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PERCEPTIONS
OF
INDIAN CONTROL
OF
INDIAN EDUCATION

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This discussion paper was prepared with the assistance of a number of Indian and non-Indian educators at Headquarters in the hope that it would be of assistance to Indian communities and to staff regarding the development of educational systems for Indians. If it stimulates discussion it will have served its purpose.

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Perceptions of Indian Control of Education

I. Introduction

The involvement of Indian communities in operating their education programs has developed slowly over the past decades. It was not until 1956 that the policy of establishing school committees was approved by the government. In 1963 the role of these committees was expanded and clarified. At that time there were 41 active committees. By 1972 the number of committees had increased to 194 and their role had expanded to include most aspects of the education program with funding provided under the contributions to bands program.

In December 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood presented their policy paper entitled "Indian Control of Indian Education". The Minister accepted this policy paper as the basis for Departmental education policy and wrote to all chiefs and councils confirming a policy based on the National Indian Brotherhood paper.

Since 1973, the Department has assisted those bands wishing to take on local control to do so. As a result there are now some thirty schools controlled by bands or Indian education authorities and numerous other situations where the band or education authority control major parts of the education program.

With this expansion of local authority, there has been need to rethink the roles and relationships of parties involved in the Indian education program. Basic questions such as: What is local control? Control of what? Control by whom? What is the future of local control? are being asked. The purpose

of this paper is to examine some of these questions and to give the views and comments on them from various sources and spokesmen. The paper will not try to arrive at a "right" answer or an acceptable answer since in many cases the answers rest with the local Indian community working within the limitations, if any, of the social system and setting of which they are a part. Hopefully, the various points of view expressed in this paper will assist bands and Departmental staff to clarify some of the basic issues of local control.

But, education is not a static process. Just as there is change within the classrooms in content and procedures, there is also change in the ways of managing and administering programs. For example, on the provincial education scene most systems have changed from small local education systems to large area systems called divisions, units, counties and the like. Undoubtedly, further change will be part of the concept of local control by Indian communities as these communities explore ways to meet the educational needs of their people.

II. Some Views of Local Control

A. Introduction

This section of the paper gives some of the more general statements regarding local control. It will present a range of views in an effort to illustrate the kinds of thinking and the positions which have been taken by different spokesmen and authorities. An examination of various points of view should help bands and other involved groups to clarify for their situation what local control ought to be.

B. Perceptions of Complete Control

The National Indian Brotherhood paper entitled Indian Control of Indian Education makes a number of statements about control such as: "Indian parents must have full responsibility and control of education. The Federal government must adjust its policy and practices to make possible the full participation and partnership of Indian people in all decisions and activities connected with the education of Indian children." (p. 27) and "Band Councils should be given total or partial authority for education on reserves, depending on local circumstances, and always with provisions for eventual complete autonomy, analogous to that of a provincial school board vis-a-vis a provincial Department of Education." (p. 27)

The Saskatchewan Indian of August, 1973, in an article entitled, "Survival Rests in Education" stated, "...the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians wish to make it categorically clear that it demands that the education of Indian children should be returned to the Indians themselves." (P. 33). Also, "Educational control begins with curriculum. Unless the people have the right to decide what their children are to be taught, they do not have control of their education." (P. 34). Regarding teachers

the article states, "We therefore, put forward the proposition that the training and education of teachers for Indian children should be placed entirely under the control of the Indian people themselves." (P. 35). Concerning facilities such as residences, reserve schools, and integrated schools on or off reserves the article says, "What we recommend is that the authority to make a decision on this matter belongs to the Band Councils of communities concerned." (P. 36). An important consideration related to control of any program is the need for funds to operate it. The same article states, "...the Department of Indian Affairs has the responsibility to supply and administer funds to meet fully the needs of Indian Education". (P. 34) Similarly, Indian Control of Indian Education says, "...it is the financial responsibility of the Federal Government to provide education of all types and all levels to all status Indian people, whether living on or off reserves." (P. 3).

An N.I.B. group studying revisions of the Indian Act has proposed a section, "...which would allow a band to assume total jurisdiction over the education of its members, with the Minister (IAND) involved only financially."

This sampling of views regarding complete control of Indian education by Indian bands, though limited, indicates what some of the thinking is by Indian spokesmen regarding the type of control envisaged by these groups.

C. Control Within Accepted Limitations

Another preception of local control may be labelled as providing the maximum possible degree of local control within the practical limitations which exist. These limitations, which may contain considerable flexibility,

derive from practise, from various statutes and government regulations, from financial considerations, from educational quality and effectiveness concerns, and from the need to ensure that the educational rights of all groups and especially of parents are respected.

This view of local control is not static. Practice does change; laws and regulations change, levels of financial support for education change, concepts of what is a good education change; and ideas of individual, parental, and child rights change. Consequently, the limitations mentioned in the title are not rigid and are subject to modification over time and in an organized way. Some of these limitations will be discussed in subsequent paragraphs to illustrate what they are and how they function.

Limitations which derive from practice are basically those things which are done in a certain way though there are no laws or regulations which indicate that they must be done in that way. For example, in many education systems it has been practice to have one teacher for each twenty to twenty-five students. It has been practice to have the more qualified teachers teaching at the more senior grade levels and to have a major amount of the students' school work written, and to have education boards report only infrequently to parents.

These practices which are custom or habit, or thought out and tested over time can be modified at the community level as the need for modification is seen and accepted. However, it should be noted that some practices which have implications for budgets or for standards of education may not be as easily changed.

The limitations which **exist** by law or regulation may be somewhat less easily changed. There are many of these in various areas of the educational enterprise. Some are federal and others are federally approved use of existing provincial standards. The present Indian Act contains clauses regarding school attendance and denomination of schools and empowers the Minister to make regulations about numerous other educational matters. Though some regulations have been made by the Minister from time to time, the practice has been to follow the regulations of the appropriate province. For example, the Department has made few regulations in the area of curriculum, school days, teacher certification, school texts, school bus standards and the like. For such aspects of the education program provincial standards generally apply.

The Indian Act, Section 88, refers to the application to Indians of provincial laws which are not inconsistent with treaties and with Acts of Canada. The operational practice has been to accept provincial standards unless there are treaty or federal rules or regulations regarding the specific subject of concern.

Local control, in this context, is viewed as control within the existing constraints imposed by treaty, by federal law, and by provincial law where treaties and federal law do not refer to a subject. However, these limitations generally are designed to ensure that some minimum standards are met and are frequently permissive regarding doing those things which exceed the basic standards.

Limitations on local control due to financial considerations exist because elected authorities, (federal, provincial, and local) determine at what level society is prepared to financially support education programs. This decision is reflected in local education authority budgets which establish how much the local authority can spend. Fortunately, Canadian society is prepared to allot a considerable portion of its income to education programs. However, it is still true that local education authorities are not able to do all of the things they would like to do because of financial limitations.

Concerns for educational quality and effectiveness originate from various segments of society but particularly from professional educators. Society may decide the level of resources to be provided, the basic content of education, major administrative matters about education; however, the educator, by professional preparation and experience, knows how to educate. The methodologies, skills, strategies of education are the particular expertise of the educator. Consequently, educators may be expected to have views about such things as reading skills, preschool education, team teaching, class groupings, learner disabilities, the use of phonics in reading, study skills, student achievement, progress patterns, diagnosis, remediation, motivation, transfer effects and a host of other matters related to how children develop and learn.

The protection of individual educational rights is basic in Canadian society. The right to an education is nationally accepted. The right to operate denominational schools, where numbers of students

warrant, is frequently accepted. The right of a parent to provide alternate education is accepted though not always fully funded. The right to special education for the atypical student (blind, deaf, etc.) is supported. Local education authorities accept parental choice of school where this does not create extra cost or unmanageable administrative problems. Respect for individual educational rights though it may at times appear to limit local control, actually strengthens local control since it meets the wishes of the majority without creating anxieties or concerns or imposing harsh controls on minority groups or individuals.

D. Control as Management

A third view of local control is that the idea is unrealistic and that local control is really local management of education. Needless to say this view is not popular. In a soon to be published National Indian Brotherhood pamphlet entitled "Indian Control of Indian Education" this point of view is rejected as, "Indians operating Indian Affairs programs".

Jon C. Wade in an article entitled "Indian Control of Schools" writes of various restrictions on local control such as legal restrictions, extra-legal controls, the role of professional education associations, the role of community decision makers, the lack of control of financial resources, and the fact that all communities are dependent entities in a society of interdependent communities. He concludes that community control of schools is a myth and states that, "The emphasis should be on community management of schools."

However, the term management as he uses it is not a powerless concept. He thinks school boards fulfill their management obligations in two

basic ways:

- "1) they are the legitimate front for relationships with their public, and
- 2) they have internal operational responsibilities.

The selection of top administrative leadership, allocating of financial resources, and examination of the system's products are examples."

These two ways provide considerable scope for changing an education system to meet community educational needs. They put a school board in the position of being able to listen and respond to the needs expressed by the parents and community members, and they provide a school board with decision making powers in the most important areas of determining priorities, organizing the system, selecting appropriate staff, and assessing how well the program is functioning.

III. Local Control of What?

A. Reserve Level Education Programs

Direct control of education by a band or a band education authority is most possible regarding a reserve education operation; however, as earlier sections have indicated there are some restrictions on what a local education authority may or may not do. These restrictions would not prevent the provision of a good education program. In fact, most of them are there to ensure that a quality program is available since the benefits of a good education are important not only to the individual, his family, and his reserve but to the larger society as well.

A reserve education authority can have a major influence on various education program areas which will strengthen the total program. For example, they can and should assess the facilities (school buildings) under their control to determine the adequacy of existing facilities and to plan for renovations and construction to overcome inadequacies which may exist. Similarly, they can carry out planning regarding school grounds, roads, and other physical items to ensure that these items positively support the education program.

More important than the physical facilities available is the level of community motivation for an education program. The best buildings, teachers, and programs cannot be effective without community support as practically demonstrated by good attendance, parental interest in and encouragement of the children regarding education, and parental supervision which will ensure that each child arrives at school ready to learn - well fed, well rested, well clothed, and in a positive, energetic state. Through meetings

with parents and other community organizations, a local education authority can achieve a great deal to ensure a community atmosphere and attitudes which positively support educational progress. Fortunately, this is an area where the quantity and quality of useful activity which an education authority can develop is unlimited.

Local control of education staff selection and other staff related items is probably the most important aspect of an education system since what is or is not done in the classroom is in the final analysis the single most important educational factor. Staff selection can, of course, be under local control irrespective of whether or not the staff become, when employed, band employees or public servants. Though there are some advantages and disadvantages to each type of employment, it is clear that any band or education authority who wishes to directly employ their educators can do so. The Department will help them bring this about. Bands need to be aware of the legal requirements for this and of processes and procedures to ensure the selection, assessment, development and retention of the best possible education staff. For example, if a band were fortunate enough to employ only staff members with education degrees who have a record of proven teaching ability in the intercultural situation, the band could be sure that their children would receive a superior educational program. Consequently, the assessment of teacher applicants' qualifications, areas of expertise, record of performance, proven abilities is of vital importance in the selection process. This assessment normally requires the involvement of qualified education personnel as well as of community representatives since matters of qualifications, certification and performance can be more thoroughly examined by professionals. The hiring

and keeping of good staff, of course, requires that the various conditions of their employment meet or exceed the area norms.

Local control of the education program (curricula, course of studies, subject matter, textbooks, visual aids, etc.) is a somewhat more diffused area though there is certainly considerable opportunity for local initiative and input about programs. Practice has been for reserve schools to use the program of studies in effect in the province in which the reserve is located and to follow numerous other provincial regulations regarding school hours, textbooks, discipline, methods, teaching aids, student evaluation, student progress/promotion, school regulations, educational standards, and other such items related to the daily operation of schools and to the educational program provided. Generally, there is considerable flexibility built into these programs. Consequently, a local education authority together with its education staff can adapt and modify the education program to meet the needs and wishes of the community. In the words of the National Indian Brotherhood policy paper, "A curriculum is not an archaic, inert vehicle for transmitting knowledge. It is a precise instrument which can and should be shaped to exact specifications for a particular purpose. It can be changed and it can be improved. Using curriculum as a means to achieve their educational goals, Indian parents want to develop a program which will maintain balance and relevancy between academic/skill subjects and Indian cultural subjects."

The recent "Summary Report of the Task Force on the Educational Needs of Native Peoples of Ontario" lists some twenty recommendations regarding curriculum changes needed to make the program more relevant and useful to native students. The second resolution is an example of what the

native people of Ontario would like to see and proposes that, "Educators adapt the curriculum at the request of native peoples in order to produce an educational system which is compatible with the unique circumstances of the native child's upbringing, meeting not only the cultural needs of the native child, but also enabling him to function in a non-Indian world."

The N.I.B. policy paper adds an important condition when it states, "Where bands want to form a school district under the federal system, necessary provision should be made in order that it has the recognition of provincial education authorities." This recognition is important since the Department uses the provincial standards and regulations as guides and because Indian students moving from or to provincial schools ought to have their education recognized in either system.

B. Local Control of Provincial School Education

There are a number of specific areas whereby Indian parents can have effective input into the programs in provincial schools which are attended by Indian children. Each of these will be examined briefly to indicate various views of what is desirable and needed.

1. Representation on Provincial School Boards

The National Indian Brotherhood has stated, "...all provinces should pass effective laws which will ensure Indian representation on all provincial school boards in proportion to the number of children attending provincial schools, with provision for at least one Indian representative in places where the enrolment is minimal. Laws already on the books are not always effective and should be reexamined. Neither

is permissive legislation enough, nor legislation which has conditions attached."

The recent Ontario Task Force proposed that, "Native representation on school boards be guaranteed through legislation, not left to the discretion of presently elected school board members." Also, it recommended that, "The number of Indian representatives be increased on each school board serving native peoples."

In a survey undertaken by this Branch some months ago, it was pointed out that the provinces of British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and New Brunswick have legislation which provides the opportunity for full and equal (or better) participation by Indians on provincial school boards. Some other provinces, notably Alberta and Quebec, have indicated a willingness to pass such legislation when the Indian organizations support it. Ontario has legislation but it has some possibly restrictive features though indications are that it is working reasonably well in practice.

2. Tuition Agreements

The present practice of the Department is to have tuition agreements negotiated annually or as needed with the provincial school boards which operate the schools attended by Indian students. Where bands or education authorities have accepted local control of this aspect of the education program, they may negotiate directly with the provincial school board regarding any educational matters appropriate to the agreement. These could include, among others, Indian language instruction, Indian cultural content, Indian professional and paraprofessional

staff, other Indian staff, curriculum, and many other items which are within the authority of the school board to modify.

Bands which have not accepted local control may, nevertheless, be full participants in negotiating tuition agreements and may, by consequence, ensure that the terms and conditions are fully satisfactory to them. In either case, bands or other Indian education authorities should be signatories to the agreement along with the school board involved and the representatives of the Department which provides the funding for agreed to regular, special or alternate programs.

By these tuition agreements a band can ensure that the educational concerns of the Indian parents are met and that the education program positively reflects Indian culture and values.

3. Capital Construction Agreements

As with tuition agreements, school construction agreements with provincial school boards require the approval of the band or Indian education authority concerned. Since a capital agreement is a long term contract covering twenty or more years, it is important that it only be entered into after a band referendum indicates support for the plan. This procedure should ensure that all parents have an opportunity to discuss and be informed about the proposal and to ensure that the decision, in fact, reflects Indian control of Indian education.

In reference to such agreements the Ontario Task Force has recommended that,

"All agreements drawn up between the federal and provincial governments

through local school boards be re-evaluated by the native peoples to ensure that their concerns are satisfied."

"Band councils be fully recognized as legal entities to negotiate joint school agreements with local school boards".

"Band members fully understand and be in agreement with any proposed joint-school agreement before it is finalized."

4. Other Consulting Mechanisms

The three previous parts referred to various formal and legal ways bands can have control regarding the education program. Though these are important, it is also important that there be other less formal, but sometimes more effective, channels of communication and consultation. At the community level these channels may be between the band and the school boards or between the band and the education staff. For example, some bands or their education committee have arrangements whereby they meet on a regular or as needed basis with the provincial school board to discuss questions of mutual concern and to plan for needed programs for the Indian and other students. Similarly, many communities have home and school or parent-teacher organizations which serve as a focal point for two-way communication between the parents and the professional staff regarding the educational program and progress of their children and students. Since what happens in the classroom and the home are extremely significant elements in a child's educational growth, it is vital that there be communication and understanding between the parents and the teachers regarding what is a good education, how it may be achieved, and how each partner can assist and strengthen

the role of the other in working toward the accepted educational goals.

IV. Some Issues Regarding Local Control

This part of this paper mentions some of the questions that have been raised and discussed regarding local control of education programs. The intent is to look at some of these issues from various viewpoints in an effort to clarify the issue rather than to resolve it. Obviously, there are many possible views and positions on each question. A range of opinions will be presented as worthy of consideration and further discussion.

A. Why Local Control?

The 1976 Ontario task force has stated, "It is the belief of the Native peoples that any educational system will continue to be unsatisfactory, until the responsibility for education and the potential for improvement in that education is in the hands of the Native peoples themselves" (p. 21).

The N.I.B. policy paper (1972) states, "If we are to avoid the conflict of values which in the past has led to withdrawal and failure, Indian parents must have control of education with the responsibility of setting goals. What we want for our children can be summarized very briefly:

.....to reinforce their Indian identity

.....to provide the training necessary for making a good living in modern society." (p. 3)

These two views mention the past unsatisfactory nature of the education program in the areas of cultural transmission and educational success. However, the question may not be solely one of who controls the schools. For example, Jon Wade, an American has examined the research on local control and states, "Why should 'community management' be desired? Will there be increased cognitive achievement on the part of students? I think not. There is little evidence to indicate a correlation between community

influence and student achievement. Cohen says, 'unfortunately, however, there is no evidence that the level of parent participation in schools is related to students' achievement.'

Another writer (Abt) who did a study for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the United States said, "American Indians have the right to control their own schools as much as any other American community. If they wish to exercise that right, the government should give them every support in doing so."

In summary, then, a number of reasons have been advanced as to why Indian communities should have local control. Some of these reasons are: to reinforce Indian culture, to provide a better education, to strengthen community participation, to fit the program to the community, to provide to Indians the same rights as other groups, to provide Indian employment, to channel more funds to Indian communities, to strengthen Indian identity, and to dispel local apathy.

B. Control by Whom?

The N.I.B. policy paper says, "The Federal Government must take the required steps to transfer to local Bands the authority and the funds which are allotted for Indian education.

The Band itself will determine the relationship which should exist between the Band Council and the School Committee: or more properly the Band Education Authority." (p. 6).

The Federation of Saskatchewan Indians has stated, "The controlling agency on all matters concerning the Indian people is the Chief and Band Council. Common policies on matters that pertain to the whole province are to be taken care of by an organization that is appointed by the Chiefs and Band Councils of the whole province.

In the case of Saskatchewan, such an organization is the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians."

Another view that has been expressed by some Education Committees (Band Education Authorities) is that the bands should adopt the practice which is normal in non-Indian communities of having an education board elected by the eligible voters of the reserve community. This type of organization would permit more direct parental involvement with the education program and would allow an elected group to give their full attention to education for the community. Conversely, such an organization may be seen as a duplication and as tending to reduce the unity and cohesion possible under one general authority. Also, of course, there are some questions regarding legal authority and relationships which would need to be resolved under such an arrangement.

How the education authority reports and relates to the parents and community is an important consideration since it is acting on behalf of the parents and needs to ensure parental support and involvement. Some education authorities hold regular, open to the public, monthly meetings and special meetings as needed to solicit the views and concerns of parents.

C. Control of What?

1. Program of Studies

In the various Canadian systems of education, the basic curricula are developed and authorized by the Departments of Education. Likewise, textbooks are frequently authorized as suitable for use. In some cases various alternative texts which are considered to be equally useful are also authorized.

At the school board level there is generally considerable opportunity to develop modified and special programs of study and to use other books and materials which are more suited to the specific goals and objectives of the local education system and to the needs and abilities of the students concerned.

If Indian communities wish their children's education to be recognized as equal to the education provided in other communities, they need to adopt the use of the provincially authorized program of studies suitably modified to include Indian cultural content and adapted to the needs of the Indian students. Such a program will provide the Indian culture content and the essential skills and abilities required for continuing educational growth in the Canadian context.

This procedure should ensure a program, rich in Indian history and culture which is fully transferable from a reserve school to any other school where it will be recognized as equal to the program in off-reserve communities.

2. Staff

As with programs, all education jurisdictions in Canada require a certain level of qualifications for teachers. All school acts or other appropriate regulations establish standards for teaching certificates and insist that a teacher have a current, approved certificate before being allowed to teach or to be in charge of a classroom.

There has been a trend in Canadian society to require more teacher education prior to granting of a teaching certificate. In years past it was fairly usual for teachers to be granted a teaching certificate on the basis of only one year of teacher education. Now many jurisdictions require three years or a degree in education. Likewise, specialist qualifications and graduate degrees are now more frequently required for teachers of particular subjects or levels or in such areas as guidance, principalships, consultants, and various supervisory and educational leadership roles.

Indian people wish to have more native people in teaching and supervisory roles. This desire is based on the conviction that an Indian teacher who knows and has experienced the Indian culture and language can develop a better rapport with Indian students and can better meet their various cultural and educational needs. However, there are too few qualified Indian teachers available despite special efforts and programs to encourage training. The alternative of hiring Indian persons with sub-standard qualifications is not legally or educationally acceptable. The hiring of teachers who have acceptable teacher education

plus specific training in the intercultural area needs to be carefully considered in relation to the goals and objectives of the education program.

A third alternative, which appears to strengthen the program, and which is now in use, is the teaching team approach of having the professional educator and the native educator working together in the classroom or counselling situation. This mix of training and cultural insight and sensitivity should solve a number of problems which exist in the intercultural educational process.

In all cases, to ensure that the band operated education program is at least equal to and is recognized by the education systems of Canada, bands must ensure that their teaching staff have, as a minimum, the certification qualifications applicable in non-Indian schools. That is a minimum; bands should consider requiring qualifications which are higher than the minimum particularly in specialist teaching areas. For example, bands should decide about employing only qualified teachers with primary methods and intercultural specializations to teach in the primary grades. Similarly, principals and supervisory staff should have specialist education in school administration and in supervisory areas in addition to successful experience and training in intercultural education.

It is difficult to employ staff ideally suited to the educational needs of an Indian community. However, the retention of good staff can be equally difficult. A band should examine what it can do to ensure

that it retains the type of staff which is able to provide a superior education program. Salaries need to be at least competitive with other education systems as do living and working conditions. Reasonable security of employment is essential. The other benefits (pension plan, types of leave, etc.) are significant factors. However, studies have shown that more important than any of these is a school and community environment which provides the professional educator with the materials, support, and freedom to do a good job and which provides recognition for a job well done. For example, some communities have a Teacher Recognition Night at which teaching staff are honoured for their contributions to the community. (This sort of recognition ought not to be limited to one night a year and ought not to be limited to teaching staff. Students, parents, and others who have made contributions to the community should be given positive recognition).

3. Physical Facilities

The term facilities as used here means the school building, major equipment, school grounds, buses and any other items normally considered to be part of the school operation. Normally the transfer of control of buildings to a band poses no unusual problems. Likewise, the ongoing operation and maintenance of such facilities does not normally create particular concerns. However, bands do need to develop some standards for the operation of such facilities in relation to adequate heating, cleanliness, water and sewer, lighting, pupil safety, fire regulations, care of equipment and other such items. Dominion or provincial fire commissioners should be expected (and invited) to make annual inspections to ensure that appropriate standards are practiced.

In the area of new facilities or extensions to existing facilities, there are a number of viewpoints which need to be considered. Should schools be viewed not only as places for the education of children but also as community recreation, cultural, and general activities centres? The Ontario Task Force has recommended that, "Complete gymnasium and auditorium facilities be included in all new schools built to serve native students." (p. 34)

The N.I.B. Policy Paper stated, "It shall be within the power of the Band Education Authority to plan for and provide the school facilities needed for community educational programs: e.g., education of children, parental involvement in education, adult education, cultural activities, training sessions, etc." (p. 21)

It is not possible in general policy statements to precisely define the boundaries within which such facilities will or will not be provided or any limitations imposed by financial or priority considerations. For example, classrooms need to be given priority over other facilities and communities having no or inadequate schools need to be given priority over those seeking replacement classrooms. The practical necessity is for a system which provides facilities where they are needed most. Indian bands should consider the needs of a total Region and develop acceptable priorities which will provide first for those communities having greatest needs.

4. Finances

The preceding three sections discussed control by a band or education authority of programs, staff, and facilities. However, the provision of programs, staff, and facilities require money. Of critical concern to any education program is a sufficient budget to fund the programs which are desired and approved. Also of management concern is the need to have a budget sufficiently flexible which will permit the freedom to change priorities and adapt to circumstances as they arise.

The recent Ontario Task Force made some recommendations regarding financial concerns. A number of these related to educational assistance; however, the general problem was expressed as follows: "The Department of Indian Affairs, by virtue of the treaties and through the Indian Act, is financially responsible for the education of all Treaty Indians. Yet in recent years, education cutbacks and policy changes regarding the granting of financial assistance to Treaty Indian students have made it increasingly hard for these students to receive adequate financial assistance to continue their education." (P.23)

The National Indian Brotherhood in its policy statement, Indian Control of Indian Education stated, "While we assert that only Indian people can develop a suitable philosophy of education based on Indian values adapted to modern living, we also strongly maintain that it is the financial responsibility of the Federal Government to provide education of all types and all levels to all status Indian people, whether living on or off reserves." (P.3)

Clearly Indian organizations see an all encompassing federal financial responsibility for Indian education. However, the Indian Act limits the legal requirement to children aged seven to sixteen or six to eighteen if the Minister so requires. Also the Act excludes off-reserve and off-Crown land Indians. This strict interpretation of the Act, has however, been extended by practice to include pre-primary education for four and five year olds and secondary, post-secondary, cultural, and adult education irrespective of age. Also the Department provides some help to off-reserve Indians in those instances where provinces do not have legal and practical educational responsibility.

The questions and concerns about what levels of financial support are or should be provided are topics of frequent discussion and debate. At one extreme are those who say the Department must meet all education financial needs and demands as identified by Indian bands at dollar levels determined by bands. At the other pole are those who contend that Indian education should be financially supported at a level equivalent to the adjacent non-Indian education system. Various intermediate positions could be identified. In practice, the Department now funds Indian education at a level somewhat superior to most provincial systems and, in addition, funds special programs related to culture, language and special needs such as student residences and student maintenance programs.

Assuming an acceptable level of funding for Indian education and assuming a continued move toward band management of programs, a further question is how to determine which band gets what. Professor Don Rowat commented on this in his 1973 paper entitled, "Implementing Local Government for Indians: The Need for Clarifying Concepts." His view was that bands should set their own budgets within the total amount available to them and the decision of what this total amount would be should be based on an objective equalization formula rather than on political negotiation among bands where, "...the squawkiest goose is likely to have the least feathers picked. In other words, the most advanced bands, least in need, may get the most goodies."

His proposal was that there be a per person grant which would be adjusted upward or downward by objective measures of need to provide better equalization. These measures of need would be formulated and agreed to by the bands and the Department and would be based on factors such as population ages and density, per person income, level of employment, geographic isolation, resource development, etc. In education, many provinces presently have a system of equalization payments to ensure that a region of need receives more help than an area of some strength. No doubt a similar system could be developed to cover the major part of a bands budget while allowing sufficient flexibility to meet unique needs and situations.

D. Parental and Student Rights

There has been considerable discussion regarding the question of parental and individual rights in relation to education as these rights affect the bands' or education authorities' functions of administering an education program. One position is that the band has full and total authority to make decisions for its members about education. The opposing view is that parents have a right to decide where and when their children will attend school. The practical solution probably lies somewhere between these two views.

Regarding choice of school to be attended, there is no problem if there is no choice. This is true of those reserve schools where the distance to any other school is prohibitive. In Indian communities where a choice of attending a reserve school or a provincial school is geographically possible and where costs are comparable, it is reasonable that parents make the decision recognizing it as being a firm commitment over a period of years. The idea of a long-term commitment may be objectionable to some parents and students but seems necessary for a number of practical reasons related to school building construction, staff employment, and the educational welfare of the children. Obviously, it would be impossible to make adequate long range plans if each family could decide each year which type of school they wanted their children to attend. Also frequent changes of schools normally have some adverse effects on students who must adjust to new classmates, staffs, and circumstances.

Society generally accepts that children not be compelled to participate in practices of faith contrary to the wishes of the parents. Local education authorities need to consider means and procedures whereby the rights of individuals in the area of beliefs are respected. The Indian Act and also many provincial education acts spell out ways that have or may be used to ensure such individual concerns are respected.

Exceptional children have a right to an education suited to their particular abilities or disabilities to the end that they will experience an equal opportunity to develop and grow as their skills and talents will permit. An educational authority will want to ensure that children with special educational needs are provided for though the costs may in some cases be comparatively high, especially in cases where specialized residential care is required.

Parents and students also have the right to a hearing where they feel they have been unfairly treated. Ideally such a hearing should be held before an independent third party. However, as a minimum, the hearing should be established in such a way that the parties initially involved can present their case at a more senior level of the system. For example, if a family wishes to object to some action by the education authority, they should be heard by the band council or other group who have responsibility for the actions of the education authority. In Indian communities another possibility is that a group of elders may perform this problem resolving function.

V. Questions for Discussion

The following questions are listed as some possible areas for discussion and planning. Most of them have been mentioned in various articles or publications which refer to the topic of local control.

- a) What changes in what laws, regulations, policies need to be made to positively support local control?
- b) What system of funding is needed to ensure that local planning and initiatives are supported and encouraged in an equitable fashion from community to community?
- c) What systems and procedures need to be developed at the community level to ensure that the local education program reflects the wishes of the community rather than those of special interest groups?
- d) Can a community under local control support alternate systems of education such as free schools for those community groups wanting such systems?
- e) Under local control, what parts of the education program should local education authorities control beyond those presently controlled locally in provincial school systems? For example, teacher education is not locally controlled in the provincial systems. Should it be in an Indian system of education? Who should decide?
- f) How can a local education authority organize its program and operation to ensure that it receives adequate information and advice from a variety of view points about topics that require a decision?
- g) What standards should there be for facilities and school buildings? Can these be decided by each community or is a wider-based district, region, or national system needed?

- h) What standards are needed regarding the provision of textbooks, materials, supplies, equipment, for the school, classrooms, and site? Should these be community decisions or come from some broader based decision making process?
- i) How can a community or a group of communities shape the curricula to the cultural basics of the community and to the need to be competent in the larger Canadian society?
- j) How can a program be designed to adequately educate youth about their past, the present reality, and prepare them for a future which is likely to be one of increasing change in technology, community life, family life, occupations, and work patterns?
- k) The quality of an education program basically depends on the quality of the education staff. How can a community precisely define standards for the selection of quality teaching and supervisory staff and what staff selection procedures will ensure that the best possible educators are employed?
- l) What means have been or can be developed to ensure Indian community involvement, in-put, and participation in decision making for those provincial schools attended by Indian students?
- m) How can a community develop a system to evaluate the interim and longer range success of their local education program in achieving the desired objectives?
- n) What should be the schools role in the community in addition to teaching the children?
- o) If we accept that living is learning, what can a community do in the area of out of school activities and programs to support and enhance the learning of its youth and adults?