

# **Community Members Speak: First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education (K – 12)**

## **Summary of Consultation Recommendations: 10 Themes and 33 Recommendations**

**Based on consultation analysis by Dr. Diane Vetter, Practicum Coordinator, York University Faculty of Education**

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The data collected in *Community Members Speak: First Nation Métis and Inuit Education (K-12)* provides rich learning for all stakeholders in education. The voices of the community have made clear the concerns, challenges, successes and celebrations that must be recognized to reach the goal of student success and respectful, relevant learning for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students and for their non-Aboriginal classmates. The data implies that significant work is required to address student awareness and teacher confidence in implementing First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultural, historical and current understandings in the classroom.

Dr. Vetter identified **thirty-three recommendations** to help guide our board in the development of a multi-year plan and assist in the implementation of the Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework. These recommendations have been categorized under the **10 themes** that emerged during the initial analysis of the findings as follows:

### **1. Attitude**

- Create awareness about the impact of teacher attitude on FNMI student learning
- Address teacher awareness and confidence in implementing First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultural, historical and current understandings in the classroom
- Support teachers on their learning journey about FNMI historical / contemporary issues and FNMI perspectives

### **2. Culture:**

- Establish strong working relationships with Elder and community partners to support in-school cultural teaching and ongoing infusion
- Create an “ethical space” and process for discussion about faith, culture, religious observance and other sensitive issues

### **3. Curriculum:**

- Review curriculum to determine natural links for infusion of Aboriginal content and implementation of accessible learning strategies
- Create local history units for inclusion in specific school curriculum
- Facilitate teacher awareness to appropriately handle sensitive subject matter
- Initiate policy inquiry to determine the possibility of offering native languages as an equivalent course to French

### **4. Governance:**

- Think outside the box to create opportunities for community representation at all levels
- Establish liaison group to facilitate buy-in from community and schools

### **5. Identity / Student Self-Perception:**

- Implement self-esteem programs for students
- Implement student voice forum through Speak Up Grants & Minister’s Student Advisory Council
- Assess implementation of Voluntary Self-Identification program to evaluate, address concerns, buy-in and share understandings

## 6. Learning Environment:

- Integrate a School Environment Initiative into the School Improvement Plan
- Establish an outreach program with local communities
- Assess Anti-Bullying and Safe Schools Initiatives against success criteria

## 7. Policy

- Review re-enrollment policies to support students who leave the system
- Implement Anti-Racism initiatives at all schools
- Advocate for additional resources for Special Education
- Seek innovative ways to make meaningful change

## 8. Resources

- Develop online resource libraries for student and teacher access
- Partner with local libraries to maximize resources
- Honour the resources that exist within school communities (parents, community organizations, charitable organizations) with invitations to collaborate
- Encourage student-created visual displays and resources to support cultural visibility

## 9. School / School Board Systems

- Advocate for greater support of special education
- Promote guidance service to Aboriginal students
- Facilitate training for guidance staff in addressing Aboriginal concerns
- Facilitate community partnerships for a continuation of the consultation process

## 10. Supports

- Liaise with community support organizations to identify and support students who require assistance to secure basic needs, addictions counselling and other social supports
- Engage in study, conversation and consultation to understand the roots of problems facing students
- Create in-school initiatives to support involvement and student achievement
- Advocate for greater funding to meet student needs

**Please note:** The above recommendations align with recommendations made by the 1996 *Royal Commission on Aboriginal People* (Vol. 3, 84 recommendations K-12); *The Report of the Ipperwash Inquiry* with mandatory treaty education among 100 recommendations made in *A Roadmap to Improved Relationships and Quality of Life*; *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015)* – Calls to Action to Provincial School Boards

**For more information please contact: Stephen Charbonneau – Superintendent of Education  
Linda McGregor – Manager of First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education**