



The Simcoe County District School Board produces this regular e-bulletin to help parents support children on their journey of lifelong learning. We know positive connections between home and school support student achievement. In each edition you'll find practical tips and strategies to help your child achieve success in those important years of learning from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

Bringing School Home is available through the Simcoe County District School Board website (www.scdsb.on.ca). As well, parents, guardians and other interested members of our school communities may subscribe through our website and have the bulletin e-mailed directly to their e-mail accounts (readers may also unsubscribe at any time). Please send your comments and feedback to: webadmin@scdsb.on.ca.

The Ministry of Education has identified Aboriginal education as a priority in Ontario in order to increase the graduation rate of First Nation Métis and Inuit students within provincial schools.

The SCDSB has ongoing relationships with the Chippewas of Rama and Beausoleil First Nations, working together through its Native Advisory Committee to deliver culturally appropriate programming for students attending SCDSB schools from these two First Nation communities. SCDSB Native Trustee Brenda Ingersoll represents students who reside on the two First Nations but attend elementary and secondary schools of the Board.

With the release of the Ministry of Education, Aboriginal Education Office, *Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework* the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) has sought input from First Nation and Métis organizations through the Aboriginal Education Advisory Circle to develop further programming which is relevant, culturally appropriate and sustainable for First Nation, Métis and Inuit youth attending SCDSB schools.



Which Aboriginal organizations are working with the SCDSB?

The Simcoe County District School Board has been working in conjunction with the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board through the Aboriginal Education Advisory Circle (AEAC) including:

- Georgian Bay Métis Council
- Métis Nation of Ontario
- Barrie Native Friendship Centre
- Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre

- Barrie Area Native Advisory Circle (BANAC)
- Georgian Bay Native Women's Association
- Orillia Native Women's Association
- Chippewas of Rama First Nation
- Chippewas of Beausoleil First Nation
- Mnjikaning Kendaaswin Elementary School
- Christian Island Elementary School
- Georgian College

What is sustainable programming?

It is important that student programming is sustainable taking into consideration:

Simcoe County District School Board System Goals with a commitment to literacy, numeracy, safe schools and employee excellence.

The Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework includes the Ministry of Education overall goals: focusing on high levels of student achievement; reducing gaps in student achievement; and, fostering high levels of public confidence.

Wholistic Learning Model: In creating success for First Nation Métis and Inuit students a more wholistic approach to education is necessary. This wholistic approach includes addressing the emotional, physical, spiritual and mental aspects of the human experience. Judy Syrette, former Senior Education Advisor, Ogemawahj Tribal Council, explains "spiritual" as "the integration of the inner and outer world of the student to create meaning. If students are not honoured and they do not experience positive peer and teacher relationships in school then they do not get to the place where education has meaning to them and consequently are not able to progress so that mental learning can take place."

What programs have been put into place this year to support First Nation, Métis and Inuit learners?

The following are a list of programs developed for students, teachers, staff and community to enhance an awareness of Aboriginal culture within classrooms, schools and the Board:

Teaching and Learning on Turtle Island - First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Programming Plan 2008-2009

Teachers/Educators

- Guidance Part 1, 2 & Specialist Additional Qualification Course (First Nation, Métis & Inuit Focus)
- Cultural Awareness Training (Principals, Vice-Principals, teachers, staff)
- Professional Learning Community (PLC)
- Ongoing cultural resource development to support elementary and secondary Ontario Curriculum expectations

Student Programming

- Leadership and Peer Support with a First Nation, Métis and Inuit Focus
- Seventh Fire Alternative Learning Program
- Ojibwe Language Courses at David H. Church PS and Twin Lakes SS
- Native Studies Courses at Twin Lakes SS, Penetang SS, Barrie Central, Collingwood CI and Banting MHS
- First Nation, Métis and Inuit Youth Symposium
- Métis Language, Literacy & Culture Program
- Celebrating First Nation, Métis and Inuit local, national events
- Grade 10 Treaties with Canada "Living Documents" curriculum resource development

Voluntary, Confidential Self-Identification of Aboriginal Students: SCDSB Policy 4195

The Simcoe County District School Board respects and values the Board's practices related to 'Commit to Character' and the diverse teaching of Aboriginal communities. The Board recognizes that the learning aspirations and potentials of Aboriginal students can be realized through a responsive, transparent and accountable policy that results in improved programs and services. Co-operation among Aboriginal students, parents and their communities, First Nation Schools, Aboriginal governments and the Simcoe County District

School Board will encourage the development of strong partnerships. Student achievement data will be collected and aggregated related to the performance of Aboriginal students. Data collection and analysis will provide information for future decision-making promoting Aboriginal student success.

Policy

Simcoe County District School Board is committed to providing programs that result in improved success for Aboriginal students. This policy establishes self-identification of Aboriginal students in order that student data may be collected and aggregated. All Aboriginal students have the right to voluntarily self-identify so that appropriate programs may be designed and delivered to improve educational outcomes.

Definition

The term *Aboriginal* includes First Nation, Métis or Inuit peoples.

Guidelines

The self-identification policy will adhere to the following as its guiding principles:

- transparency
- inclusiveness
- equity
- respectful of individual privacy, dignity and cultural diversity

Voluntary and confidential self-identification can take place at any time. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's school Principal if they wish to self-identify their child(ren) as First Nation, Métis or Inuit. If you have any questions about the SCDSB Voluntary, Confidential Self-Identification of Aboriginal Students Policy, please contact School Services at 734-6363 ext.11711.

The Urban Aboriginal Education Pilot Project

One of the Ministry of Education's key commitments in the First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework is as follows: "In collaboration with school boards, First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities and organizations, develop innovative approaches to meet the needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students living in large urban centres".

The Simcoe County District School Board is one of three school boards in Ontario selected by the Ministry of Education to address educational needs of urban First Nation, Métis and Inuit students within the Barrie area. The Lakehead and Toronto District School Boards were also selected by the Ministry of Education. The primary focus of the Urban Aboriginal Education Pilot Project (UAEPP) is to develop best practices in addressing First Nation, Métis and Inuit student achievement and success with the intent of providing guidance to other schools with similar demographics and populations.

The SCDSB Urban Aboriginal Pilot Project is guided by a set of principles that will:

- foster and promote Aboriginal student success
- promote respectful relationships among all participants
- incorporate the Aboriginal traditions of wholistic education and worldview
- foster parental/family/community engagement
- provide professional development for SCDSB teachers
- be collaborative, supportive and inclusive

The four schools participating in this one year pilot project are: Andrew Hunter Elementary School, Cundles Heights Public School, Barrie Central Collegiate Institute and Barrie North Collegiate Institute. Each school has dedicated space devoted to First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures and learning.

Meaningful and engaging community partnerships are an integral aspect of the pilot project. Our community partners include the Barrie Native Friendship Centre, Barrie Area Native Advisory Circle, Métis Nation of Ontario, Georgian Bay Native Women's Association, Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre, Georgian College, the Ogemawahj Tribal Council, the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario and the Secondary Teachers Federation. Representatives from each of these organizations and an Education Officer from the Aboriginal Education Office of the Ministry of Education meet regularly to oversee the project's development, implementation and evaluation.

The UAEPP is staffed by two Itinerant Resource Teachers. Ian McCallum is our Elementary Itinerant Resource Teacher and Teena Millette works with staff at Barrie Central and Barrie North as our Secondary Itinerant Resource Teacher. The role of the itinerant resource teacher is to work with teachers and administrators in the four pilot schools to deliver program in a culturally sensitive and appropriate manner; to review curriculum; develop resources, and model teaching strategies that address the learning needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit student. Three Child and Youth Workers (Shirlene Hall, Andrea Wall and Ashleigh Melnyk) work directly with students and families to support their academic, social and emotional well-being. The role of the Child and Youth Worker also includes coordinating services with external community agencies who serve the Aboriginal community of Barrie.

Program Strategies

Our program strategies of the Urban Aboriginal Pilot Project include:

- Integration of First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures and histories for all SCDSB students and staff
- Increased interaction between Aboriginal organizations in the Barrie area and SCDSB
- Consistent, integrated school and community response to social and emotional issues of students
- Providing professional development opportunities for SCDSB staff in the areas of appreciation of Aboriginal perspectives, values and cultures
- Enhancing Aboriginal resources in schools
- Parent/community information forums
- Student/parental/family consultation – focus groups
- Coordinating qualitative research to inform program development and on-going program planning
- Professional Learning Circle comprised of teachers and school administrators of the four pilot schools and UAEPP staff who meet together on a monthly basis to organize and implement the one-year strategic project plan

Official Launch of the Urban Aboriginal Education Pilot Project

On December 4, 2008 the Urban Education Pilot Project was officially launched at Andrew Hunter Elementary School. Students and staff of the four pilot schools were joined by representatives of the Barrie Native Friendship Centre, Barrie Area Native Advisory Circle, Métis Nation of Ontario, Ministry of Education, the Board Chairperson, Native Trustee and Associate Director of Simcoe County District School Board, and Chief Sharon Stinson-Henry of the Chippewas of Rama First Nation. All participants were organized in the four directions and four colours of the Medicine Wheel (see below). Participants also wore t-shirts in one of the four colours. An Ojibwe Elder opened the ceremony in a traditional Anishnaabe manner and sang 'O Canada' in Ojibwe. Each participating school was presented with a large wooden Medicine Wheel with commemorative plaque, Dream Catcher, Métis Sash and an Inuit canvas painting to display in their schools.

White

All invited guests
 Direction: North
 Stage: Elder
 Aspect: Spiritual Wisdom

Yellow

Students from JK to Grade 5
 Direction: East
 Stage: Child
 Aspect: Physical

Red

Students from Grades 6 to 8 and Secondary
 Direction: South
 Stage: Youth
 Aspect: Emotional

Black

School staff and adults
 Direction: West
 Stage: Adult
 Aspect: Intellectual



Communication, Collaboration and Community

Community partnerships are the foundation of our pilot project. Our First Nation, Métis and Inuit organizations, Elders, parents and students continue to inform the planning of school activities in addressing the needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit learners. This collaborative process is our opportunity to learn from our community and a vehicle for communicating program activities. The focus for the remainder of the 2008-2009 school year is to continue to implement UAEPP initiatives, consult with our community through community forums and ensure that our endeavours are meaningful learning experiences for all students and staff of the Simcoe County District School Board.

Next Steps Beyond 2008-2009

Based on the results of our pilot project here in Simcoe County and the pilot projects in the two other Ontario school boards, urban models with case studies and effective practices will be developed for each board which can be adapted and implemented in other urban settings based on similar geographical and demographic circumstances.

The Good Path: Sharing the Journey - April 29 and 30, 2009

SCDSB School Services staff who plan and implement system-wide activities in First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education work collaboratively with the various district school boards of the Barrie region. Through sponsorship from the Aboriginal Education Office of the Ministry of Education, the Barrie Region is planning a First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Symposium called "The Good Path: Sharing the Journey" on April 29 and April 30. "The Good Path" is being sponsored by the Aboriginal Education Office of the Ministry of Education. Our keynote speakers for the Symposium are: Senator Lillian Dyck – Senate of Canada, member of the Cree Nation and Anishnabek Nation Grand Chief John Beaucage. Shelley Knott Fife, Education Officer in the Aboriginal Education Office and member of the Curve Lake First Nation will present a history of First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education. Participants will enjoy a special evening performance by recording artist, renowned actor and Honoured Humanitarian Tom Jackson. Community members of the Aboriginal Education Advisory Circle will take part in "The Good Path."

Contact

For further information regarding our First Nation, Métis and Inuit programs and services, please contact:

Janis Medysky, Superintendent of Education, 705-734-6363 ext. 11304

Lisa Ewanchuk, Principal of Aboriginal Education, 705-734-6363 ext. 11475

Angela Bosco, Facilitator for Aboriginal Education, 705-734-6363 ext. 11214

We invite you to visit www.scdsb.on.ca often for news, facts, school information, Board highlights and hundreds of other pages about Simcoe County's public education system.

Our internet surfing this month leads to the following valuable resources for parents:

Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework:

<http://www.turtleisland.org/education/abedont07.pdf>

Ministry of Education: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/policy.html>

Simcoe County District School Board Programming Plan: <http://scdsb.on.ca/programs-services/aboriginal-education/programming/>

Turtle Island Native Network - the story of Turtle Island: <http://www.turtleisland.org>

Assembly of First Nations: <http://www.afn.ca/>

Métis Nation of Ontario: <http://www.metisnation.org/>

Quote of the month:

Children who are successful radiate their happiness with life in general. They stand tall in their positive self-esteem. They feel valued and are not afraid to take on new challenges.

~ Aboriginal Parent

The Simcoe County District School Board is deeply committed to ensuring all learners have the opportunity to realize their dreams within a vibrant and successful public education system. We are very proud of our 50,000 students who are learning and achieving in our 107 schools and seven adult learning centres throughout our urban and rural communities. Working with school communities, our dedicated and skilled staff members provide quality programs to help students develop lifelong learning skills in safe, caring environments. Our schools are located in the Huronia and Georgian Bay regions of south-central Ontario.

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