



## Meeting Notes

**Attendees:** Edna Arcand, Elder (Alexander First Nation), Ella Arcand (Alexander First Nation)\* - Regrets, Jody Kootenay, Director of Education (Alexander First Nation), Verna Arcand, Assistant Director, Leanne MacMillan, Community Strategy (City of St. Albert), David Keohane, Superintendent (GSACRD), Rhonda Nixon, Assistant Superintendent (GSACRD), Barb Brochu, Associate Superintendent (GSACRD), Carol Bruineman, Communications Manager (GSACRD), Joan Crockett, Trustee (GSACRD), René Tremblay, Trustee (GSACRD), Noreen Radford, Trustee (GSACRD)

1. Hospitality and Networking
2. Acknowledgement of Territories – David
3. Tobacco Offering – Barb to Edna
4. Opening Prayer – Edna
5. Review of Draft Knowledge for the Alberta Curriculum Teacher Quality Standard Changes, and Our Three-Year Education Plan Goals (David/Rhonda)
  - Review of *Walking Together: Education for Reconciliation* by Cheryl Devin
    - Alberta's Commitment - to start new curriculum. Infusion of \$5.3 million dollars;
    - to include the history of indigenous people and recognition of it.
  - 3 standards in TQS -
    - Apply foundational knowledge;
    - Fostering effective relationships;
    - Engaging in career-long learning.
  - To address the application of foundational knowledge, GSACRD applied for and received a grant of \$47,500.00 for books for schools. The stories are all about our FNMI children. The goal is to use literature to teach foundational FNMI knowledge. Some examples of titles are: *Fatty Legs*, *A Stranger at Home*, *The Elders are Watching* and *I am Raven*.
  - The committee will create lessons that involve the literature choices and then make these lessons available to schools (once Ella and Edna have had a chance to review to make sure that the content rings true).
6. **Review Feedback from the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Leadership Committee**

For this section, we welcome Leadership Queries (LQ) rather than Leadership Feedback

  - Mid-Year Review of Outcome Two: *The Achievement Gap Between First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students and All Other Students is Eliminated*
    - Strategy 1: Assessment of FNMI engagement. Recommendation to continue.
      - Gallup will disaggregate the FNMI data for our purposes (Gallup student poll).
    - Leadership Query (LQ) - To whom and how often is the Gallup survey administered? What does it tell us?
      - Gallup measures constructs such as hopefulness which may be linked to whether a student feels they will graduate from High School. Some things to consider also - are students able to identify a significant adult who will help them to reach their goals? What can we do differently? In terms of engagement; for Gallup, this tends to be a higher predictor of whether the student will proceed to post secondary or not. A provincial

- tool called Tell it From Me is also available, but its use is waning. Gr. 10 data about whether a student anticipates post secondary attendance is very important.
- LQ - Wondering why some students choose to self-declare and others not.
    - Perhaps it depends on the situation they are in and the perceived level of acceptance within the community context. May not be sure where the self-declaration will lead them (i.e. in a positive or negative direction)?
  - LQ - Are the FNMI students singled out?
    - No, grade coordinators meet with all students; however, they tend to ask more questions of FNMI students. Some parents of FNMI students have not graduated; this makes connecting more of a challenge. The elder noted that in the past, home visits have helped to engage the parents. Mentorship is also an important aspect. Past practice has shown that having student counsellors available as a support system has worked well. Do we need to strengthen this model? Is this something that principals could consider when they are making their staffing plans? Who else could we engage to support students and act as liaisons?
      - ◆ Suggestion: Gwen Crouse is a local Métis member of the community; perhaps she could assist with this?
  - LQ - Are you capturing Children in Care as well as FNMI students to ensure access to supports?
    - Yes, schools collaborate with Human Services to prepare a Success in Schools Support Care Plan.
  - LQ - A strong sense of trust is necessary when involving the families of FNMI students. Perhaps if there systemic good happening, self-declaration may be higher.
- Strategy 2: Partnerships - Recommendation to continue.
    - Noted among many are: Musée Heritage, ERLC, Centre for Global Education, Alberta Teachers' Association, Alberta Education, University of Alberta, Alexander FN, Yellowhead Tribal College links to post-secondary (Jocelyn Verreault and Joe Shaw), Catholic Archdiocese.
      - Q - Could we be more focused to engage the parents? If yes, how would this look?
        - It helps to engage parents and grandparents if you have an event where students are performing (i.e. tea and bannock day - to share learning experiences, making crafts together or watching a Talent Show).
    - New suggestion: Friendship Centres.
    - LQ - Are there liaison workers for FNMI students? Is this happening around the province?
      - Success Coaches or Graduation Coaches (i.e. mentors that can walk with the students) seem to be more of a focus in present times.
      - Jody agreed to be the contact with Alexander First Nation (AFN) to oversee the integration of local foundational knowledge into curriculum.
    - LQ - Alberta Teachers' Association Professional Development on Residential Schools - we will have elders review the content and once approved, send it out to all staff (perhaps the Nov. DWPD).
      - Perhaps we could look at "core trainers" and then develop a process to deliver to the information to all staff. It would be important to engage some AFN community members to assist - to be there for support for staff. Could we explore AFN Go-to-Educators for each school?
      - Tea with Jody....
      - Look at our calendars for meeting times for next school year.
  - Strategy 3: Recommendation to continue. Truth and Reconciliation furthers staff awareness of trust, respect and understanding of FNMI efforts to honor strengths.
    - Continue efforts with meaningful engagement - such as Blanket Exercises for all staff, UBC online course, Project of Heart, PD and preparation of literature kits (with scope and sequence for K-12) to support and further the call to act better in the future.
  - Strategy 4: Recommendation to continue. 2016-2019 DW FNMI Education Advisory Committee will recommend school based processes to maximize student engagement in learning.
    - Recommendation - revise wording of this strategy to capture and reflect our current practice (i.e. articulate both an Advisory and Leadership committees - each stated separately).

- *Strategy 5: Recommendation to continue. A day to celebrate FNMI heritage within our schools is conducted annually (June 21st is National Aboriginal Day).*
  - *A Pipe Ceremony is suggested by the elders for June 21st.*
    - *The following Pipe Ceremony background and protocols were provided by the elder:*
      - *(EA) The Pipe Ceremony is done with identified pipe holders (usually men as this is a historical/cultural tradition in Alexander). Some First Nations also acknowledge women pipe holders. If we have a Pipe Ceremony in GSACRD, there are pipe holders available from the (Alexander First Nation AFN) community. The protocol is to approach the pipe holder with tobacco and invite him to do a Pipe Ceremony.*
      - *At the Pipe Ceremony, women could sit in the circle, but would not smoke the pipe. Smudging is done at the pipe ceremony. The purpose of the smudging practice is to clear and purify your thoughts, feelings and emotions - almost like the purpose of using incense in the church.*
      - *At the end of a Pipe Ceremony, there is an option to have a Round Dance - drummers would come to do the singing. We would all dance around in traditional fashion in large circle.*
  - *Suggestion: consult with others including senior administration to see what and how the ceremony(ies) can be offered to attendees.*
  - *In order to raise our level of consciousness about this day, it is very important for a district event to happen in solidarity with others. The invitation could come from the district level.*
  - *LQ - Are there other important dates for Alexander?*
    - *Treaty Day, Sundances and Round Dances are also important days for the AFN community.*
  - *In addition to the ceremony for June 21, Ella and Edna could do smudging for both Leadership and Advisory committees.*
    - *The smudging practice - involves one eskapios (individual "in training" who helps the pipe holder) who will do the smudging at a ceremony. Barb and Rhonda to approach Dan and Ella about bringing this to both committees.*
  - *Flag raising for the Francophone district was a memorable event that some Trustees attended.*
  - *LQ - What is the reason for the grotto being chosen for the pipe ceremony?*
    - *Ella chose this perhaps due to it's historical significance and the cherished relationship between Fr. Albert Lacombe and Chief Katsaweskum.*
  - *LQ - Could we book the church basement? Could we have representation from the schools?*
    - *Yes. It is an opportunity to share; and a testimony to others about the experience.*
- *Strategy 6: Career counselling and post-secondary enrollment coaching. Recommendation to continue.*
  - *NEW 2017-2018 - FNMI Literature Kit Grant Committee is working to provide K-12 teachers with materials to explore foundational concepts of emerging curriculum in indigenous education. This work will be added to our list of strategies.*
- *News was shared about an FNMI pilot project - Rhonda will get more information from GSACRD's Alberta Education liaison.*
- *NEW STRATEGY suggested for the 2017-2020 TYEP - For those First Nation, Métis and Inuit students who are not achieving at an Acceptable Standard on provincial achievement tests and diploma exams, school funds will be used to support appropriate interventions.*
- *There is a preferential option to deal with the FNMI learning gap; which is why the funding is in place! Agreed.*

## **7. Closing Prayer - Edna**