



THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR FIRST NATIONS EDUCATION IN ALBERTA NEWSLETTER - Volume 3, June 2012

Introduction

Welcome to the third edition of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for First Nations Education in Alberta newsletter. In this edition you'll find updates on the eight sub-tables including a list of sub-table representatives, an update on the next steps to develop a long-term strategic plan, profiles of individuals involved in the sub-tables, and a summary of recent meetings/information sessions. This MOU is about supporting First Nations students, parents, communities and educators and we encourage you to learn more and get actively involved.



Sub-table orientation meeting
November 21-22, 2011

Sub-Table Updates

Eight sub-tables consisting of over 100 experts and stakeholders from across the province invested their time and expertise to develop options and recommendations for improved outcomes in a number of areas. Members of the sub-tables – representing all partners – conducted research and analysis in key areas relating to First Nations education in Alberta. They have developed detailed recommendations and strategic approaches based on the implementation



Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Centre (IKWC) Sub-Table:

Consultation with community groups, stakeholders and various levels of government has provided direction and the development of foundational cornerstones. These include the development of a mandate, a vision statement and a business plan with short, medium and long-term objectives.

The IKWC continues to refine its work plan and will play an integral role in implementing the long-term strategic plan. Of primary importance will be legal, governance and structural considerations that will ensure the long-term success of the IKWC.

“We are the future and our voices need to be heard for better education for the generations to come.”

-Treaty 8 Youth Presentation, November 30, 2011

framework approved by elected officials in January 2011. Reports have been presented to the MOU working group and it is anticipated the findings and recommendations will be presented to the Alberta First Nations Education Circle (senior officials from Canada, First Nations and Alberta) in summer 2012. The development of a long-term strategic plan is currently underway and the valuable research, reports and recommendations made by the sub-tables will inform development of the plan. It is anticipated the strategic plan will be completed by summer/fall 2012.

The MOU working group is pleased to welcome MOU Team Lead Clayton Kootenay and three IKWC liaison officers who will continue to establish the IKWC through community consultations.

Sub-table Representatives:

Kathleen Laboucan	Treaty 8	Liz Letendre – Elder	Treaty 6
Nora Yellowknee	Treaty 8	Mike Bruised Head	Treaty 7
Harry Lawrence - Elder	Treaty 8	William Shade	Treaty 7
Ruby Bird – Elder	Treaty 6	Leonard Bastien – Elder	Treaty 7
Beverly L. Crier	Treaty 6		



Children In Care/Children Not In School Sub-Table:

The mandate of this table was to review current initiatives and best practices while considering issues affecting children and youth, those not attending school as well as youth in custody in the broadest scope.

Programs/support levels were analyzed at all levels of government. Sub-table members have examined the social and environmental challenges that impede educational achievement and those considerations were taken into account in the recommendations. Recommendations address resources, First Nations culture and protocols, the role of Elders and other partners while emphasizing the individual and his/her environment.

Sub-table Representatives:

Mayble Noskiye	Treaty 8	Margaret Gadwa – Elder	Treaty 6
Pauline Giroux	Treaty 8	Shawna Larocque	Treaty 6
Emily Cheecham - Elder	Treaty 8	Gordon Breen	Treaty 7
Carolyn Buffalo	Treaty 6	Roberta Yellow Horn	Treaty 7
Frank Weaselhead – Elder	Treaty 7	Carol Shimanke	AANDC
Michelle Parker	Alberta Education		
Julian DiCasteri	Alberta Education		
Kelvin Hussey	Alberta Education		
Allison Barnes	AANDC		

Community Engagement Sub-Table:

This sub-table, like the IKWC, is comprised entirely of First Nations members from Treaty 6, Treaty 7 and Treaty 8. They have worked with the IKWC sub-table to ensure direction and clarity of recommendations are compatible. The sub-table submitted a broad array of recommendations including the need for a First Nations Education Act and strategies for engaging parents and communities in education.

Sub-table Representatives:

Billy Joe Laboucan	Treaty 8	Charles Wood – Elder	Treaty 6
Alice Martin	Treaty 8	Connie Jacknife	Treaty 6
Jerry Noskey	Treaty 8	Valerie Cardinal	Treaty 6
Fred Francis Willier - Elder	Treaty 8	Ruth Bellegarde	Treaty 7
		Joseph Yellow Horn - Elder	Treaty 7

“We like reserve school because we are able to stay with our family and have close relationships with relatives and elders.”

-Treaty 8 Youth Presentation, November 30, 2011

Data Sharing Sub-Table:

The data sharing sub-table was tasked with exploring how to share education data between the MOU parties while respecting necessary guidelines. Data sharing must take into consideration many variables such as privacy protection, ownership and use. Because of the complex nature of data sharing, the parties will continue to explore how a data sharing protocol or agreement will be achieved. Data sharing will play an important role in the long-term strategic plan.

Sub-table Representatives:

Gloria Cardinal	Treaty 8	Ronald Arcand – Elder	Treaty 6
Esther Giroux	Treaty 8	Lynn Stanley	Treaty 6
Bert Alook – Elder	Treaty 8	Maggie Nielson	Treaty 7
Bonnie Healy	Treaty 7	Tina Fox – Elder	Treaty 7
Caroline Grimard		Alberta Education	
Jane Martin		Alberta Education	
Gabrielle Christopherson/Norma Giroux		Alberta Education	
Shelly Blizzard-Jones/Sonnica Sihota		AANDC	
Lisa Balsillie		AANDC	

Education Restructuring Sub-Table:

The education restructuring sub-table completed a series of tasks:

- comparative education funding analysis;
- education programs and services analysis;
- legislation and policy review;
- recommendations to maximize existing programs and resources; and
- recommendations on accountability and efficiency in First Nation education funding.



The table's report includes a gap analysis in addition to recommendations.

Sub-table Representatives:

Al Rollins	Treaty 8	Nadeem Altaf	Treaty 7
David Yu	Treaty 8	Michael Kanhai	Treaty 6
Pat Gray – Elder	Treaty 8	Mary Mitchell – Elder	Treaty 6
Casey Provost	Treaty 7	Rick Jackson	Treaty 6
Chris Lafrance	AANDC	Daimen Tan	Alberta Education
Lee Day	AANDC	Dan Smith	Alberta Education



“If all partners/parties are on the same page, then we can succeed. Success starts with full commitment and full participation.”

-Treaty 6 MOU Information Session

Teachers Sub-Table:

This sub-table has focused on three key issues: retention, recruitment and professional development. With assistance and guidance from the sub-table’s Elders, the group has worked on the identification, collection and analysis of existing and historical information – statistical and otherwise.

Extensive information sharing and review has resulted in recommendations that address retention and professional development issues. Recommendations are focused not only on immediate concerns but also on innovative long-term solutions that will introduce new approaches driven by Indigenous knowledge and forward thinking.



art by Lucas Littlechild, Grade 2,
Nipisihkopahk primary school

Special Education Sub-Table:

This sub-table was tasked with identifying issues and making recommendations to improve the educational outcomes of First Nations students with special education needs. In keeping with specific tasks identified in its mandate, the sub-table has completed a review of current federal and provincial initiatives. Results from a survey given to educators of First Nation students with special needs were combined with an extensive literature review and findings from consultations and presentations highlighting success mechanisms and programs. All of this data is included in the report.

The sub-table delivered recommendations regarding the optimal re-structuring of special education programs and delivery services to maximize benefits for First Nations students with special needs.

Sub-table Representatives:

Eileen Lines	Treaty 8	Florence Kanhai	Treaty 6
Lori Aliche	Treaty 8	Doris Calliou – Elder	Treaty 6
Marie Goodale – Elder	Treaty 8	Georgina Henderson	Treaty 7
Madeline Calliou	Treaty 6	Lavina Gillespie	Treaty 7
Glenda Thiel	AANDC	Grace Maclellan	AANDC
Pat Chemerys	Alberta Education		
Natalie Prytuluk	Alberta Education		

Sub-table Representatives:

Gladys Cardinal	Treaty 8	Mary-Jane Quinney	Treaty 6
Cheryl Sheldon	Treaty 8	Richard Arcand – Elder	Treaty 6
Florestine Chowace – Elder	Treaty 8	Annette Bruised Head	Treaty 7
Velma Memnook	Treaty 6	Jason Good Striker	Treaty 7
Maryanne Bushore	AANDC		
Shelly Blizzard Jones/Sonniah Sihota	AANDC		
Karen Shipka	Alberta Education		
Peter Prinsen	Alberta Education		

PROFILE – Charles Wood

Charles is from Saddle Lake First Nation. He has been a tireless advocate for First Nations education for many decades. His endeavours began as a committed leader for his community, ensuring that all members of his tribe were treated fairly and equally.

Charles has been a passionate spokesperson for First Nations education at local, provincial and national levels. He has been a strong supporter of the MOU process. Charles has been involved in all the regional MOU community information sessions and has been an active participant in ongoing sub-table working groups and orientation meetings.

Charles is adamant about informing leadership - whether federal, provincial or First Nations - that education is key. *“Little is left of the world of our Ancestors: the buffalo is almost gone, other four-legged brothers, fishes and birds which gave us food and clothing have decreased significantly for various reasons including contamination. Even plants and their fruits have been affected by so-called development. Now we have little choice but to take and accept the responsibility of educating our people; we must make education become the buffalo, for our on-going survival.”*

Transitions Sub-Table:

Improving student transition between First Nations and provincial schools was the primary focus of this sub-table. The group worked on recommendations that will smooth or resolve current challenges students face when transitioning between schools. In the past, 'tuition agreements' have often been viewed primarily as financial arrangements.



art by Madison Soosay, Grade 2,
Nipisihkopahk primary school

To counter this narrow perspective, the concept of 'educational services agreements' has been developed to promote a broader and more collaborative understanding of these agreements — one where First Nations and provincial school jurisdictions are partners in enhancing the learning outcomes of First Nations students. The sub-table developed recommendations that facilitate the negotiation, interpretation and implementation of existing and new education service agreements.

The sub-table has made recommendations which include clarification and definition of roles, responsibilities and expectations of each level of government or service provider involved.

Sub-table Representatives:

Judy Kim	Treaty 8	Jody Kootenay	Treaty 6
Emily Calliou – Elder	Treaty 8	Johnny Ermineskin – Elder	Treaty 6
Richard Fox	Treaty 7	Neil Markham	Treaty 6
Audrey Weasel Traveler	AANDC	Carolyn McDonnell	AANDC
Donna Crowshoe	Alberta Education		
Chelsea Evans-Rymes	Alberta Education		
Randy Risto	College of Alberta School Superintendents		
Steve Cymbol	Alberta School Boards Association		

Thank You to Sub-table Experts and Stakeholders

The MOU working group would like to extend its sincere gratitude and appreciation to all of the participants including the over 100 experts and elders who have come together to help the MOU attain its vision of an Alberta where First Nations students are achieving or exceeding the full educational outcomes, levels and successes of all other students in Alberta. The research and recommendations generated by the sub-tables will play a crucial role in guiding the direction of the long-term strategic plan, with an ultimate aim to improve education outcomes of First Nation students.

Long-Term Strategic Plan

The MOU working group is pleased to announce that three highly respected scholars, who have made significant contributions to Aboriginal education, have been contracted to assist with the writing of the long-term strategic plan. The team is being led by Dr. Leroy Little Bear and consists of Dr. Diana Steinhauer and Dr. Cora Weber-Pillwax.

The Long-Term Strategic Plan will include identification of immediate, short, medium and long-term actions and the roles and responsibilities of the parties related to implementation of recommendations. The working group plans to present the draft plan to the Circle for review and/or approval in the summer of 2012, with approval from elected officials to follow shortly afterwards.

RECENT ACTIVITIES

Orientation Session for New Sub-tables

A second MOU sub-table orientation was held November 21-22, 2011 in Edmonton. Participants reviewed the progress of the Implementation Framework and determined expectations for the new sub-tables. The two-day session also provided an opportunity for members of all sub-tables to meet as a large group and share information and expertise.

Assembly of Treaty Chiefs

An MOU update presentation was delivered at the Assembly of Treaty Chiefs (AoTC) meeting on February 29, 2012. The MOU update was well received by the Chiefs in attendance. They accepted the update by way of motion and have requested a formal presentation on the long-term strategic plan in the fall of 2012.

Another MOU update was provided on the IKWC and sub-table recommendations on May 10, 2012 at the AoTC which was also well received.

Community Information Sessions

Since November 2011 the MOU working group has collaboratively provided more than 12 MOU information sessions in communities and at conferences held across Alberta.

To schedule an information session for your community or for a list of upcoming information sessions please contact a Director of Education in your area for more information.

PROFILE – Beverly L. Crier



Beverly is Maskwâcis Cree from Samson Cree Nation, Treaty 6 Territory. Beverly serves on the Indigenous Knowledge and Wisdom Centre Sub-table. She strongly believes that the preservation of language, customs and traditions, history and world view are critical for the survival of a nation. Her contribution to the development of the Centre will ensure that First Nation students and community members have the opportunity to learn and enrich their lives as proud Indigenous people.

Beverly is a historian by profession. She has a BA in History with a minor in Native Studies from the

University of Alberta, and is currently working on her graduate degree in Heritage Resource Management. From 2003 to present, Beverly has served as coordinator, director and manager of Samson Cree Nation’s Culture Portfolio, which includes the nation’s museum and interpretive centre, history and archives, and language and culture preservation.

Beverly’s research interests include oral history, oral tradition, treaty education, Samson Cree Nation history, and traditional knowledge. She has made two presentations at the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education: Oral History ‘Maskwacis Oral Tradition & History: A Dialogue’ in New Zealand, and Traditional Knowledge ‘Awakening of Stories Unimagined Through Cree Oral History’ in Australia.

Beverly has volunteered at Edmonton’s Capital EX Kîyanâw Indigenous pavilion as chairperson, co-chair and committee member for the last six years. She does extensive work researching and networking the Maskwacis Cree syllabary, teaching Cree syllabic classes and transcription and translation. She is also busy with Cree language and culture seminars at Samson, collecting the nation’s cultural and heritage material, records management and recorded history.

Fast Facts

Number of Schools*	2,163
Number of School Authorities	300
Number of First Nation Band-Operated Schools	59
Number of Métis Settlement Schools	8
Number of First Nations Post-Secondary Institutions	9
Number of Publicly Funded Post-Secondary Institutions	26
Number of Aboriginal/Native/Indigenous Study Programs at Post-Secondary Institutions	4
Number of Post-Secondary Institutions with Support Services for Aboriginal Students	7

*includes Public, Separate, Francophone, Charter, Edmonton Catholic Schools Private Operator, Private

(Source: Alberta Education and Alberta Enterprise and Advanced Education – June 2012)

Contacts/Information

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Your Input Is Important

First Nations citizens and organizations are strongly encouraged to provide their input and opinions on the evolving MOU implementation process. Your input is important. If you have suggestions, comments or concerns about this process or about how we can work together to improve educational outcomes for First Nations children, you are encouraged to contact your Chief and Council or working group representatives from the three treaty organizations, the Province of Alberta and the Government of Canada, as identified above.

To view the MOU or learn more, go to:

<http://www.treaty6.ca>
<http://www.treaty7.org>

<http://www.aandc-aadnc.gc.ca>

<http://www.treaty8.ca>
<http://education.alberta.ca>

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