

First Nations, Métis and  
Inuit Education Policy  
Framework

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## Introduction

The Native Education Policy Review is part of Alberta Learning's commitment to enhance educational opportunities for Aboriginal learners in the province, and to develop an ongoing dialogue with Aboriginal communities and other education stakeholders.

Alberta Learning thanks all Albertans who participated in the Native Education Policy Review for sharing their vision, advice, and education goals. Special recognition must also be extended to First Nations and Métis authorities, provincial educational organizations, and federal and provincial government departments for their time and commitment in providing representation to the Native Education Policy Review Advisory Committee.

## Background

In Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, Aboriginal Peoples of Canada are identified as “*Indian, Inuit and Metis peoples of Canada.*” There are 46 First Nations in Alberta with many different cultures and languages. Traditions and protocols vary from community to community. Approximately 117,470 people in Alberta identified themselves as North American Indian in the 1996 Canada Census.

In 1984, the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding released a discussion paper, referred to as the Ghitter Report, on Native education in Alberta. The Committee noted that while a majority of Aboriginal children attended provincial schools, the provision of education services for these children was problematic because of the fragmentation of responsibility and coordination among Native communities, the provincial government, and the federal government. The Ghitter Report contained a number of key recommendations for Alberta’s Ministry of Education. The Ministry responded by establishing the Native Education Project team to develop a Native Education Policy to serve as the foundation for improving the delivery of quality education to Aboriginal learners in Alberta.

On March 25, 1987, the Minister of Education introduced the following *Policy Statement on Native Education in Alberta* to the Alberta Legislative Assembly: “Alberta Education supports education programs and services which provide enhanced opportunities for all Alberta students to develop an understanding and appreciation of Native histories, cultures and lifestyles. These programs and services also provide opportunities for Native people to help guide and shape the education their children receive.”

Education is a very serious topic to First Nations peoples because it is a beacon of hope to many who want to improve their lives and obtain employment to raise their families and help their communities.

*(Treaty 8 Member)*

Over the years, many worthwhile initiatives have resulted from the policy statement including the hiring of Aboriginal staff, the publication of Aboriginal learning resources, the development of Cree and Blackfoot languages curricula and resources, the development of cultural awareness projects, support for Aboriginal teacher education programs, and the establishment of Aboriginal parent committees (Appendix A).

While successes were achieved through the 1987 policy, Alberta Learning seeks to ensure that all policy directions remain relevant to the educational needs of today's Aboriginal learners.

### **The Need for the Review**

In the spring of 1999, a review of the 1987 Native Education Policy in Alberta was initiated.

The Native Education Policy Review is part of Alberta Learning's commitment to enhance educational opportunities for Aboriginal learners in the province, and to develop an ongoing dialogue with Aboriginal communities and other education stakeholders.

The Review is also part of Alberta Learning's commitment to the Government of Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Framework. In September 2000, the Government of Alberta released: *Strengthening Relationships: The Government of Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Framework*. The Framework seeks to enhance opportunities, including educational opportunities, for all Aboriginal peoples in the province. Through the Framework, the Government of Alberta is committed to working with Aboriginal people, federal and municipal governments, industry and other interested parties to (1) improve individual and community well-being and self-reliance, and (2) clarify federal, provincial and Aboriginal roles and responsibilities.

It is time for government, in partnership with school jurisdictions and Aboriginal people, to place a high priority on the education of First Nations and Métis students.  
(*Treaty 6 Tribal Chiefs Institute*)

While all governments including First Nations, Métis, federal and provincial governments have undertaken initiatives over the last 10 to 15 years to increase the educational successes of Aboriginal people, significant improvements in educational attainment, labour market participation, and income levels can still be made. Current demographic trends underscore the urgency of addressing this need (Appendix B).

## Principles

The Native Education Policy Review was carried out according to principles adopted from the Alberta Government's *Strengthening Relationships: The Government of Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Framework* (Appendix C).

They also need to know that we have special status in Canada as First Nations and Treaty Indians with specific rights that were attained through treaties.  
*(Treaty 7 Elder)*

The Review recognized that First Nations, Métis and Inuit people are not special interest groups in Canada. They are unique constitutional and governance entities, whose place in Canada is unlike that of any other people because of their original occupancy of Canada, their treaty rights, and Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* that recognizes and affirms the "existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada."

The Native Education Policy Review process was designed to respect the governance, treaty, and constitutional rights of First Nations authorities for Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools and post-secondary institutions located on First Nations land.

## Long-Term Expected Outcomes

The long-term expected outcomes of the Review are to:

- Improve First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner success in Early Childhood Services to Grade 12 and in post-secondary education.
- Recognize and increase parental involvement in the education of First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners.
- Strengthen relationships among First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, school jurisdictions, post-secondary institutions, vocational schools, apprenticeship providers, industry, other key education stakeholders, and government.
- Foster a greater appreciation and understanding by all Albertans of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people.

We must take the things that are good from both our cultures and the mainstream society and learn both. Only then will we have the skills to survive in both worlds and be successful.  
*(Treaty 7 Member)*

## The Process

In September 1999, the Native Education Policy Review Advisory Committee was formed to assist Alberta Learning with the Review. The Advisory Committee consisted of representation from First Nations and Métis authorities, other key education stakeholders and government. The Advisory Committee played an integral role in the development of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework.

The First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework reflects the collective voice of over 5,000 participants in an Alberta-wide consultation process. Community input was received through:

1. Contracts with First Nations and Métis authorities.
2. Consultations with education stakeholders and other Albertans.
3. A comparative review of Aboriginal education research and initiatives in other jurisdictions.

Let me congratulate you for undertaking the policy review. This review is both necessary and timely, given the tremendous changes impacting Aboriginal people throughout the province.  
*(Dr. D.H. MacRae, President, Keyano College)*

*Students Conquer  
Obstacles to Graduate.*  
The sounds from a traditional drum group filled the air as thirty-six Aboriginal students from three high schools in Fort McMurray and one from Janvier walked on stage to receive recognition for completing high school. "As Aboriginal students who have to move away from home to attend school, you face challenges, challenges you wouldn't have to face in your communities such as loneliness, no family support, dealing with things on your own," Chief Archie Cyprien of the Athabasca First Nation told the students. "These efforts only make you stronger. Remember you not only make your parents proud for completing high school, you also make your community proud."

*(Alberta Sweetgrass,  
May 7, 1999)*

## **1. Contracts with First Nations and Métis Authorities**

Contracts were signed with each authority representing the three main treaty areas in Alberta (Treaty 6, 7, and 8), the First Nations and Adult Higher Education Consortium (FNAHEC), the Métis Nation of Alberta Association (MNA), and the Métis Settlements General Council. These authorities held public consultations within their communities. On a number of occasions meetings were carried out in the residents' first language. Reports were then submitted to the Review.

## **2. Consultation with ministry staff, education stakeholders and other Albertans**

Other consultation activities were undertaken:

- Regional meetings were held in Alberta's nine largest urban centres with learners, native liaison workers, parents, teachers, principals and school administrators.
- Zone level meetings were held across the province with school superintendents, school board members, and school board business officials.
- Meetings were held with Alberta's public post-secondary institutions. Post-secondary institutions were also invited to provide a written submission to the Review.
- Meetings were held with other community members including industry representatives.
- Meetings were held with provincial ministry officials and key federal ministry officials.

### **3. A comparative review of Aboriginal education research and initiatives in other jurisdictions**

Some comparative work was also undertaken:

- A review of Aboriginal education research.
- A review of current Aboriginal education programs supported by the Government of Canada, other provincial governments in Canada, and various international jurisdictions.

## The Policy Framework

The First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework was developed under the advice of the Native Education Policy Review Advisory Committee. The public consultation process, the foundation of the policy framework, was one of the largest consultation processes on Aboriginal education undertaken in Canada.

The policy framework is designed to be a living document. It is expected to change over time as the vision, policy statement, framework goals, framework principles, strategies are implemented, and the performance measures and outcomes are evaluated. It is anticipated that the policy framework will help stakeholders identify their role in helping First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners achieve their educational goals. It is also anticipated that the policy framework will help guide planning and evaluation of Aboriginal learner programming.

### **Format of the Policy Framework**

The policy framework contains a vision statement, goals, principles, strategies, and performance measures intended to provide Alberta

Learning and education stakeholders with direction in improving Aboriginal learner opportunities and success in Alberta.

Appendix A is a list of selected Aboriginal education initiatives carried out by Alberta Learning from 1987 (when the *Policy Statement on Native Education in Alberta* was introduced) to 2001. Appendix B provides some demographic background on Alberta's Aboriginal population. Appendix C contains *Strengthening Relationships: The*

Aboriginal involvement and participation concerning all aspects of program design, delivery and evaluation is a key factor in the success of any curriculum or program aimed at Aboriginal learners.  
(Dr. Rod Fraser,  
President, University of Alberta)

*Government of Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Framework.* Appendix D is a What We Heard Report from the Native Education Policy Review Advisory Committee. It contains strategies and priority actions that require further consideration. Appendix E is an overview of Aboriginal education initiatives in other provincial and international jurisdictions. Appendix F is a list of references.

Quotations in the margins are a sampling of views expressed by various people during the consultation process. Relevant statistics and/or insights from newspaper articles are also provided in the margin.

Readers who wish to learn more about the community input received by during the Review are encouraged to read the written submissions. These can be found on Alberta Learning's website at [www.learning.gov.ab.ca](http://www.learning.gov.ab.ca).

## Vision

The life-long learning aspirations and potential of First Nations, Métis and Inuit individuals and communities are realized through a responsive and accountable public education system that is recognized as a provincial leader in Aboriginal education.

I believe that education is our buffalo. If any changes for the good are to be made it will be education that does the job. It doesn't matter where you send your kids; you need to support them to succeed - to give them a chance to succeed.

*(Treaty 7 Member)*

## Policy Statement

Alberta Learning commits to proactive collaboration and consultation with First Nations, Métis and Inuit parents and communities, and other key education, government, and community stakeholders to implement learner-focused strategies that will:

- Increase and strengthen knowledge and understanding among all Albertans of First Nations, Métis and Inuit governance, history, treaty and Aboriginal rights, lands, cultures, and languages.
- Provide First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners with access to culturally relevant learning opportunities and quality support services.
- Develop ministry capacity to address First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner needs effectively.
- Report progress on the achievement of expected long-term outcomes for First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, and other Albertans.

In the Wheel of Life everybody has a role. As a community, all the parents and Elders need to get involved in the school so that their children can benefit from their caring and support.  
*(Treaty 8 Member)*

## Achieving the Vision

Alberta Learning has primary responsibility for the implementation of the policy framework. In instances where community issues may require attention, responsibility for such issues is shared among various stakeholders, and will require the goodwill and ongoing collaborative efforts of the federal government, the provincial government, educators, professional associations, community organizations, industry, and First Nations, Métis and Inuit parents, learners and communities.

There clearly needs to be true collaboration between all parties that are striving to meet the needs of Alberta's Aboriginal people in the 21st century. This is especially true in respect to the rapidly growing urban Aboriginal population.  
*(Dr. Dean Stetson, Vice-President, Student and Enrolment Services, Lethbridge Community College)*

## Goals

First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners are increasingly realizing their education goals. Accounts of individual successes and accomplishments shared during the Review are evidence of such achievements. Learning from these successes is an important part of this Review's goal to help First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners overcome difficulties in their learning experiences. For example, in 1996, the high school graduation rate for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners was 15% less than those individuals who did not report Aboriginal ancestry on the Census. About 4% of First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners completed university compared to about 14% of individuals who did not report Aboriginal ancestry on the Census.

The following goals are designed to support First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners, and are not intended to diminish or detract from the importance of their strong value systems, cultures, languages and communities.

Between 1991 and 1996, the percentage of the Aboriginal population in Alberta aged 15 or over involved in post-secondary education went from 38.0% to 43.4%. Those with a trade certificate went from 3.0% to 3.5% and those with a university bachelor's degree or higher increased from 3.7% to 4.1%.  
*(1991 and 1996 Statistics Canada)*

### **Goal 1: High quality learning opportunities that are responsive, flexible, accessible, and affordable to the learner.**

- Identify and reduce barriers preventing First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner and community access and success.
- Prepare and support educators to meet the needs of First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners and communities effectively.
- Use effective communication practices (e.g., indigenous languages) to improve the information flow between government and First Nations, Métis and Inuit parents and communities.
- Strengthen the use, sharing, recognition and value of indigenous knowledge and languages.

- Ensure education governance structures are representative of and responsive to First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner, parent and community needs.

**Goal 2: Excellence in learner achievement.**

- Recognize and honor excellence in learner achievement and parental support.
- Maintain high achievement expectations for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners.
- Increase the knowledge and understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures, and increase the level of support to teachers, other instructors, and school and institution administrators and personnel.
- Raise the educational attainment of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people living in Alberta to levels comparable to that of the general Alberta population and to community expectations.
- Develop processes that will improve the reporting of First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner outcomes.
- Provide opportunities for parental participation in decisions affecting their children's education.
- Research, develop, share and implement with stakeholders successful teaching, learning and assessment models for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners.

**Goal 3: Learners are well-prepared for participation in post-secondary studies and the labour market.**

- Increase the number of First Nations, Métis and Inuit high school graduates making a successful transition into a post-secondary diploma or degree program, apprenticeship training, or employment.
- Increase the number of career planning programs and services throughout the learning system.

- Provide choices and bridges to post-secondary learning opportunities for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners participating in academic upgrading programs.
- Provide programs for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners that reinforce cultural and linguistic identity, enhance character development, and develop life management skills.

The community has to play a role in education. We have to address the value that a community places on education.  
*(Métis Settlements General Council)*

#### **Goal 4: Effective working relationships.**

- Recognize and respect the role of, and invite participation from, elders and community resource people.
- Respect and follow protocols during collaborative initiatives and consultation activities with First Nations, Métis or Inuit people.
- Support the capacity of school divisions and post-secondary institutions to dialogue, plan, and make decisions with First Nations, Métis and Inuit parents, authorities and communities.
- Develop and sustain meaningful relationships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners and parents, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Authorities, the federal government, school jurisdictions, post-secondary institutions, industry, and other stakeholders.
- Support First Nations communities in strengthening band-controlled schools and post-secondary institutions.

It is important with so many native children in our schools that there are teachers, elders and helpers that they can learn from. It is important to have these role models in the school for the children to watch and learn from their examples.  
*(Teacher, Edmonton Public Schools)*

#### **Goal 5: Highly responsive and responsible ministry.**

- Report First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner achievements and results of the implementation of the policy framework.
- Develop and support ministry structures and practices that foster optimal working relationships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities including parents, and education authorities.

- Seek First Nations, Métis and Inuit community input on the ministry's three-year business plan.
- Support the capacity of First Nations, Métis and Inuit authorities to respond to the educational needs of learners within their communities.
- Raise awareness, understanding and respect of First Nations, Métis and Inuit worldviews among ministry staff and all Albertans.

I believe that as Indian people we have an inherent right to determine our destiny through an educational system that puts greater emphasis on our language, our traditions, which would work synergistically with academic skills.

*(Student)*

## Principles

In working toward the policy framework goals, Alberta Learning commits to be:

### **Transparent**

First Nations, Métis and Inuit parents are aware of and have ease of access to information concerning all aspects of their children's education.

### **Inclusive**

First Nations, Métis and Inuit parents and communities will have meaningful opportunities to participate actively in decisions that directly impact their children's education.

Parent involvement is the key that opens doors to success. If parents are not involved then there is really no movement towards higher education, no matter how many meetings, workshops and conferences are held.

*(Tsuu T'ina)*

## **Innovative**

Outcomes for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners will be improved by initiatives that recognize and model best practices.

## **Learner-Centred and Equity Focused**

Programs designed primarily for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners will be learner-centred and culturally respectful.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners will have access to culturally sensitive support services. Barriers to First Nations, Métis and Inuit access to learning, career and employment opportunities will be reduced.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit people will have no less access than other Albertans to information about educational choices and opportunities.

## **Responsive**

First Nations, Métis and Inuit community knowledge will be sought in the development of Early Childhood Services to Grade 12 curriculum, post-secondary programs, and teaching resources.

Métis people must be involved in the development of learning resources for and about Métis people in all subject areas. For too long, learning resources dealing with First Nations and Métis people have been developed by non-Aboriginal people. As well, there must be an increase in the number of resources available to students on Métis history, culture and language.

*(Métis Nation of Alberta Association)*

Language is a very intrinsic component to culture and identity of the First Nation peoples; therefore, language retention needs to be respected and honoured.

*(Treaty 8 Submission)*

## **Collaborative**

Programs designed primarily for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners will be developed in collaboration with Aboriginal communities.

Capacity for collaboration with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities will be encouraged and enhanced.

## **Results-Oriented**

Innovative, practical and measurable strategies and actions will be supported.

# **Strategies**

The following strategies have been designed to help achieve the policy framework goals.

## **Achieving Goal 1**

*High quality learning opportunities that are responsive, flexible, accessible, and affordable to the learner.*

### **Strategy 1.1**

Increase the quantity and quality of First Nations, Métis and Inuit curriculum, language, learning and teaching resources.

### **Strategy 1.2**

Increase the availability of relevant K-12 and post-secondary education information resources and services for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners, parents and communities.

### **Strategy 1.3**

Encourage First Nations, Métis and Inuit participation in governance structures in school jurisdictions and post-secondary institutions.

### **Strategy 1.4**

Create mechanisms and consultative processes to improve First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner success.

### **Strategy 1.5**

Increase First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner access to post-secondary and other adult training opportunities and support services.

### **Strategy 1.6**

Ensure financial need is not a barrier to First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner participation.

## **Achieving Goal 2**

### ***Excellence in learner achievement.***

#### **Strategy 2.1**

Increase the attendance, retention and graduation rates of First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners attending provincial schools.

#### **Strategy 2.2**

Increase the number of First Nations, Métis and Inuit teachers and school/institution personnel.

#### **Strategy 2.3**

Increase awareness, knowledge and understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit history, lands, rights, languages, cultures, and contemporary perspectives on governance, education, science, wellness and other issues.

The more programs that are available to Aboriginal learners in the home communities, the higher the success rate.

*(Dr. D.H. MacRae, President, Keyano College)*

Alberta lags far behind other provinces in the number of Aboriginal people that have graduated from teacher training programs. A supply of Aboriginal teachers can improve high teacher turnover in many of the First Nation and Métis communities in Northern Alberta. They would also become excellent role models, and would bring a greater understanding of Aboriginal youth to the classroom.

*(Treaty 6 Tribal Chiefs Institute)*

### **Strategy 2.4**

Facilitate the continuous development and delivery of First Nations, Métis and Inuit courses and professional development opportunities for aspiring and existing administrators, teachers/instructors and school/institution personnel.

### **Strategy 2.5**

Improve mechanisms to measure First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner success.

### **Strategy 2.6**

Improve the assessment of First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner achievement.

## **Achieving Goal 3**

*Learners are well prepared for participation in post-secondary studies and the labour market.*

### **Strategy 3.1**

Increase literacy opportunities for First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and adults.

### **Strategy 3.2**

Support arrangements to increase First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner enrolment in post-secondary programs of study.

### **Strategy 3.3**

Increase the linkages between education and employment for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners.

### **Strategy 3.4**

Work with stakeholders to provide relevant career and labour market information resources and services to First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners, parents and communities.

## **Achieving Goal 4**

### ***Effective Working Relationships.***

#### **Strategy 4.1**

Establish mechanisms to increase First Nations, Métis and Inuit participation in policy development, decision-making, accountability, and issue resolution (e.g., increase collaboration and consultation).

#### **Strategy 4.2**

Build working relationships that will contribute to quality learning opportunities for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners (e.g., build relationships to support a First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learning Resource Council).

#### **Strategy 4.3**

Identify and reduce barriers to First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner success.

## **Achieving Goal 5**

### ***Highly responsive and responsible ministry.***

#### **Strategy 5.1**

Enhance performance measurement, performance assessment and results reporting.

I think that offering some programs in an area where native people would feel less alienation would help. For example, I am aware of a Practical Nurse program being offered by NorQuest College in Hobbema. The College took the program to the area instead of expecting the people to move.  
*(Individual Response)*

“Back when I went to school there weren’t many Aboriginal grads, but now there are a lot more. Any time you can celebrate the success, you should.”

*(Liaison worker, Fort McMurray Catholic School District, quoted in Fort McMurray Today)*

### **Strategy 5.2**

Improve ministry coordination and capacity to respond effectively to opportunities and challenges associated with issues of importance to First Nations, Métis and Inuit people.

### **Strategy 5.3**

Improve communication practices with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities and organizations.

### **Strategy 5.4**

Improve ministry awareness and understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit history, lands, rights, languages, and cultures.

Parents want to know if their children are doing well. They also want to know if the school programs are being evaluated and doing well.

*(Treaty 8 Submission)*

## **Performance Measures**

The assessment of First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner achievement will be enhanced with the development of improved performance measures. New performance indicators may also be needed for specific approved actions.

As the policy framework’s vision, policy statement, goals, principles and outcomes are expected to change over time to reflect new developments and understandings, performance measures are also expected to evolve over time.

Limited Aboriginal-specific data currently makes monitoring progress a challenge. Canada Census data is available every five years. Most school jurisdictions and post-secondary institutions do not request registration information by ancestry. Alberta Learning can identify

Aboriginal students who have Registered Indian status<sup>1</sup> (either attending a band-operated school or another school system such as a separate, public or private system) but the ministry is unable to identify other Aboriginal students. Additionally, as registered Indians make up approximately one-half of the Aboriginal population in Alberta, the existing data cannot be generalized to all Aboriginal students.

The existing measurement data from Alberta Learning indicates that the percentage of Alberta students with registered Indian status who participated in the Achievement Testing Program in a band-operated school in 2000 was approximately 75% in grades 3 and 6, and approximately 60% in grade 9. The participation of students with registered Indian status in other school systems, especially at the grade 9 level, was greater than the participation of students in band-operated schools but was still below the overall participation rate in the province (approximately 90%). The strongest performance by students with registered Indian status who wrote the Achievement Test was in grade 3. Over the past two years approximately 40% of grade 3 students in band-operated schools and 50-70% of students in other school systems met the Acceptable Standard in English language arts and mathematics. The weakest performance was in grade 9. In the past three years, fewer than 15% of grade 9 students in band-operated schools and fewer than 50% of students in other school systems met the Acceptable Standard in mathematics, science and social studies. While this measurement data exists, these observations cannot be generalized to all students with registered Indian status in the province due to the low participation rate of these students in the Achievement Testing Program, especially at the grade 9 level.

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<sup>1</sup> Alberta Learning considers a student to have registered Indian status if the student is enrolled in a band-operated school or if the student is classified as "Indian students for whom the educating school authority receives payment of a tuition fee from the Government of Canada."

Accordingly, improved measures and indicators are necessary for several reasons:

We would encourage Alberta Learning to work in partnership with the Aboriginal community and post-secondary institutions to maintain a continuing process of tracking and keeping statistics.

*(Dr. Rod Fraser,  
President, University of  
Alberta)*

- All Albertans, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit individuals and communities, require information to assess the effectiveness of program expenditures.
- Improved information is a tool that can help Aboriginal organizations, parents, educators and education stakeholders determine for themselves the effectiveness of programs.
- Improved information is a tool that can help education providers identify and continue initiatives that demonstrate positive results, and determine areas where changes may be necessary to improve Aboriginal education services.
- Business planning strategies for the provincial government must be accompanied by performance measures.

Ensure the involvement of Aboriginal learners and other stakeholders in the design and implementation of evaluation processes.

*(Dr. Paul J. Byrne,  
President, Grant  
MacEwan Community  
College)*

The following section identifies current ministry performance measures and recommends several new measures. This section is extensive but, as the ministry undertakes priority strategies/actions, appropriate performance measures would be selected from this section or be developed. Measures will be closely related to key areas where improvement is needed. Further, the successful use of proposed measures will depend on the creation of mechanisms to monitor and report on learner success accurately. First Nations, Métis and Inuit community members and education stakeholders will be fully consulted before measures are implemented. Steps will be taken to ensure that proper protocols for the appropriate use of performance information are in place.

## Measuring Goal 1

*High quality learning opportunities that are responsive, flexible, accessible, and affordable to the learner.*

Current and/or potential performance measures:

- Percentage of teachers and instructors satisfied with the number and type of Aboriginal specific language, learning and teaching resources, and support services.
- Number of available Aboriginal-specific scholarship and bursary awards, and number of applicants for these awards.
- Percentage of First Nations, Métis and Inuit high school students, parents and other community representatives satisfied with the quality of the basic education system including First Nations, Métis and Inuit language, learning and teaching resources.
- Percentage of First Nations, Métis and Inuit adults satisfied with the quality of the adult learning system.
- Level of participation of First Nations, Métis or Inuit people in governance activities (e.g., involvement on parent councils, boards of trustees, post-secondary boards, provincial education committees, task forces and school administration).

## Measuring Goal 2

*Excellence in learner achievement.*

Current and/or potential performance measures:

### **Basic Education Participation Indicators**

- Number and percentage of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students enrolled at the provincial and school district levels.
- Number and percentage of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students writing provincial Achievement Tests and Diploma Examinations.

Learning opportunities can be broadened if institutions set targets for Aboriginal student enrolment with our regional industry partners.  
*(Dr. D.H. MacRae, President, Keyano College)*

## Basic Education Achievement Indicators

Often First Nations children are categorized as special needs because their first language is not English and due to the cultural differences. *(Treaty 7 Member)*

- Number and percentage of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students achieving the Acceptable Standard and the Standard of Excellence on provincial Grades 3, 6 and 9 Achievement Tests and Diploma Examinations.
- Number and percentage of Grade 9 First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners completing Grade 12 within 4 - 6 years.
- Percentage of all learners with knowledge and understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures as identified through provincial Grades 3, 6 and 9 Achievement Tests and Diploma Examinations.

## Post-Secondary Participation Indicators

- Number and percentage of First Nations, Métis or Inuit students enrolled in post-secondary programs by field of study including those enrolled in apprenticeship programming.
- Average number of years to complete post-secondary programs by field of study including apprenticeship programming.
- Number and percentage of First Nations, Métis or Inuit students enrolled in academic upgrading programs.

## Post-Secondary Achievement Indicators

- Number and percentage of graduates by field of study including apprenticeship programming.
- Number of students receiving scholarships to attend post-secondary institutions in Alberta.
- Number and percentage of students completing academic upgrading programs.

## Other Indicators

- Number and percentage of teachers/instructors of Aboriginal ancestry employed within the learning system.
- Number of high school and post-secondary student awards and recognitions.
- Level of teacher satisfaction with professional development opportunities and learning resources.
- Number and percentage of students qualifying for Rutherford Scholarships in Grades 10, 11 and 12.
- Level of learner satisfaction with learner transitions services and other support services.
- Number of successful teaching and learning models (“best practices”) in Alberta, in Canada, and worldwide.

## Measuring Goal 3

### *Learners are well prepared for participation in post-secondary studies and the labour market.*

Current and/or potential performance measures:

- Level of participation of eligible-age First Nations, Métis and Inuit children in Early Childhood Development or Headstart Programs.
- Perception of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people including learners and parents, institutions, and employers that Aboriginal learners are adequately prepared for life-long learning and the world of work.
- Provincial recognition of Aboriginal institutions, programs, and courses of study.

### *CBE Launches Native Role Model Directory.*

Aboriginal leaders across the province are adding their voices and experience to Calgary’s public schools. Lawyers, artists, police officers and bankers are among the 50 role models profiled in the Aboriginal Role Model Directory. The directory is designed to encourage Aboriginal students to make valid career choices and stay in school. It is also designed to provide more teachers with knowledge about Aboriginal resources. *(Calgary Herald, January 10, 2001)*

Educators need to open the children’s minds to the possibility of them becoming doctors, lawyers, nurses, accountants, business executives, teachers, etc...[They must] find ways to show them what these positions are about, make them seem rewarding and possible for them to achieve. They should feel there are no limits on them. *(Treaty 7 member)*

- Employment status of First Nations, Métis or Inuit post-secondary graduates at specified time periods after graduation.
- Perception of First Nations, Métis and Inuit post-secondary graduates that the education system adequately prepared them for the world of work.

Our communities want teachers to become aware of the experiences that Native students go through and to be open-minded rather than just looking at behaviours.

*(Treaty 7 Member)*

Programs offered within the Aboriginal community with local support are most likely to be successful, encouraging. And, subsidizing such offerings is recommended. We know that Aboriginal learners identify strongly with an Aboriginal cohort and this is best achieved on-site within Aboriginal communities.

*(Dr. Judith Hughes,  
Vice-president, Student  
Services, Athabasca  
University)*

## **Measuring Goal 4**

### ***Effective Working Relationships.***

Current and/or potential performance measures:

- Level of satisfaction of First Nations and Métis parents and authorities with Aboriginal language services and resources, learning and teaching resources, support services, curriculum, school districts, primary and secondary schools, post-secondary institutions, and ministry services.
- Level of satisfaction of stakeholders working with the ministry on Aboriginal education issues.
- Level of satisfaction of First Nations authorities and school boards with tuition agreements.
- Level of satisfaction of First Nations, Métis and Inuit authorities and the federal and provincial governments with issue resolution.
- Number and type of agreements and/or formal relationships between the ministry and First Nations, Métis and Inuit authorities.

## **Measuring Goal 5**

### ***Highly responsive and responsible ministry.***

Current and/or potential performance measures:

- Level of satisfaction of First Nations, Métis and Inuit authorities, post-secondary institutions, and education stakeholders with the quality and breadth of ministry services and supports.
- Percentage of ministry staff satisfied with the quality of Aboriginal education in-service opportunities and support services.
- Level of spending by the ministry on Aboriginal education initiatives as a percentage of provincial funding for the learning system.
- Number of available Aboriginal-focused products and services.

## **Monitoring and Reporting of Results**

### **Policy Framework Monitoring**

Progress reports on the attainment of policy framework goals will be prepared yearly.

### **Consultation**

Ongoing dialogue with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities will be carried out in order to report progress on goals and to possibly receive survey results. A symposium or conference held every 1.5 to 2 years may be an appropriate mechanism to review outcomes and discuss outstanding issues.

## Internal Reporting

Current and/or potential internal reporting mechanisms:

- An annual outcomes report identifying progress on specific strategies contained in the ministry's three-year business plan.
- A section in the Annual Educational Results (AER) report on improvements in the educational attainment of First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners.

School jurisdictions should be accountable for the success of all students in their schools. This includes students of all Aboriginal backgrounds. A strategic plan for Aboriginal education in their three-year business plan will hold the school jurisdiction more accountable for results relative to the achievement of Aboriginal students.  
*(Métis Nation of Alberta Association)*

- Third-party evaluation of the policy framework every 3 to 4 years to assess the extent to which the vision has been achieved.

## External Reporting

Current and/or potential external reporting mechanisms:

- School districts and post-secondary institutions' inclusion, in their three-year business plans and annual reports, a summary of initiatives for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners, and the outcomes achieved.
- Continuing requirement to report First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner participation and achievement results to respective Aboriginal education authorities.

## Conclusion

A great deal of interest and expectation has been generated throughout the province as a result of the Native Education Policy Review. The policy framework is intended to help guide the ministry's future activities on First Nations, Métis and Inuit education policy development, strategy implementation, and program evaluation.

The policy framework's success will be dependent on the continued commitment of all individuals, organizations and communities involved in Aboriginal education. Improving Aboriginal learner success is a priority for Alberta Learning, and is a responsibility shared by parents, the community, education stakeholders, Aboriginal authorities, and the provincial and federal governments.

Alberta Learning commits to working toward the goal of ensuring that the life-long learning aspirations and potential of First Nations, Métis or Inuit individuals and communities are realized through a responsive and accountable public education system.

Alberta Learning needs to focus on curriculum development that describes our Alberta history in such a way as the many Aboriginal heroes that impacted on the development of our great province are described and included in the Alberta Learning curriculum. We have a rich heritage and an incredible history of peaceful negotiations and partnership that should be described and modeled to the world, especially to our youth.  
*(Individual Response)*

## Glossary of Key Terms

**Aboriginal peoples:** The descendants of the original inhabitants of North America. Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* defines Aboriginal peoples to include First Nations (Indians), Inuit and Métis peoples. The Constitution does not define membership in First Nations (Indians), Inuit and Métis groups. First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples have unique heritages, languages, cultural practices and spiritual beliefs. Aboriginal peoples is also a term used in other parts of the world to refer to the first inhabitants of a given area.

**Elder:** Any person regarded or chosen by an Aboriginal nation to be the keeper and teacher of its oral tradition and knowledge. This is a person who is recognized for his or her wisdom about spirituality, culture and life. Not all Elders are “old”. An Aboriginal community and/or individuals will typically seek the advice and assistance of Elders in various areas of traditional as well as contemporary issues. (Source: Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.)

**First Nations:** This term, preferred by many Aboriginal peoples and the Assembly of First Nations, refers to the various governments of the first peoples of Canada. First Nations is a term preferred to the terms Indians, Tribes, and Bands that are frequently used by the federal, provincial, and territorial governments in Canada. There are over 600 First Nations across Canada with 46 First Nations in Alberta. The main Alberta-based tribal communities include the Blackfoot, Tsu’u T’ina, Stoney, Plains Cree, Woodland Cree, Chipewyan, Beaver and Slavey. (Source: Assembly of First Nations and Aboriginal Studies Glossary.)

Some 117,465 persons in Alberta identified themselves as North American Indian during the 1996 Canada Census. It should be noted that some First Nations in Alberta chose not to participate in the 1996 Census.

**First Nations Authorities:** First Nations Chiefs and Councils are the local governing authorities for First Nations. All First Nations in Alberta are a member of one of three Treaty organizations: Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta, the Confederacy of Treaty 6 First Nations, or the Treaty 7 First Nations. First Nations have developed Tribal Councils or similar organizations to act for them under delegated authority including the Athabasca Tribal Council, Kee Tas Kee Now Tribal Council, Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council, North Peace Tribal Council, Tribal Chiefs Ventures Inc., Western Cree Tribal Council and Yellowhead Tribal Council. (Source: Department of Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.)

**Indian:** A term used to define indigenous people under Canada's *Indian Act*. According to the *Indian Act*, an Indian is "a person who pursuant to the Act is registered as an Indian or is entitled to be registered as an Indian." This is a highly selective legal definition subject to historical events and legislation. The use of the term "Indian" has declined since the 1970s when the term "First Nations" came into common usage. There are three legal definitions that apply to Indians in Canada: Status Indian, Non-Status Indian and Treaty Indian. (Source: Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.)

**Status Indians** are registered or entitled to be registered under the *Indian Act*. The Act sets out the requirements for determining who is a Status Indian.

**Non-Status Indians** are not entitled to be registered under the *Indian Act*. This may be because their ancestors were never registered or because they lost their status under former provisions of the *Indian Act* (e.g., enfranchised Indian).

**Treaty Indians** belong to a First Nations whose ancestors signed a treaty with the Crown and as a result are entitled to treaty benefits. Non-treaty Indians have no such benefits.

**Inuit:** Aboriginal people in northern Canada living generally above the tree line in the Northwest Territories, northern Quebec and Labrador. The Inuit are not covered by the *Indian Act* but the federal government makes laws concerning the Inuit. According to the 1996 Canada Census there were 1,105 individuals who identified themselves as Inuit living in Alberta. (Source: Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.)

**Métis people:** People of mixed First Nations and European ancestry who identify themselves as Métis people and are accepted as such by a Métis leadership. They are distinct from First Nations, Inuit or non-Aboriginal peoples. The Métis history and culture draws on diverse ancestral origins such as Scottish, Irish, French, Ojibway and Cree. According to the 1996 Canada Census, 45,745 people in Alberta identified themselves as Métis.

**Métis Authorities:** There are two recognized Métis authorities in Alberta who speak on behalf of their membership: Métis Nation of Alberta Association and Métis Settlements General Council.

**Métis Nation of Alberta Association's (MNAA) Provincial Council** consists of an elected Provincial President and Vice-President and six elected Zone Presidents and six Vice Presidents from each of six zones across Alberta. There are approximately 65 MNAA Locals across Alberta.

**Métis Settlements General Council** consists of 40 councilors, representing the 8 Alberta Métis Settlement councils and 4 non-voting executive officers. The General Council was established in 1990 under Alberta's *Métis Settlements Act*, and serves as the collective governing body for the Settlements. It is established as a corporate entity (separate from the Settlement corporations) and holds the fee-simple title to the land within the Settlement areas. (Source: Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.)

**Métis Settlements:** Eight distinct geographic areas in northern Alberta covering approximately 1.25 million acres with a total population of 6,500 in 1995. Métis Settlements were established in the 1930s in response to recommendations contained in the Ewing Commission, 1932. Although 12 colonies were originally established, 4 of the colonies ceased to operate because the land was unsuitable for farming. Under the 1989 Alberta *Métis Settlements Accord*, and resulting 1990 legislation, the Settlements collectively acquired title to the Settlement areas and were established as corporate entities, similar to municipal corporations, with broad self-governing powers. The Settlements are governed locally by elected 5-member councils and collectively by the Métis Settlements General Council. (Source: Aboriginal Studies Glossary and Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada)

**Treaties:** Treaties are legal documents between government and a First Nations that confer rights and obligations on both parties. No two Treaties are identical but the western Treaties provide certain Treaty rights including, but not restricted to, entitlement to reserve lands and hunting fishing and trapping. To First Nations peoples, the Treaties are more than simply legal commitments. The Treaties are sacred documents made by the parties and sealed by a pipe ceremony. Prior to Confederation, Treaties in Canada were made between First Nations and the British Crown. Subsequent Treaties, including the western Treaties, were made with the Crown in right of Canada.

The province of Alberta is included in three populated treaty areas covered by Treaties 6, 7, and 8. (Treaties 4 and 10 have some Alberta land but are not populated.) When Treaty 8 was signed in 1899, it became the last in a series of agreements concluded between the Government of Canada and the First Nations in what is now Alberta. Because of the legal, historic and sacred elements of the Treaties, First Nations consider these documents to be the essential factor in any relationship between the Government of Alberta and First Nations people, leaders, governments and organizations in Alberta. (Source: Department of Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.)

**Treaty Rights:** Treaty Rights are special rights to lands and entitlements that Indian people legally have as a result of treaties. Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* recognizes and affirms, the “existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal people of Canada.” Rights can include freedom from taxation, conscription into foreign wars, etc. (Source: Department of Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.)