

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION

Belief Statement

The Saskatoon Catholic Board of Education believes in the dignity and worth of each individual. The Board is committed to Indian and Métis education based on the principle of equity which contributes to the development of all students in heart, mind, body and spirit.

Guiding Principles

Indian and Métis education shall be developed and established according to the following principles:

1. Recognition and respect for diversity

The diversity of children's cultural heritage, life experience, potential and capability needs to be recognized, respected and acknowledged by all students and staff. Students should have the opportunity to share different forms of knowledge, allowing for affirmation and personal growth.

2. Leadership and commitment

It is imperative that leadership at all levels be a strong steering force in the development of commitment of all partners in Indian and Métis education.

3. Shared responsibility

The best practices in Indian and Métis education require the input of a myriad of representative groups: students, families, communities, and education partners. Recognition that society is a composite of histories, ideas and aspirations allows for wide participation and shared achievement.

4. Educational success and personal growth

The purpose of Indian and Métis education is to provide a safe, stable environment to encourage, enlighten and empower students to develop their talents and maintain positive cultural and behavioral standards. This environment will foster balance in all aspects of life - mind, body, emotion and spirit - so that students may realize educational success and personal growth.

5. Developmental approach

Development of Indian and Métis education in the school division is to incorporate a process of collaboration involving students, staff, parents, community members, and administrative leaders. The objective is to develop effective programs and approaches that contribute to the board's focus on equity, awareness of Indian and Métis culture, and personal growth opportunities. The process is to build clear understanding and to establish firm support for the division's initiatives.

6. Pro-active strategies

Education programs should be pro-active in nature. Programs should be based on current developments in Indian and Métis education and employ specific strategies such as early

intervention. These strategies should address the challenges of educating all students.

7. Cultural responsiveness

Cultural responsiveness is the process by which the majority society allows a minority to maintain its cultural heritage. In this environment, a minority group can protect and maintain its unique cultural heritage through language development, spiritual awareness, traditional teachings and values, storytelling and history (oral traditions), sharing of the Indian philosophy and psychology, dances and songs, art forms, and community restitution.

School-Based Projects in Aboriginal Education

School-based projects in Aboriginal education grants are available to schools to support the development of innovative and effective strategies that target inclusion of Aboriginal themes, content or perspectives in curriculum or school program. School teams are invited to meet with the Coordinator of Indian and Métis Education or a member of the Aboriginal education team to discuss project criteria prior to project approval. Project criteria are as follows:

The project must be linked to curriculum

The project must include a connection to contemporary Aboriginal people and culture

Studies of Aboriginal cultures must refer to specific Aboriginal groups (Cree, Dene, Dakota, Nakota, Lakota, Anishinabe, Métis)

Preference may be given to projects that address Aboriginal student identity, belonging and self-esteem

Preference will be given to projects that promote family and community involvement

Preference will be given to projects that promote staff awareness and professional development

Detailed information regarding Saskatoon Catholic School's Aboriginal education initiatives are available from the Coordinator: Indian and Métis Education. A complete list of Saskatchewan Education's Aboriginal Education documents are available on the Aboriginal Education Unit's web-site, <http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/k/pecs/ab/index.html>