

Wahkotowin

Wetaskiwin Regional Public School First Nations Parent Consultation 2013



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This report is titled ***Wahkotowin*** (Cree meaning Kinship/Family) to highlight a major thread reverberated throughout the conversations as a foundational way to support and nurture First Nations students.

Wetaskiwin Regional Public School (WRPS) Board Priority: Enhance the success of the First Nations students and encourage the active involvement of their families.

Our Proximity to the Maskwacis Cree Nation community constitutes the need for high quality responsive First Nations Education Programming. The Board identified enhancing the success of First Nations students and encourages the active involvement of their families as a priority. To address the Board priority, WRPS has worked hard to develop a culturally responsive school division through community engagement, working with Elders, cultural leaders, students, parents and our communities. In 2011, the Board established the Maskwacis Education Council to foster effective communication with First Nations families and to involve them in a collaborative decision-making process (Appendix 1). In the Fall of 2012, the Maskwacis Education Council set out to plan and implement strategies to involve First Nations parents, guardians, grandparents to join the conversation around the schooling experiences of First Nations students within WRPS.

Background

In collaboration with the Maskwacis Education Council; Shauna Bruno, Board of Trustee representing Maskwacis Cree and Brian Taje, Associate Superintendent of Instruction; developed a *First Nations Parent Consultation Framework 2013* (Appendix 2). This framework outlined the purpose of the consultation as well as the timelines, participants, questions and overview of the three-hour parent consultations.

The Council engaged with a working team to assist in the consultation process. The team included: Shauna Bruno; Brian Taje; Trish Randolph-Beaver; Corrine Desjarlais; guided by our Cultural Advisor and Elder, Roy Louis.

Purpose and Discussion Questions

The purpose of the gatherings was to explore ways to enhance the educational experiences of First Nations students attending WRPS. One of the facilitating factors of educational success for First Nations students is the involvement of parents and community in the school careers of their children. The Maskwacis Education Council identified three questions to be posed to First Nations parents and communities:

- What successes have your children experienced at school and what contributed to the success?
- What are two or three things that we can do differently to help make your child successful?
- How would you like to be involved at your child/children's school?



Our Goal

Develop strategies that are responsive.

Community Engagement

It was determined that there were four distinct communities from which responses were needed; contacts were made with three schools in each of the areas and dates for the parent conversations were set:

- Buck Lake held at Buck Mountain School February 6, 2013
- Pigeon Lake held at Pigeon Lake School February 13, 2013
- City of Wetaskiwin held at Centennial School March 6, 2013
- A culminating celebration feast held in Hobbema March 20, 2013.

A traditional Feast was held in honor of our fourth gathering to celebrate all the children attending WRPS. Protocol was followed with selected individuals in attendance and asked to respond to the discussion questions after the Feast.

Relationship Building

It was important for us to begin the conversations guided by cultural protocol. This was attended to by our Cultural Advisor and Elder in prayer and smudging before or after our conversations, in and or outside of the school building. It was attended to in a respectful way of the school and those willing to participate in smudging. This established a relational responsibility and accountability on all our parts in how we attend to each other and as decision makers in how we can be responsive. This engagement opens up spaces to attend to ethical, respectful, and culturally appropriate ways. It attends to the understanding of *Wahkotowin* in that we are related to all that surrounds us – cosmos, animals, plants, and people. It attends to the fundamental belief that knowledge is relational and that knowledge is shared with all that surrounds us (Wilson, 2008). For example, we do not simply have a relationship with the families in WRPS it is with all of creation.

What We Heard

As we entered each community it was evident parents and grandparents were passionate about the opportunity for their children to succeed and excel in their education. As the conversations progressed, it was evident that there were themes under each of the questions that were addressed in each of the communities. This section, **What We Heard**, will look at the common themes and comments that came out of the conversations, the culminating Feast, and that of the Maskwacis Council. The listing of all of the comments for each of the conversations can be found in Appendix C, D, and E.

- **What successes have your child/children experienced at school and what contributed to this success?**
- **What can we do differently to help make your child/children successful?**

In order to make sense of what we heard and put their words into perspective we weaved together their responses to the first two questions in the themes below:

Wahkotowin (Kinship/Family)

This report is titled ***Wahkotowin*** (Cree meaning Kinship/Family) to highlight a major thread reverberated throughout the conversations as a foundational way to support and nurture First Nations students. *Wahkotowin* is quite visible in each of the families and has no boundaries between communities or background.

Family is central to a student's success -- it is where learning begins. Families play a significant role in supporting the student in every aspect of their life. In the First Nations community, relationships go beyond the mother and father; the family involved with a First Nations student can be the extended family; grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, older siblings, and Elders. It is important for teachers to recognize how kinship is lived out in a student's life and how they can nurture that strength.



Family involvement in the school results in higher student achievement and a more welcoming school environment. The school must welcome the family and recognize that sometimes the family unit also needs support from the school. This means having supports in place that can be easily accessed by families. Home visits, parenting classes, classes where homework help for the family can be taught, and general supports for the family need to be discussed in the schools and ways found of extending this support. Family involvement is fundamental if First Nations students are to succeed.

Aahkam-mamowin (Desire for children to do well ... keep trying)

This was an overwhelming topic of discussion — parents and grandparents have the desire for their children and grandchildren to be successful in graduating, in achieving, in learning how to compete in overall society, and in learning who they are and how they fit into



life. One mother spoke of how her daughter was receiving the highest marks in math, how she had been bullied in school and felt so proud that her daughter was achieving in things that she had not. One spoke of how her son went to Hawaii with the basketball team and how sports were allowing this generation to explore the world. The overall message was how

the parents and grandparents were proud of their children and the successes they were having in education and overall development. Parents desire for their children to continue to go to school in a good way.

Awaasisak titah aahkam-miiyo kisinahmaakosicik (children continue going to school in a good way)

(side note: the double vowels indicate a macron or long sound. The miiyo is a broad statement of being well)

High Expectations

When connecting with a First Nations student, school staff must see a student who will achieve and who will graduate from high school. This was an overwhelming message that was conveyed in all communities. No longer will low expectations be tolerated for First Nations children, they have proven they can and will succeed with the help of their parents, their community, and their teachers. Old ways of having most of the First Nations students in a class for low achievers have been done away with in some schools in WRPS but parents spoke of how this continues to surface in the SNAP, K&E, and Storefront schools which are “set up for failure.” This is supported in Steinhauer’s (2008) study which found “a general consensus that academic expectations of Native children are low within the public school system” (p. 68).

First Nations students have flourished, proving that if you expect them to do well, they will. This message needs to be put forward to not only the teaching staff, but all staff involved in a school setting. There needs to be a perception shift.

In conversations held at the Maskwacis Education Council meetings it was clear that WRPS staff should have high expectations of themselves as staff and that this is also an expectation of public education. Parents also need to have high expectations of themselves and in their children. In some stories related to labeling, it has been detrimental for parents because they do not want to begin to see their child through the eyes of their teacher. With open and honest conversations around expectations between parent-teacher and student-teacher a positive relationship can be developed.

Teachers Make a Difference

“Positive relationships formed through warm, sensitive, and responsive care help children to feel valued and gain more from their learning experiences. Relationships between teachers, families, peers, and even to place are important and help to build environments that nurture children’s growth and development” (Steinhauer, 2008, p. 112.)

Relationships; they are at the heart of why a First Nations student comes to school and works hard to succeed. Much research has been done on the value of one significant adult taking an interest in a student and how that relationship can make a positive difference in the life of that student.

Parents want a relationship with the teacher and want to feel comfortable approaching the teacher at all times. Parent’s spoke of how teachers changed the way their child relates to school and life; how teachers helped build their grandchild’s self-esteem. Parents recognized when the teacher believed in their child it made all the difference in their child wanting to attend school.

Relationships are built in honoring and embracing the background of the student—who is their family, what community are they from. Teachers can build this into how they teach and bring aspects of the student’s life into the school in order to facilitate learning. Feasts, sporting events, community get-togethers, all of these are an opportunity for relationships to begin and flourish.

Longevity of a teacher also makes a difference in sustaining a student-teacher relationship. A teacher who has been at the school for many years and is involved in the community is regarded very differently than one who has just joined the school community. There are many stories of teachers who are only in a First Nations school for a few short years and move on, families and students are not willing to invest a great deal of time and emotion on a relationship that will only last one or two years. Teacher retention is necessary and is an area that leadership must attend to.

Teacher professional development also is a reflection of how they can make a difference. Knowledge of cultural practices, worldviews, unique learning processes—all of which can assist the teacher in embracing the capacity in First Nations students. Many students

come into the school as having knowledge to be valued and worth sharing in the school. Many students come in with an array of skills and experiences that teachers are not aware of. How can these links be made with the mandatory curriculum? However, it is crucial for teachers to understand what the current generations carry into the schools and the tensions that might arise from the “historical” “old” stories, or being storied as the “Indian” and often “as less than.” Or perhaps how Aboriginal people were storied historically and how this may have contributed or reinforced a current narrow conceptualization of Aboriginal peoples.

These can create spaces for student’s potential and enhance their educational experiences. Professional development in this area is not a one time learning event, it is a commitment to long-term, meaningful learning that can take many years.

Leadership

“Our principal listens to us and welcomes us.” A powerful statement that reflects how parents know and recognize that leadership makes one of the greatest differences in First Nations education. School leadership needs to be involved in the community and have the community involved in the school. A commitment to this concept makes a significant impact in the overall success of young lives.

Dealing with Bullying in a Positive Manner

Parents recognize that all partners have a role to play in providing students with a safe and caring learning environment. They appreciate the school staff taking immediate action when they become aware of bullying behavior in the schools; one school telephoned the parents of the students involved, brought the students and the parents together to have an open discussion regarding the behaviors that took place.

Parents spoke of how leadership has a vital role in being the champions of positive behaviour and relationships. School leaders must be proactive in ensuring that there are intervention and prevention strategies in place that have community involvement in their development. The community input is vital as there is not one solution to bullying that fits into every community and a successful prevention program will address the needs of each

individual community. School leaders must recognize that there needs to be a coordinated and intentional approach to having a bullying-prevention program in the school and in the community.

All school staff should be involved in training regarding bullying preventions in schools, positive relationship building models and teaching self-responsibility. This will ensure that staff has adequate supports necessary to effectively intervene when they see bullying taking place. This will also ensure that consistent and appropriate interventions are in place for bullying situations.

Parents want to be involved in the positive resolution of bullying; the community wants to be a partner in prohibiting bullying. Surveys, community meetings, guest speakers from the community are all methods of involving the community in ending the bullying cycle.

FNMI Presence

Parents want to see an increase in FNMI presence in the schools. Opportunities need to be created for FNMI resource people/teachers to enter into the school. It has been observed that when an FNMI person is in the school/classroom, students become engaged in the learning. Success for FNMI students is built on best practices and community linkages to the community, cultural teachings, celebrations, parental engagement and school practices that create culturally relevant learning opportunities within the schools that will build a supportive school climate.

FNMI presence in schools can positively affect many aspects of the culture of a school by:

- increasing awareness of FNMI peoples and culture
- developing partnerships with the FNMI community
- advocating for the specific educational needs of FNMI students
- helps build a supportive school environment
- build relationship

Another major theme that emerged in all of the parent meetings was the significance of having an FNMI liaison worker type role in each of the schools. Many parents spoke of the value of having a point of contact that was immediately accessible for them. Parents believe that having an FNMI person in their schools makes a difference in not only the education of their child/children, but also in the role that parents play in a school. Parents spoke of how having an FNMI person on staff advocating for their child and their family made a positive difference in how they viewed the school and the education provided by WRPS.

Quality Programming - Cultural Programming

Research has shown that many children who have little to no exposure to cultural learning opportunities in school create a dissonance between dual understandings of teachings (Culture/School). It creates a dichotomy between First Nations/White. Many First Nations students do not realize the difficult question they are left to contend with and for most the



challenge is within, wondering “Whose knowledge do I privilege?” “Who am I?” Many find themselves embarrassed and want nothing to do with being “First Nations” or “Native” related. The experiences of First Nations youth are embedded in place, family, and community.

We need to be concerned with the shaping of identities and how to reinforce and extend traditional and cultural practices.

We heard from parents that quality programming that focuses on strengths and abilities is seen as pivotal in the development of young lives and in the shaping of their future. Quality programming provides the spark that ignites the passion of learning and for students to begin to imagine, hope, and dream.

One parent spoke of how taking home economics was the beginning of her daughter discovering a love of culinary arts that resulted in ensuring she graduate from high-school and pursue post-secondary studies in this area.

Parents believe that the programming that happens at school needs to be relevant to what is happening in their child’s life. Tapping into students’ culture and looking at what is happening in students’ lives and community while weaving it into classroom teachings make

learning interesting. It is critical for teachers to have an understanding of the histories and experiences of Aboriginal people and knowledge systems.

Aboriginal values need to be embedded in the curriculum ensuring that what is important in Aboriginal communities is reflected in the school. For example,

Cree Value System

Wahkotowin (Kinship)

Sakitowin (Loving)

Kitimakeyitowin (Caring)

Iyisahowin (Patience)

Kisewatisiwin (Compassion)

Iyanowpimatisowin (Indigenous Life and Values)

Schools should explore cultural programming that will bring awareness of histories and experiences of Aboriginal people, culture, perspectives and traditions into school space. For example, parents expressed that Cree needs to be taught in the schools, language is the heart of the Cree people and the teaching of it needs to be seen as important. Teaching of Cree is intertwined with the cultural programming.

- **How would you like to be involved at your child's school?**

Every parent has a different level of involvement in how they can participate in the school community. Many are very comfortable entering the school and being a part of the classroom activities; from classroom reading, parent volunteers in the classroom, sitting on Parent Councils and School Boards. Many are not comfortable entering the schools and can



support the school in other ways; making sure that their children have a good breakfast at home before going to school, helping with homework, “watch APTN” on TV and/or speak Cree to their child at home. Parents expressed different ways of being involved

in their child's learning and all of them are valuable. One grandparent shared a list of resources to share with the schools (Appendix F).

The funniest story that we heard at the evening parent conversations is to have an Elder or parent come in and read *The Three Little Pigs* to the students in Cree.

The overall message received was all parents and grandparents have a vested interest in their child/grandchild's education. They genuinely care. Research has shown that some sources (media, government, papers) report that Aboriginal parents lack interest or do not care about their child's education and we have found this to be untrue. Many parents are unable to supply lunch or attend school events or parent teacher interviews for logistical reasons – no money, no transportation or other resources or no sitter. There are multiple reasons. However, it does encourage us in our school district to explore our practices of society and look at innovative ways to increase parent involvement.

Summary

Our First Nations communities believe there are aspects of what we are doing in our school communities are working well for our First Nations students. They also believe that there are practices that need much improvement.

Attending to lives and the experiences that make up those lives is vital to understanding. It's important to understand there are often complexities in lives of youth and families as they transition between band and public school, between different home landscapes, on and off reserves and the struggle with social ("reserve kid" "Indian"), political (Provincial & Federal), historical (residential schools, treaties, colonization) and cultural ("what kind of Indian do you have in mind") realms. As we return to *Wahkotowin* we are reminded of the significance to create educative spaces within schools that appreciate Aboriginal knowledge and knowledge systems and create conversational spaces with parents, grandparents, and communities that are meaningful and create the necessary changes in policies and practices.

Returning to the Parents

It was important to ensure accuracy and returning the conversations, the transcripts back to the parents became part of sustaining relationships as well as ensuring our accountability and retaining trust.

As we came close to summer holidays, we found limited number of days to return to the parents. We therefore decided to return to only two communities: Buck Lake and Wetaskiwn. However, all the parents and grandparents were invited to attend one or the other.

Returning to Our Goal

Our goal was to develop strategies that are responsive. Some immediate strategies include:

- 1) Hiring of 10 new staff: FNMI/FSLW Support Worker; FNMI Support Worker; FNMI Teacher
- 2) Making schools more accountable with the FNMI dollars received.
- 3) *PEKISKWEWIN* Maskwacis Cree Student Engagement Initiative



REFERENCES

- Steinhauer, E. (2008). *Parental School Choice in First Nations Communities: Is There Really a Choice?* Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller.
- Wilson, S. (2008). *Research Is Ceremony: Indigenous Research Methods.* Winnipeg, MB: Fernwood Publishing.

APPENDIX A: TERMS OF REFERENCE

Maskwacis Education Council

Terms of Reference

Purpose

- To have effective communication with First Nations families and to involve them in a collaborative decision-making process.

Powers and Duties

- To discuss and implement strategies to involve First Nations families in public consultations regarding the education of First Nations students and the involvement of their families in the decision-making process.
- To coordinate and implement public consultations with First Nations families.
- To provide a direct communication and problem-solving link between First Nations families and the Board.
- To discuss and make recommendations to the Board regarding any issues that pertains to programming and services for First Nations students.
- To discuss school system operations referred to it from time to time that pertains to First Nations students.
- To identify issues that are more directly associated with improving educational opportunities for First Nations students of the Division.
- To review proposed and existing policies of the Board and Administrative Procedures of the Division.

Membership

- At least two trustees, one of whom shall be the committee Chair.
- Superintendent or designate
- Cultural Advisor/Elder
- Representatives of First Nations families.

Meetings

- The **Maskwacis Education Council** will hold up to a maximum of four meetings per year.

APPENDIX B: FIRST NATIONS PARENT CONSULTATION FRAMEWORK

WETASKIWIN REGIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOL FIRST NATIONS PARENT CONSULTATION FRAMEWORK 2013

PURPOSE:

Enhance the educational experiences of First Nations students

TIMELINE & LOCATION:

1. January 30th, 2013

Buck Mountain Central School

2. February 6th, 2013

Pigeon Lake (Location: TBA)

3. February 13th, 2013

City of Wetaskiwin (Location: TBA)

4. March 20th, 2013 TRADITIONAL FEAST

Hobbema (Location: TBA)

- Need a setting which can accommodate the parents/participants and where they would feel comfortable expressing their opinions.
- Do we meet in a school?
- Does the setting encourage conversation?
- Is it easily accessible?

IDENTIFY PARENTS/PARTICIPANTS:

- All First Nations parents who has a student in WRPS (broad invitations)
- Generational Families (personal invitation)
- Four Band Educational Authorities (personal invitation)
- Maskwacis Education Council

QUESTIONS TO PARENTS/PARTICIPANTS:

- a. What successes (have you or) your children experienced at school and what contributed to the success?
- b. What are two or three things that we can do differently to help make your child successful?
- c. How would you like to be involved at your child's / children's school?

FACILITATOR:

Trish Randolph-Beaver
Education Manager, FNMI Services
Alberta Education

OVERVIEW:

Meeting Facilitation (Table facilitators / note takers - Corrine)

- a. Invocation
- b. Greeting and Welcome
- c. Administration
- d. Engagement
 - i. Outline broader consultation process

- ii. Review evening
 - iii. Question and Report Back for each question
- e. Closing

PLAN

5:00	Invocation - Roy
5:05	Greeting & Welcome – Shauna
5:10	Meal – Bannock and Stew
5:45	Purpose of consultations/my role as a trustee/Introduce Brian and Trish – Shauna
5:50	Admin Overview - Brian
6:00	Consultation Overview – Trish
6: 10	Question One
6: 30	Question Two
6: 50	Question Three
7:10	Discussion/presentation of questions
7:35	Wrap-Up - Trish
7:50	Closing – Roy

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Recorders

Notepads/pencils

Flip chart or easel paper

Focus group script

List of participants

Markers

Masking tape

Name tags

Food/Refreshments

INTERPRET AND REPORT RESULTS:

- Facilitator Trish Randolph-Beaver will write report.
- Facilitator Trish Randolph-Beaver, Shauna Bruno, and Brian Taje will interpret and report results.
- Report to MEC
- Report to WRPS Board
- Report to Principals

APPENDIX C

Buck Lake FNMI Parent Consultation-February 6, 2013

1. What successes have your child/children experienced at school and what contributed to this success?

- I was bullied when I went here—but my daughters have not!
- My daughter is at the highest level at mad minutes.
- Prizes for doing well.
- Grades 7, 8 & 9 are more of a family; they support each other.
- This is my child's first year in the program; there has been a positive change, a sense of belonging.
- High expectations resulted in positive experience.
- Daughter graduated!
- Two children graduated high school and one is at the University of Alberta because of the school and the family support.
- Get along with non-FNMI society, we do things together.
- Corinne makes a big difference.
- Teachers make a difference—help, tutoring, after school.
- Early intervention by professionals.
- Leadership abilities are recognized.
- Grades were brought up and my daughter is graduating.
- Daughter going to NAIT in the culinary program; her interest was developed in high school home economics.
- Having different programs, quality programs.
- Leadership listens.
- Teachers pay attention to all students, they care.
- When there was a problem with bullying they talked to the parents, they dealt with it, it didn't carry on.
- Hard to be leaders and teachers. Full time principals.
- All teachers went to a sweat lodge ceremony.
- Teacher longevity.
- Connection the community through the FNMI worker.
- Councilor/FNMI worker work well together.

2. What can we do differently to help make your child/children successful?

- Take action on bullying.
- Care more; staff shouldn't turn a blind eye.
- Make lessons real, not hypothetical.
- Need FNMI worker at Alder Flats and Winfield.
- Keep on with center-rewards.

- Self-esteem work; children need to be ready for work force.
- Encourage children.
- Take struggling students and look at the issues they are dealing with; take on projects and make it real.
- Bring out the different characteristics of the children—their strengths. Ecology, work with seniors and old folks, gardening...
- Cree classes, even for adults.
- “Native Way”. Living it; having older students teaching younger kids culture.
- Lesson planning surrounding cultural activities—how to pick sweat grass traditionally.
- Once a month at the school talk about a historical Aboriginal figure in Canada and the province—Louis Riel month, or Roy Louis month.
- Important to do Family Tree—know who you are and where/who you came from. Healers, leaders....

3. How would you like to be involved at your child/children’s school?

- Fundraising bannock sale.
- Organize pow-wows, Christmas Concerts....
- Every child should write down their cultural traditions and go to class to talk about their lives/family.
- Parents contribute to hot lunch.
- VOLUNTEER.
- Read to child’s classroom.
- Watch APTN Cree.
- Build a tipi and talk about the teachings.
- Be present→be involved in the school.
- Have Kokom days.
- Go in to help make native crafts.

APPENDIX D

Pigeon Lake FNMI Parent Consultation-February 13, 2013

1. What successes have your child/children experienced at school and what contributed to this success?

- Basketball trip to Hawaii
- Team activities—volleyball, basketball..
- More EA's to provide help when needed; this cuts down on homework.
- Connections for students with First Nations staff leads to opportunities like drumming and singing.
- Round Dance in schools.
- Leadership program helps students with their growth and development.
- Leadership starting at the elementary level helps prepare students for “big” school.
- When student was struggling, school team met with her and helped-not forced, but worked with her at her level. Now she's back on track. A “gentle” push.
- Directly addressing the needs or issues of students.
- *Project Respects* at Lakedell helped grandchildren with self-esteem.
- Positive parental involvement makes a difference—homework, marks, attendance. Asking my kids “how was your day?” This is also relationship building with our children when we are there to listen.
- Parental school involvement—“Meals by Moms”, fund-raising activities. It makes a difference when children see parents or family members at school.
- Seeing someone from the community creates a comfort zone.
- Transition programs (efforts at elementary to junior high); “sleep-over” and field trips to PLRS, help parents get connected.
- Have a positive relationship with principal, principal is non-judgmental.
- Good teachers make a positive difference, working together with parents.
- Schools keep tabs; i.e. mailing report card and sending it home. Attendance reports.
- Jerry Saddleback worked with staff at Lakedell School to have all the students sing *Jingle Bells* in Cree.

2. What can we do differently to help make your child/children successful?

- Need to have therapists and counsellors available to students-or know they're there and who does what.
- They need to be not so rigid to get into see.
- Someone needs to help address truancy and attendance.
- Attendance certificates.
- Phone calls out regarding attendance.

- Attendance needs to be recognized as a combination of issues and that it is a shared responsibility.
- More First Nation parents need to be active with their children's schooling.
- Maybe an Aboriginal Parent Council.
 - Safer space.
 - Maybe for a community, not just a school?
- School can feel intimidating
- Parents (not FN parents) can also feel intimidated to follow teams to schools on reserves.
- Create awareness, address stereotypes in all schools, school communities, in order to help all students, staff and parents in order to bridge gaps, create sensitivity and awareness.
- Be clear about the level students are at when they are in a combined class—is she at grade 3 or grade 4? What are the implications?
- Bullying occurs at all levels, even at the First Nation/First Nation level.
- Address bullying; develop strategies to deal with this.
- Is a criminal record check always necessary, even for an Elder?
- Things are let go, not dealt with or followed up—i.e.—Veteran's Day “mocking songs” and “you don't even look native” comments.
- Suspension doesn't work—don't suspend and then complain that work isn't done.
- If there's two students—First Nation and non-First Nation—in trouble, there are greater consequences given to the First Nation student.
- Storefront is a set-up for failure—students at Storefront are all native.
- SNAP doesn't lead to graduation→K&E.
- SNAP/K&E/Storefront “set up for failure”.
- First Nations programs, classes, etc. support should be led by someone who is First Nations-Cree-in our community from our community-Cultural Resource People.
- Cree languages classes-there are certified Cree language teachers in Hobbema.
- Cultural introduction needs to start in elementary school—Falun vs. Lakedell.
- Learn diversity, not immersed.
- Contact to the home-do differently-text if there's not a house phone.
- Put plan in place for success, not just three strike rule; look at what is in place for kids in care—“Success in School for Children and Youth in Care Protocol”.
- There are more First Nation teachers out there—find them.
- Issue with taxation for staff—understand, encourage, promote.
- WRPS↔FN Authority employment partnerships, arrangements.
- Teachers are still harsh and mean with some of their comments to students and parents.

3. How would you like to be involved at your child's school?

- Getting more native parents involved in Aboriginal Studies class.
- Aboriginal Career Day that involves parents.
- Rewards and recognition to students that is solution focused.
- Go to Parent Teacher Interview meetings.
- Volunteer in activities such as Literacy Week.
- Get FNMI teaching into classrooms-history, law,
- On website dedicate a column or a page to Families including current events, liaison easy contact, “little” community events that involve students and informing parents, etc. Veteran’s Day.
- A dance theatre should come to the schools, with students or local involvement “showcase” for all of the schools. Northern Cree, role modeling, celebrating, Conan....
- Send First Nation students who are doing well to “Gathering of Nations”.
- Speak with Chief and Councils with these same questions.
- Speak-Out involves students from grade 9-f12—need to reach student voice sooner to try to make an impact “in time”.
- Stereotypes-how do we address them?
- Acknowledge what has been shared.

APPENDIX E

Wetaskiwin - FNMI Parent Consultation-March 6, 2013

1. What successes have your child/children experienced at school and what contributed to this success?

- Centres.
 - Outdoor Education.
 - Asked to help teach students about plants, snares....should know, need that knowledge.
 - Children respond positively when culture is weaved into classes:
 - Diorama
 - Author Reading
- Big impact.
- Arts inspired program, music is important, it is a great outlet.
 - Recognition for doing well.
 - “Peer Buddy” recognition from teacher, draw at the end of the month.
 - Cree Program, stay for school culture. Teachers care (most of them), love the school.
 - One on one with kids; if there is a problem, call the parent first.
 - Likes coming to school, excels at reading.
 - Empowered to share knowledge.
 - Given opportunity to shine in front of classmates by teachers.

2. What can we do differently to help make your child/children successful?

- Staff need cultural learning-cannot teach all children the same.
- Staff cultural p. d. day opens eyes. Can’t be pushed on, must be ready for it. Work up to it, prepare all year for it with speakers.
- Cultural competencies, mandatory for RCMP, must be looked at in education.
- Aboriginal Day, bring in learning’s, not just a celebration.
- Speakers on knowledge for classrooms...Fish and Wildlife Officers, talk of trapping...talk of success.
- Increasing lines of communication between schools ↔ parents ↔ home. Recognizing that not everyone has a telephone, different ways of communicating.
- Native Liaison Worker, why not in elementary school, it would be someone to talk to. Important!
- FNMI reflected in resources.
- Stereotyping needs to stop! Staffs don’t know what they don’t know.
- Differing consequences for First Nation students and non-First Nation students. Fairness!

- Elder available, work into daily schedule, a daily routine. A cultural person such as a Kokum.
- Have aboriginal food available for FNMI students.
- Classes on how to make cultural foods one day a week.
- Put consequences in front of agendas. Accountability not just for students, but staff as well—(math question, asking for help).
- Switch negative voices, need to challenge and give positives.
- Expectations of doing well.
- On the website there should be links for the 4 Band children.
- Chain reaction beyond helping student, but helping the home situation too. Support families beyond the school walls.
- Look at racism and how it is dealt with in schools. Not just between students, but adults and students. And that racism works both ways.
- Learning achievement—styles of teaching; curriculum changes. What of parents? Help them learn in order to help their children in homework.
- Communication—newsletters—what is happening this month. If there are newsletters, they are late; we need to get them on time.
- Technology promotes learning. Need to keep pace. There's a renovated playground, but no smart boards.
- Student led conferences instead of teacher interviews.
- FNMI students are holistic thinkers. Staff needs to know how this works, what does it mean to the classroom-graphic organizers.
- Tactile, hands-on learning.
- At one school the teacher had everything updated on-line on Sundays as what was going on in the classroom. Moved to a new school and there is nothing on line at all. Having it on-line helped to get the week organized and helped with the work done at home with my child.

3. How would you like to be involved at your child's school?

- Our schools need to be more welcoming.
- Have speaker on different topics (see attachments).
- Aboriginal staffs—step outside of hiring process, make visible.
- Get involved in projects.
- More parents (fathers!) going on field trips.
- Give kids a good breakfast.
- Help out at schools.
- Parent volunteers in classes.
- Parents need to be there for their children.
- Online homework for parents.
- Reward children for their good works.
- Get suggestions from teachers at how parents could be involved beyond baking and chaperoning.

- Read to child's classroom students in both English and Cree. It's fun for the kids.
- Show that there is more in life than just reserve—see the possibilities.
- Sit on Councils, Parent Councils, and School Boards.
- Take a look at resources and books being used in the schools.
- After school programming, volunteer for them.
- The waiting list at the Boys and Girls club is way too long, look at some after school resourcing at the school. Get parents on-board to support this through Shauna.
- Homework help at the school in a “good” way. In a supportive environment. How can transportation be provided for an initiative such as this?

APPENDIX F: RESOURCE SHARED BY A GRANDPARENT

A Grandparent at the Wetaskiwin meeting provided the following documents as a resource:

Aboriginal Topics

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1. Theories of origin: | Eight main theories listed here |
| 2. Creation stories: | Each Nation or tribe has its own story of its creation |
| 3. Linguistic groups: | Over 600 distinct peoples at the time of Columbus Linguistic groups, dialects |
| 4. Cultural groups: | Nine distinct cultural areas in North America |
| 5. Treaties in Canada: | There are eleven numbered Treaties in Canada and many named Treaties |
| 6. Housing: | Types, reasons, protection, defense, camp circle |
| 7. Clothing: | Moccasins, ceremonial, daily use, head dresses |
| 8. Food: | Hunting – traps, snares, dead falls, surrounds, jumps, pound moose, deer, elk, fish, birds
Agriculture-tools, jobs-female, male
Crops-Corn, beans, squash, rice, potatoes, over 500 crops new to Europeans
Buffalo provided food, clothes, homes, tools, storage |
| 9. Transportation: | Horses after 1650, sleds, toboggans, snow shoes, boats, canoes, bull boats, travois |
| 10. Recreation: | Games with teams, solitaire, sports with teams, solo |
| 11. Music: | Song-types, drums, flutes, horns, rattles, bells, foot drums
Dancing – ceremonial, social |
| 12. Ceremonies: | Sundance (thirst dance), Sweat lodges, vision/dream quests, naming, puberty, burial, birth, life cycle, fasting, tobacco, pipes, mnemonic devices, giveaways, goose, chicken |
| 13. Warfare: | Traditional plains, woodlands
Murder-revenge, insults, killing, sacrifice, suicide, feuds, raids, weapons |
| 14. Government: | Iroquois, Inca, Aztec, Natchez, rank, prestige, slaves, torture, gauntlet, wealth |
| 15. Tools: | Obsidian, farming, pestle and mortar |
| 16. Marriage/divorce: | Love, courtship, bride service, moieties, descent, kinship extended families, clans |
| 17. Arts and Crafts: | Decorations, embroidery, quill work, bead work, basketry, pottery, engraving, bark biting, birdache |
| 18. Medicines: | Shamanism, medicine people, societies, diseases |
| 19. Potlatch: | Reasons, loans, debts, locations |
| 20. Witchcraft: | Sorcery, magic |
| 21. Beauty: | Tattoos, scars, hair plucking, adornments, jewelry |

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 22. Alcohol: | Abuses, reasons, problems |
| 23 Education: | Traditional styles, storytelling, legends |
| 24. Humor: | Boasting, teasing, joking, laughter, contraires |

Topic for Crafts

- | | | |
|--------------------|---|-------------------------|
| 1. Beading | ➤ | Designs |
| | ➤ | Colors |
| | ➤ | Looms |
| | ➤ | Lazy stitch |
| | ➤ | Running stitch |
| | ➤ | Sewing on backing |
| | ➤ | Edging |
| 2. Quill work | ➤ | Source of quills |
| | ➤ | Plucking quills |
| | ➤ | Dyeing quills |
| | ➤ | Sorting quills |
| | ➤ | Patterns |
| | ➤ | Techniques |
| 3. Hide Tanning | ➤ | Types of hides |
| | ➤ | Skinning |
| | ➤ | Scraping, tools |
| | ➤ | Drying frames |
| | ➤ | Smoking hides |
| 4. Hide Clothing | ➤ | Bags |
| | ➤ | Moccasins |
| | ➤ | Shirts, pants, leggings |
| 5. Miniature Tipis | ➤ | Cutting materials |
| | ➤ | Selecting designs |
| | ➤ | Coloring tipis |
| | ➤ | Attaching poles to base |
| | ➤ | Finishing bases |
| 6. Moss bags | ➤ | Patterns |
| | ➤ | Beading cover |
| | ➤ | Sewing together |
| | ➤ | Wrapping babies |

7.	Maps	➤ ➤	Culture areas Linguistic areas
8.	Bells	➤ ➤ ➤	Metal bells Uses or types Old style-hoofs
9	Belts	➤ ➤ ➤ ➤	Colors Designs Additions to belts Materials
10.	Drum Making	➤ ➤ ➤ ➤	Materials Types Decorating Uses
11.	Dream Catchers	➤ ➤	Materials Story behind Dream Catchers
12.	Earrings	➤ ➤ ➤ ➤	Beaded Metal Shells Feathered
13.	Shields	➤ ➤ ➤	Paper Metal, raw hide Painted, feathers
14.	Breastplates	➤ ➤	Male – chicken, traditional, loop Female – traditional
15.	Chokers, Bracelets	➤ ➤	Bone and beads Beaded
16.	Hair Drops	➤	Feather
17.	Hair Ties	➤	Leather, beads
18.	Knife Sheath	➤	Leather, raw hide, beaded
19.	War Bonnets	➤ ➤ ➤ ➤	Types Bead designs Feather wrapping Hat base

