, designed and implemented by the school division and approved by the Commission, include initiatives to bolster equity. The following are examples:

- hiring and retaining Aboriginal teachers
- providing cross-cultural training for non-Aboriginal teachers
- strengthening curriculum content about Aboriginal peoples
- increasing the involvement of Aboriginal parents and community members
- reviewing school policies and procedures to identify and remove barriers to Aboriginal students’ achievement. The equity plans were originally monitored by the Human Rights Commission. Since 1993 the annual monitoring has been combined with an Equity Seminar, which includes the educational partners. At the 1995 Equity Seminar, the Human Rights Commission reported that school divisions with equity plans in 1989 and 1995 saw an increase of 35% in the number of Aboriginal teachers and a 14% increase in the number of Aboriginal students.

In 1997, 20 school divisions had equity plans in place. Approximately 40% of Saskatchewan kindergarten to grade 12 students are enrolled in schools with equity programs.

Equity in Education Forum

Subsequent to Saskatchewan Education’s commitment to advancing equity within the school system, the Equity in Education Working Committee was formed. This committee became a means for the educational partners and the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission to communicate with one another and plan for action on equity issues. In 1997 *Our Children, Our Communities and Our Future* was prepared and released jointly by Saskatchewan Education; the League of Education Administrators, Directors and Superintendents; the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission; the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association; and the Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation. The document is a policy framework and foundation document for community-based action on

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equity issues.

The document defines equity as follows:

Equity in education is the fair and equal treatment of all members of our society who are entitled to participate in and enjoy the benefits of an education. All students and adults have the opportunity to participate fully and to experience success and human dignity while developing the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to contribute meaningfully to society (p. 2).

“Equity in education is the fair and equal treatment of all members of our society who are entitled to participate in and enjoy the benefits of an education.”

The committee, now known as the Equity in Education Forum, is an ongoing committee that continues to provide leadership in advancing equity throughout the education system. Its membership has expanded to include post secondary institutions and the Gabriel Dumont Institute, and its focus is now the implementation of the equity policy framework. For its part, Saskatchewan Education is currently developing an equity in education implementation guide for schools. Future plans include facilitating the development of an equity indicators framework, and preparing guidelines for creating an equitable culture and climate in schools.

Opportunity to Learn

We have come to recognize that all students do not have equal opportunity to learn. Opportunities to learn are determined by what happens in the classroom, what supports students receive from home, and what commitment and readiness they bring to their own learning. Opportunity to learn is the shared responsibility of educators, parents, and students.

...Saskatchewan Education is currently developing an equity in education implementation guide for schools.

Each year, Saskatchewan Education sets opportunity to learn standards that can be used by schools and families in planning for improved learning experiences. These standards are set by a panel of teachers, administrators, trustees, and parents. The panel reviews the results of the annual Provincial Learning Assessment, which randomly samples grades 5, 8, and 11 classrooms. Based on the survey, the panel determines standards and the percentage of students expected to have opportunity consistent with that standard. When the panel is being assembled, Aboriginal representation is sought; however, that role is not always filled.

Opportunities to learn are determined by what happens in the classroom, what supports students receive from home, and what commitment and readiness they bring to their own learning.

It is intended that teachers, parents, and students use the Provincial Learning Assessments and the opportunity to learn standards to review their roles in the learning process and make necessary adaptations.

Community Schools

Saskatchewan Education’s Community Schools Program has been in place since 1980. Approximately 55% of students in Community Schools are of Aboriginal ancestry. Community schools aim to:

- develop innovative and culturally affirming, student-centred programs
- engage parents and community members in building a safe and caring community
- provide a holistic and caring educational environment

- emphasize collaboration to bring services to schools.

In 1996 the Community Schools Program was enhanced with an additional \$1 million in funding, bringing the total funding to \$3.2 million. As a result, nine schools were added to the program, bringing the total number of schools to 26 — nine in Saskatoon, 10 in Regina, two in North Battleford and five in Prince Albert. In 1997-98 the Community Schools Program completed the second year of a two-year implementation of a new policy framework entitled *Building Communities of Hope: Best Practices for Meeting the Learning Needs of At-risk and Indian and Métis Students*.

Because of the holistic nature of the Community Schools Program, it focuses on four areas: the learning program, parent and community involvement, integrated services, and community development. Attention given to the four areas is intended to:

- increase the students' chances of academic success
- involve parents and community as important resources for the school
- integrate a range of services and supports within the school
- contribute to the development of safe, healthy communities.

Prekindergarten Programs in Community Schools

A new program, operating since 1996, is the Prekindergarten Program. This program operates within the Community Schools Program, and is designed to provide support for at-risk students before they enter school. Guidelines have been developed, entitled *Better Beginnings, Better Futures: Best Practices, Policy and Guidelines for Prekindergarten in Saskatchewan Community Schools*. Pilots are currently operating in La Loche and Prince Albert, and a third-year evaluation of the pilots has been completed.

Northern Community Schools

In 1997, Saskatchewan Education began development of the Northern Community Schools Program, with the understanding that Northern students have unique needs and that the program might operate in a somewhat different manner because of those needs. With the participation of the Northern Directors of Education, a guide was drafted entitled *Northern Community Schools: Program Development Guide*.

In 1997-98, \$450,000 was allocated for the development of the Northern Community Schools Program. Northern schools and communities submitted proposals for consideration for Northern Community Schools designation. An additional \$60,000 was allocated to five small schools to implement aspects of the Northern Community Schools Program. The Program is currently in the midst of a pilot phase (1997-1999).

Other Programs in the North

The student population in the Northern region is predominantly Aboriginal. Although the high school completion rate for Northern students is lower than the provincial average, it has increased dramatically in recent years. In 1996, there were 1,120 Northerners who held a grade 12 certificate, an increase of 88% in the 10 years since 1986 (Canada Census data).

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In addition to supporting the Northern Community Schools Program, Saskatchewan Education has provided funding for a variety of programs in recognition of the unique educational needs of Northern students. The following are examples from the year 1997/98:

- Northern Student Retention Program. Over \$400,000 was allocated to a variety of programs such as the Ile a la Crosse and Creighton School Counsellor Projects, and the Northern Saskatchewan Student Awards Program.
- English as a Second Language Program (ESL). Over \$600,000 was allocated to ESL programs in three school divisions.
- Indian and Métis Education Development Program (IMED). Northern Lights School Division co-ordinated 11 different projects aimed at improving education for Aboriginal students.

Integrated School-Linked Services

Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Children (1993) presented an opportunity for various government departments to develop an integrated approach to meeting children's diverse needs: Education; Social Services; Health; Justice; Culture, Housing and Municipal Affairs; Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training; and Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs.

Integrated School-Linked Services is a holistic, interagency approach that brings schools, families, human service agencies, and communities together to improve and integrate services for school-aged children, youth and their families. With the school as the common ground, providers can co-ordinate their services to meet needs in areas such as mental health, social services, nutrition, parenting education, and family literacy.

In recent years, Saskatchewan Education has supported Integrated School-Linked Services through the following actions:

- consultations with interagency and regional committees on issues and solutions related to interagency collaboration and integration of services
- sponsorship of two regional intersectoral co-ordinator positions (of a total of nine)
- presentations and workshops on Integrated School-Linked Services
- establishment of demonstration sites at Nutana Collegiate, Saskatoon; Community of Hope Project, Fort Qu'Appelle; and Community Schools initiative, Meadow Lake
- review of legislation and enactment of legislative amendments so that human service providers are able to share information effectively.

Saskatchewan Education is also a member of the Assistant/Associate Deputy Ministers' Forum on Service Integration. This Forum is a means for various government departments to collaborate at the provincial level.

Teacher Education and Professional Development

Saskatchewan Education's role in teacher education and professional development is as follows:

- ongoing consultation with the universities and teacher education programs on issues such as curriculum development and teacher certification
- provision of inservice education to accompany curriculum initiatives.

Post Secondary Education and Skills Training also supports teacher education through grants to the universities and teacher education programs.

Teacher Education Programs (TEP)

Saskatchewan's TEP programs are teacher education programs designed to attract and meet the needs of Aboriginal teachers. The Northern Teacher Education Program in the North (NORTEP) was established in 1976, and the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program in the urban centres (SUNTEP) was established in 1980. A third TEP program — the Indian Teacher Education Program at the University of Saskatchewan (ITEP) — was established in 1973. The Saskatchewan Indian Federated College also offers a teacher education program.

Figure 3 displays the number of teachers graduating with Bachelor of Education degrees from the above programs between the fall of 1995 and the spring of 1998. All graduates are qualified to teach Saskatchewan's Core Curriculum, kindergarten to grade 12.

Integrated School-Linked Services is a holistic, interagency approach that brings schools, families, human service agencies, and communities together to improve and integrate services for school-aged children, youth and their families.

	NORTEP	SUNTEP	ITEP	SIFC
1995-96	12	44	32	14
1996-97	12	35	45	17
1997-98	13	28	36	17

Figure 3: Aboriginal Teacher Education Program Graduates, Fall of 1995 to Spring of 1998. (Of the 48 SIFC graduates, 10 are non-Aboriginal.)

Hiring Practices

In its 1997 report *Priorities in Indian and Métis Education 1997-98*, the Indian and Métis Education Advisory Committee (IMEAC) expressed concern that disparity exists in the hiring practices among Saskatchewan school divisions: "The perception exists that in spite of the TEP programs and the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission, not enough Aboriginal teachers are being hired throughout Saskatchewan" (p. 8).

Policies regarding hiring practices are set at the school division level and Saskatchewan Education has no jurisdiction over such decisions. However, since 1985 it has been mandatory for schools with an

Aboriginal student population of over 5% to have an Education Equity plan. As a result, the number of Aboriginal teachers in school divisions with equity programs rose by 35% between 1989 and 1995. Although the number of Aboriginal teachers hired in provincial schools is still inadequate, this does point out that programs designed to encourage local level policy and planning can make a difference.

The Equity in Education Working Committee continues to provide a forum for future planning aimed at increasing the number of Aboriginal teachers in *all* Saskatchewan schools. It is important that all students, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, see their schools reflect the reality of Saskatchewan and Canadian society.

Accreditation of Teachers in First Nations Schools

Through a partnership agreement between Saskatchewan Education and Bands, there is now a process of accreditation for Band teachers. This means that Band teachers can provide their students with a final grade that will be recognized by Saskatchewan Education. It eliminates the necessity for Band students to write Departmental final exams if they wish to obtain a provincial high school diploma.

Professional Development

It is the responsibility of Saskatchewan Education to provide inservice education to teachers on Department initiatives. Because the inclusion of Aboriginal content and perspectives is a Core Curriculum initiative, Saskatchewan Education includes modules on Aboriginal perspectives in most curriculum inservice packages. Teacher leaders are trained, usually by curriculum developers, to deliver the package to other teachers. Band schools are routinely invited to participate in inservice sessions.

Aboriginal Education Staff Development Program

An Aboriginal awareness workshop package, formerly the Indian and Métis Education Staff Development Program, is being revised and updated to reflect recent changes in Aboriginal relations within Canada. During the revision process, outdated sections will be eliminated or rewritten. In addition, a modular approach will be adopted so that schools can select portions of the package according to their needs. Because similar work is being done in this area by many different organizations and jurisdictions, Saskatchewan Education is now examining other awareness packages and trying to establish partnership arrangements. It is possible that a list of facilitators and programs can be developed so that, when a school or school division requests inservice, Saskatchewan Education could match the request with an appropriate facilitator, according to geographical location and need.

Special Education Professional Development Initiatives

Saskatchewan Education provides inservice on Special Education to schools and school divisions, by request. Professional development in Special Education is focused on diverse needs and is, therefore, often relevant to teachers of Aboriginal students. In addition, a higher number of Aboriginal students are identified as being in need of Special Education supports than are identified in the general student population. For this

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reason, materials appropriate for Aboriginal students are identified and used in inservice sessions. A diversity checklist has been developed to help teachers assess whether diversity is accommodated in their classrooms.

Saskatchewan Education's Special Education Unit was recently involved with other Western provinces and territories in creating a document for teachers on suicide prevention. A current professional development initiative is focused on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

Research

Because of the unique needs of Aboriginal students, research was identified as a priority by the former Indian and Métis Education Advisory Committee (now known as the Aboriginal Education Provincial Advisory Committee). In its 1995 *Indian and Métis Education Action Plan*, IMEAC recommended that an assessment be carried out to provide data on:

- the nature and quality of educational experience of Indian and Métis students in the provincial K-12 system
- the attitudes and knowledge of non-Aboriginal students about Indian and Métis peoples
- what is being taught in the area of Indian and Métis content and perspectives, to whom and by whom
- the number and location of Indian and Métis teachers in Saskatchewan
- attitudes, opinions and experiences of teachers concerning Indian and Métis education initiatives
- Indian and Métis parental involvement in school programs and planning.

The following research initiatives have been undertaken in recent years, in response to the need for further information on Aboriginal education and students in the province.

Indian Languages

In 1997, Saskatchewan Education released the document *Indian Languages, Policy and Planning in Saskatchewan: Research Report*. This study was commissioned by Saskatchewan Education with the co-operation of the Prince Albert Grand Council to "begin to articulate what has been done and what needs to be done in terms of Indigenous language retrieval and retention in Saskatchewan" (p. 4). The research study concentrated on several communities to examine the policies and activities undertaken in planning for the retention and rejuvenation of Indian languages. The study stresses that languages are central to culture and way of life, and that language retention and retrieval are essential to the survival of Aboriginal cultures.

Aboriginal Education Research

In response to identification of the need for research about Aboriginal students and their educational experiences, a planning committee was formed, including educational partners and institutions. Saskatchewan Education now funds research projects in this area. The Aboriginal Education Research Network steers the research activity.

[a list of facilitators and programs can be developed so that, when a school or school division requests inservice, Saskatchewan Education could match the request with an appropriate facilitator]

Professional development in Special Education is focused on diverse needs and is, therefore, often relevant to teachers of Aboriginal students.

Because of the unique needs of Aboriginal students, research was identified as a priority by the former Indian and Métis Education Advisory Committee.

Research is conducted by independent researchers, under the guidance of various educational partners and organizations. To date, six research projects have been undertaken:

- An Investigation into Indian and Métis Student Life Experience in Saskatchewan Schools
- Science and Culture Nexus
- Indian and Métis Education Research (nature and quality of Indian and Métis education experience in the K-12 public system)
- Diverting the Mainstream: Aboriginal Teachers Reflect on their Experiences in the Saskatchewan Provincial Education System
- Okiskinahamakewak Aboriginal teachers in Saskatchewan Schools: Responding to the Flux
- Aboriginal education (nature of educational experience and factors contributing to success).

Longitudinal Study on Community Schools

The Longitudinal Study of Community Schools is a 10-year research project designed to gather information that will assist in the implementation of the Community Schools Program and the policy framework (*Building Communities of Hope*). The purposes of the study are:

- to guide Community Schools in the exploration, implementation, adoption, and continuous renewal of the policy framework, and the transformation from a traditional approach to the delivery of education
- to identify those aspects of the policy framework that work and those that do not
- to determine the extent to which aspects of the policy framework are being adopted, as well as what refinements are necessary
- to determine whether or not Community Schools make a positive difference in the school life and success of Aboriginal and at-risk students who attend them.

The research teams determine additional research questions for a given year of the study. In 1997-98, the first year of the study was completed.

Study of Student Movement and Retention

This study was designed to gather information about student mobility. In addition to demographic information, the study will provide information on why students move from one school to another, and on various other aspects of student turnover. The study will include a case study of one school in Saskatoon that is characteristic of schools with high student mobility. The study, funded by Saskatchewan Education, is being conducted by the Saskatchewan Educational Leadership Unit (SELU).

Classroom Profiles Study

This recently completed study examined four classrooms (inner city, rural, suburban, and Northern) to gain insights into the challenges teachers face when dealing with at-risk students. The study was funded by Saskatchewan Education and conducted by the Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit (SIDRU).

Summary

The initiatives described in this report reflect Saskatchewan Education's commitment to improving the school experiences of Aboriginal students, and increasing the knowledge of all students about Aboriginal peoples. However, no one jurisdiction can lay claim to the tremendous amount of activity occurring today in the area of Aboriginal education. Although Saskatchewan Education is responsible for the education of all children in provincial schools, knowledge about Aboriginal content and perspectives clearly resides in the Aboriginal community. Saskatchewan Education is indebted to the many Aboriginal students, parents, Elders, teachers, committees, and organizations who have identified needs and contributed to the programs and activities undertaken in recent years.

The purpose of this report was to explore the diversity and

Range of programming, and provide an indication of the many areas in which Aboriginal Education has become a priority focus within Saskatchewan Education. The chart on the following page provides a summary of Saskatchewan Education's involvement in Aboriginal Education for the years 1995 to 1998.

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**Saskatchewan Education's Involvement in Aboriginal Education
1995-1998**

Curriculum Development and Evaluation	Instructional Support	Partnership Agreements
<p>Inclusion of Aboriginal content and perspectives in curricula</p> <p>Native Studies 10, 20, 30</p> <p>FSIN scope and sequence of Aboriginal culture, values and history</p> <p>Adoption of holistic assessment techniques</p> <p>Indicators Program</p> <p>Aboriginal voices in curriculum development and implementation</p>	<p>Identification of accurate and appropriate materials</p> <p>Evaluation of resources from Aboriginal perspective</p> <p>Selection of support programming for SCN</p> <p>Diversity in the Classroom Series (consultative role, produced by SIDRU)</p> <p>Content and perspectives component in pilot and implementation inservice</p>	<p>Indian Languages partnership</p> <p>FSIN scope and sequence</p> <p>Services agreements regarding accreditation of teachers, final exams, etc.</p> <p>Multi-party agreements (Joe Duquette High School and Scott Collegiate)</p> <p>Grassroots projects</p> <p>Indian and Métis Education Development projects (IMED)</p>
Equity	Teacher Education and Professional Development	Research and Development
<p>Equity Plans in schools</p> <p>Equity in Education Forum</p> <p>Opportunity to Learn standards</p> <p>Community Schools Program</p> <p>Northern Student Retention Program</p> <p>Prekindergarten Programs in Community Schools</p> <p>Integrated School-Linked Services</p>	<p>Aboriginal teacher education programs (consultative role)</p> <p>Hiring practices in equity schools</p> <p>Accreditation of teachers in First Nations schools</p> <p>Professional development around curriculum initiatives</p> <p>Indian and Métis Education Staff Development Program</p> <p>Special Education professional development</p>	<p>Aboriginal Education Research (6 projects)</p> <p>Longitudinal Study on Community Schools</p> <p>Study of Student Movement and Retention (SELU)</p> <p>Classroom Profiles Study (SIDRU)</p>

Appendix A

Recommendations from Indian And Métis Education Action Plan (1995)

IMEAC recommends:

- 1.1** An assessment be made of the impact of initiatives carried out as part of, or related to, Indian and Métis education policy. This assessment should be carried out in collaboration with IMEAC.

In particular, the assessment needs to provide immediate and ongoing data on:

- the nature and quality of the educational experience of Indian and Métis students in the provincial K-12 system. This would include retention rates, but would extend to other aspects of the school experience such as levels of success, numbers graduating, numbers continuing with university studies, programs and courses taken, levels of social and economic resources, students' self-concept, and their feelings and opinions about school. These data should be as comparative as possible to other points in time and to non-Aboriginal students;
 - the attitudes and knowledge of non-Aboriginal students about Indian and Métis peoples, their histories and perspectives, and what the impact of the education initiatives in this area has been;
 - curriculum evaluation, beginning with an inventory of what is being taught where, to whom and by whom in the province, and extending to curriculum quality and effectiveness in meeting stated goals;
 - the number and location of Indian and Métis teachers in Saskatchewan schools, what grades and classes they are teaching, their background and experience, etc.;
 - the attitudes, opinions and experiences of teachers and administrators - Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal - about Indian and Métis education initiatives;
 - the level of Indian and Métis parental involvement in existing programs and in developing new initiatives.
- 2.1** The Department initiate and provide leadership in a process to address and resolve the issue of governance for Indian and Métis education, recognizing a range of options including autonomous, collaborative and community-based models of control.
- 2.2** The Department recognize and accommodate evolving developments of separate systems and jurisdictions in Indian and Métis education when new policy directions are taken, to ensure that common needs and desires are recognized, cooperation is achieved in meeting these needs and desires, and students do not fall through the gaps. Protocol and other necessary agreements should be formulated.
- 2.3** The Department take action through a variety of means, in its funding structures, to ensure the equity of the system for Indian and Métis students.

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- 3.1** The Department, with the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association (SSTA), The League of Educational Administrators, Superintendents and Directors of Education (LEADS), and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF), in collaboration with Indian and Métis organizations, develop initiatives and incentives to stimulate the hiring and promotion of Indian and Métis teachers and administrators.
- 3.2** The provincial government enhance the funding and authority of the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission in its Employment Equity program.
- 3.3** The Department provide leadership and support to ensure effective professional and organizational development within the education system.
- 3.4** The Department, with the TEPS, the STF, LEADS, and the SSTA, initiate a strategy specifically aimed at supporting Indian and Métis teachers in the provincial schools. Such a strategy would include:
- creating structures specifically to provide professional and personal support to Indian and Métis teachers; such structures should enable the involvement of teachers from various jurisdictions; the role of the special subject council, AWASIS, should be considered in light of this;
 - establishing structures to provide for on-going input from teachers regarding Indian and Métis education;
 - active promotion of teacher-based research.
- 3.5** The Department provide more support and resources to the TEPS and the universities to increase Indian and Métis teacher preparation in middle years and secondary school programs. This should be done in collaboration with the Aboriginal Teacher Education Committee (ABTEC).
- 4.1** Extending the implementation of Native Studies to all schools. In doing so, the following specific issues must be resolved:
- the name of the course;
 - the preparation of teachers;
 - the accreditation process; and
 - the validation process.
- 4.2** Enhancing the development of appropriate resources for including Indian and Métis perspectives in the curriculum. Such enhancements must address the following issues and trends:
- the understanding about and the elimination of racism in and among all Saskatchewan communities, Indian, Métis and non-Aboriginal;
 - the process of emerging identities among Indian and Métis youth;
 - the need to support these youth and ways in which to do so, which would include enhancing and developing processes to promote healing and personal wellbeing.
 - the continuation of support for strong academic programs.
- All partners, including The Department, STF, LEADS, SSTA, and the universities, need to be included with the Aboriginal partners in the process.
- 4.3** Increasing incentives and initiatives for publishing, developing curriculum supports and implementing curriculum among teachers and the broader educational community.

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- 4.4** Promoting innovative projects to focus positive attention and actions on the children and youth. Such projects could include:
- sponsoring children's events;
 - establishing mentorship;
 - highlighting the accomplishments of youth;
 - art, music, drama, sport and leadership development;
 - student exchange programs;
 - attention to gender equity in such projects.
- 4.5** Continuing to address the social and economic needs of Indian and Métis youth and their families through the support of the community schools, the Integrated Services models, and other initiatives.
- 4.6** Continuing to support Alternative Education programs.
- 4.7** Increasing resources and support to the teaching of Indian languages.
- 4.8** Increasing staffing of the Indian and Métis Education Unit of the Department to implement the above.
- 5.1** Initiatives to foster increased parent participation. Strategies would include:
- providing certain types of funds to school boards and Aboriginal organizations specifically to promote parental involvement;
 - providing support for a learning community to encourage dialogue and implement goals.
- 5.2** Widely communicating and discussing the roles of IMEAC and Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment. This should be done in a way that respects the fact that there are many voices and many perspectives.
- 5.3** Creating a popular magazine, a cable education channel, and/or promotional video-clips or vignettes, to tell the stories of what parents want for their children's education.
- 5.4** Assisting and encouraging school boards to work more consistently as thoughtful learning organizations, and to develop a sense of mission that includes Indian and Métis educational concerns, issues and contributions: identifying needs; acknowledging areas of improvement; and developing initiatives for programs and research in Indian and Métis education.
- 5.5** Promoting the strengthening of and resources for the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission's power, with respect to rules and regulations that deal with all aspects of racism. Relevant government departments should cooperate on developing educational programs and actions plans to combat racism in all Saskatchewan communities.

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