

Aboriginal Education Initiatives in Manitoba Schools

In December 2005, MAST contacted all school divisions and asked them to share brief descriptions of their programs or initiatives in the area of Aboriginal education. Thirteen divisions provided MAST with descriptions of one or more programs that are taking place in their schools. Here is a summary of the information received, including division, title of program(s), a brief description of the program (where provided by the division), and a contact for further information.

If any divisions have information they would like to add to this resource, please e-mail the pertinent details to Heather Demetriooff at dmtrioff@mast.mb.ca.

<i>Division</i>	<i>Title of Program</i>	<i>Description</i>
Brandon	Aboriginal Network for Development in Education	This committee is made up of community organizations (representatives include Brandon Friendship Centre, MMF, DOTC, BSD principals, native elders, native counsellors, parents). ANDE provides networking with the Aboriginal community as well as working closely with the schools and BU. The committee's goals are consistent with the provincial Aboriginal Action Plan (2004-07) and with the BSD Strategic Plan 2005-08.
<i>Contact:</i> Doug Milak, Assistant Superintendent; phone 729-3105 or e-mail milak.doug@brandonsd.mb.ca		
Evergreen	Aboriginal Education Program	Program vision: Aboriginal education is for all students Program mission: to promote Aboriginal perspectives and improve success of Aboriginal students in the division. The program plan consists of four components: Aboriginal Awareness, Resource Development, Integration into the Curriculum, and Communications.
<i>Contact:</i> Penny Ross, Aboriginal Resource Coordinator; e-mail psigmundson@esd.mb.ca		
Flin Flon	Building Student Success with Aboriginal Parents	FFSD is proposing a three-year strategy to assist aboriginal students. This strategy seeks to develop active parent support networks, strengthen literacy and numeracy skills, increase access to post-secondary information and increase the integration of culturally relevant topics within the current school curricula. This programming would be provided at all 5 schools in the Flin Flon S.D.
<i>Contact:</i> Dean Grove, Assistant Superintendent; email Dgrove@ffsd.mb.ca		
Lord Selkirk	After School Aboriginal Program (Daerwood School)	A three month program for grades 4 to 6 where students meet for three after school sessions to concentrate on First Nations Medicine, with the main topics being the medicine wheel, medicine bag, and the four sacred medicines.
<i>Contact:</i> Jane Swintak, Principal; phone 482-3677 or e-mail jswintak@lssd.ca		

Lord Selkirk
(continued)

Tracking ELA and Math
(Centennial School)

Tracking English Language Arts and Math gains through pre- and post-testing for those students identified through EIS as having Aboriginal ancestry. If students are not making gains the parents are contacted and adaptations are provided to enhance their programs. Data is collected and charted. At each reporting period, the principal, resource teacher and classroom teacher meet to discuss student progress.

Contact: Diane Brandson, Principal; phone 482-3265 or e-mail dbrandson@lssd.ca

Promoting Aboriginal Student
Success (Lockport School)

Promoting Aboriginal Student Success (PASS) is an extra-curricular club open to all students. It started as a result of a divisional PASS initiative. Its purpose is to promote and encourage awareness of Aboriginal perspectives. A variety of activities, including field trips and hands-on crafts, are being utilized to build student confidence and success.

Contact: Vicki Cielen, Principal; phone 757-9881 or e-mail vcielen@lssd.ca

Various School-Based Programs:

St. Andrews School

- some students are learning O Canada in Ojibway
- classrooms use sharing circles
- library acquired books on Aboriginal legends/stories that are regularly used in the classroom
- the Seven Teachings are being taught
- Elders have been invited into classrooms
- Grade 6 students completed projects about “The First Canadians”
- an extra-curricular Aboriginal Awareness Club, open to all students, has been started. Participants are making dream catchers, soap carvings, bracelets and pottery

Contact: Theresa Glass, Resource Teacher; phone 334-6083 or e-mail tglass@lssd.ca

École Selkirk Junior High School

- Grade 8 and 9 Aboriginal Studies courses that cover traditional Aboriginal culture and contemporary life. They utilize Aboriginal members of our local community and Winnipeg
- Aboriginal art classes
- an Outdoor Club that deals with traditional hunting, etc.
- Métis crafts

Contact: Kim Moore, Teacher; phone 785-8514 or e-mail kmoore@lssd.ca

Lord Selkirk
(continued)

Robert Smith School

Expanding Horizons is an initiative for grades 4 through 6 students. It is voluntary, with students attending sessions that interest them. They meet once a week after school, or sometimes during school hours. Activities are developed that involve both students and parents. They create crafts such as dream catchers and hooked rugs, artwork, and have had Ojibway classes.

Robert Smith Neighbours is aimed at bringing students' mothers into a school environment that is comfortable and inviting in order to develop a sense of belonging to school and community. It has been developed to nurture and empower, as well as promote wellness and friendship. The group meets once a week, with a focus on building confidence, learning stress-management skills, promoting good physical health, and exposure to Aboriginal culture.

Contact: Terry Verbiwski, At Risk Support Teacher; phone 482-3677 or e-mail tverbiwski@lssd.ca

École Bonaventure

- used a French language monitor to help integrate Aboriginal (Métis) perspectives into the curriculum and prepare Métis activities for Festival du Voyageur
- cross age group activity (K-6) incorporating sharing circles, Aboriginal literature, and the creation of a modified dream catcher
- middle years students are making dream catchers

Contact: Rachelle Tougas, Principal; phone 785-8284 or e-mail rtougas@lssd.ca

William S. Patterson School

During one week in February, Aboriginal performers and artists are invited to the school to share Aboriginal culture with all students. Activities include Métis survival skills, storytelling, hoop dancing, and crafts.

Contact: Denis Banash, Principal; phone 738-4700 or e-mail dbanash@lssd.ca

Mapleton School

School-wide initiatives:

- bringing in Aboriginal artists to work with K-6 students on soapstone carvings and birch bark biting
- lunch time art club learning Aboriginal stories, making Aboriginal games, and doing beadwork

Aboriginal perspectives integrated into the curriculum through:

- artwork in Aboriginal styles and around Aboriginal themes
- reading stories
- Aboriginal games in gym
- the Naming Ritual
- research projects
- making foods/bannock
- introducing science topics through Aboriginal stories

Contact: Tamara Dei Cont, Principal; phone 482-4409 or e-mail tdeicont@lssd.ca

Lord Selkirk
(continued)

Ruth Hooker School

Cultural Explorers is an enrichment program that is open to students in grades 5 and 6. Groups of six students work with a teacher one class per cycle on activities focussed on exploring aboriginal culture. The program explores the cultural traditions of Aboriginal people through guest speakers, art activities, research and discussion. Through this interaction, the students become more aware of the impact and breadth of Aboriginal culture in their worlds.

Contact: Terry Skarban, Principal; phone 482-3614 or e-mail tskarban@lssd.ca

Lord Selkirk Regional School

- school initiated course in Aboriginal Studies, which includes a segment on Aboriginal peoples in the city of Selkirk
- full-time Aboriginal counsellor, who provides guidance and support to meet the needs of all aboriginal students, and who helps new students from reserves adapt to the setting
- Individualized Self-Paced Learning that has helped a number of Aboriginal students succeed when they may have struggled in a regular classroom
- award programs for Aboriginal students
- community-based PASS Program (Promoting Aboriginal Student Success) recognizes former students of Aboriginal heritage, to provide inspiration for current students, expose them to Aboriginal success stories, and to demonstrate community support

Contact: Scott Kwasnitza, Principal; phone 482-6926 or e-mail skwasnitza@lssd.ca

Walter Whyte School

The Aboriginal Studies Program: The course has four main themes: self awareness, intra/interpersonal skills, creation, and the spiritual. The class goal is to plan and campout on the land for a night as a celebration of the time they have spent together.

Contact: Bob Kovachik, Principal; phone 754-2240 or e-mail bkovachik@lssd.ca

Louis Riel

Footsteps Program

The Footsteps program in the LRSD provides support to students, community and school personnel with the goal of improving learning outcomes for Aboriginal students. The program is supported by an Aboriginal Consultant, two community liaison workers, and a complement of educational assistant staff.

Program components that are offered through the Footsteps program include:

- outreach work and home visits
- cultural activity supports and referrals
- Sharing/Talking Circles
- Aboriginal Perspectives workshop presentations to develop cultural understandings
- community resources—support and referral
- Resource Centre—divisional collection of books, videos, kits for Aboriginal Materials Lending Service
- consulting and collaborating with educators and providing direct support service to students

Contact: Pauline Mitsuk, Aboriginal Consultant; e-mail Pauline.Mitsuk@rielsd.org

Park WestBuilding Student Success with
Aboriginal Parents

Contact: Ray Johnson, CEO; phone 842-2106 or e-mail rjohnson@pwsd.ca

Pembina Trails

Warriors of the Rainbow

Warriors of the Rainbow is a values program based on the Seven Sacred Teachings of the Ojibway people. The program centers around seven values: love, truth, humility, courage, honesty, wisdom and respect. First Nation people are portrayed in a positive light, highlighting their contributions, heroes, worldview and culture. One value a week or month is presented with songs, stories, and activities, all from an Aboriginal cultural perspective. Classroom teachers follow up with a project or activity that exemplifies the value. To conclude there is special celebration, a pow wow where each student receives a necklace of seven beads, with each colour representing the value they have learned. To date, eight schools have participated in this program in Pembina Trails School Division.

Pembina Trails (continued)	Workshops	<p>The Aboriginal Academic Achievement Consultant has designed and delivered numerous workshops on Aboriginal culture and worldviews, including Aboriginal Perspectives in Education, Aboriginal Art and Education. These programs have been delivered to MASS, MTS, Pembina Trails staff and Administrators, School Trustees and students in Manitoba and Alberta. The presentations have also been requested by the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba.</p> <p>After school programs are offered on traditional Aboriginal culture to educators in Pembina Trails School Division. For example, Teaching Sweatlodges continues to be offered and is well attended.</p>
	Turtle Island Production	<p>Turtle Island is a drama production based on aboriginal stories. The 45 minute production was written and performed by students at Oak Park High School. Performances were give at six divisional schools.</p>
	New Social Studies Curriculum	<p>This year, work is continuing to support the First Nation’s content in the new Social Studies curriculum with professional development provided for grades 2 – 6 teachers by the Aboriginal Academic Achievement Consultant. Teachers have been helped to build a context for new outcomes and reflect on which new instructional strategies might be effective for engaging students. Educators have requested to work with the Consultant to develop relevant, credible resource/materials for the grades 2-5 curriculum which focuses on Aboriginal studies.</p>
	Aboriginal Academic Achievement Teachers	<p>Two Aboriginal Academic Achievement (AAA) Teachers have been hired to work in seven schools in Pembina Trails School Division with the highest Aboriginal student populations. The goal is to raise the academic achievement of these young people. Programming is varied to meet the specific needs of each individual school community. AAA teachers provide academic support, liaison between school and the home, study skills support, an Aboriginal Boys Club, the incorporation of Aboriginal culture into lessons, and student leadership skills. Data is currently being collected and will be used to determine the success of the program.</p>
	Divisional Academic Achievement Committee	<p>The Pembina Trails Academic Achievement Committee meets regularly throughout the school year. Its mandate is to work towards an understanding of Aboriginal culture and perspective, and to improve outcomes for Aboriginal learners.</p>

Pembina Trails (continued)	Aboriginal Parent Groups	Two Aboriginal Parent groups, who represent those schools with the highest Aboriginal populations, have been founded and supported to strengthen ties between families, communities and schools in support of student academic achievement. One parent group supports schools in the east side of the Division and one in the west.
		A Family Connections Room has been established at Westgrove School “to create a welcoming and belonging place”. This room is open to all community members (50% of Westgrove’s population are aboriginal) and is supported in conjunction with Healthy Child and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. The grand opening was held on November 16 th with Justice Murray Sinclair in attendance. It is available Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. and is a stay and play for parents along with their young children. Workshops are also offered with health and nutrition being the current topic.
	LOGS—Low organized Games	Two aboriginal young men in Senior 3 and 4 at Oak Park High School are teaching six week blocks of low organized games to Westgrove children and parents as part of a mentorship program. They also act as role models for the younger Westgrove students.
	Initiatives at Oak Park High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lunch time networking opportunity is available for Aboriginal students. The sessions are led by the Academic Aboriginal Achievement teacher and are very well attended. • Oak park has established scholarships for Aboriginal students.

Contact: Graham Bruce, Assistant Superintendent—Program; phone 488-1757 or e-mail gbruce@pembinatrails.ca

Pine Creek

Aboriginal Academic Achievement

Cultural Awareness and Curriculum: The Division will continue to actively promote staff development in the areas of awareness of Aboriginal culture, and Aboriginal perspective in curriculum delivery, particularly in the areas of Social Studies and the arts. The schools will assess current inventories of materials relating to Aboriginal culture, and will seek out current materials to update resources. The Division will explore ways to actively involve students in the fostering of Aboriginal perspective in programming through further development of such initiatives as the high-school helpers in the lower grades. The potential for developing courses (SIPs and SICs) with a focus on Aboriginal students will be explored.

Strategic Planning: By May 2006, school or area level sub-committee meetings will be held to review the strategic plan developed in 2003, and the divisional committee will meet to develop an updated strategic plan based on the recommendations of those sub-committees. The sub-committees will include representation from families, extended family and community. Committee members will work in collaboration with school resource teachers and principals to structure sub-committees and develop submissions. Indicators will include, formation of sub-committees, involvement of appropriate stakeholders, submission of input, and development of strategic plan.

Building Student Success with
Aboriginal Parents

- Liaison services to the home.
- Creation of resource list of Aboriginal parents, elders.
- Data collection on reading, math, extra curricular.
- Connection to create stronger Aboriginal viewpoint in school plan.

Contact: Clint Cannon, Student Services; phone 385-2216 or e-mail ccannon@pinecreeksd.mb.ca

Prairie Rose

Aboriginal Academic Achievement

Reading Recovery is offered to allow all grade one students to become good readers and writers. Speech and language development programs enable language delayed students and those with articulation problems to improve by more than one grade level. Early years students not in Reading Recovery but lower than average receive small group interactions to improve literacy. In upper grades, students who are having problems at grade level may take a credit doing peer tutoring where they work with younger students under the classroom teacher's supervision.

Métis fiddling is offered once a week to students from grades 3 to S3. The school holds Heritage Day to celebrate cultural awareness. School and Community spirit is fostered and strengthened through HAWKS citizenship celebrations. The Parent Council is involved in most of these ventures.

There are various activities that allow for cross-generational sharing between students and community seniors.

The month of February is I Love to Read Month, and staff and students celebrate literacy throughout the month with various activities on a daily basis.

St. Laurent School has Skills Enhancement Classes (SEC) for children who are experiencing EBD problems. During SEC, there is daily sharing circle time.

Throughout the school year students are exposed to and encouraged to participate in cultural and artistic events focussing on Métis and Aboriginal cultures.

Educational Assistants enable small group instruction and one-on-one intervention where needed.

Contact: Linda Ducharme, Resource Teacher; e-mail stlres@prsdmb.ca

Red River Valley Fiddling Programs

The initiatives in the school division are school-based. Three schools secure more money from the AAA grant because of the number of Métis families in the community. One program that should be highlighted is the Fiddling Program in one of our schools. The program targets middle year students. The success of this program can be measured by the continued interest and the number of invitations and opportunities the students have had to perform.

Contact: Pauline Lafond-Bouchard, Assistant Superintendent; phone 746-2317, ext. 223 or e-mail plbouchard@rrvsd.ca

Rolling River Building Student Success with
Aboriginal Parents

Erickson Collegiate (ECI) and Rolling River First Nation (RRFN) have recognized that increased community involvement is one of the most important ways to improve student academic success. The target outcome of the Building Student Success with Aboriginal Parents initiative was for the first nation students to achieve the same academic success as non-Aboriginal students. The stated strategy to achieve this kind of success was to “build ashogunun” or “bridges” – bridges of trust – that would foster parental and community involvement in the school.

Specific strategies have included:

- ECI staff spending a day on Rolling River First Nation
- establishment of an Aboriginal Centre at ECI
- study nights at both ECI and RRFN
- regular youth nights
- crafts and cultural activities
- visit by National Aboriginal Youth Achievement Award winner
- parenting skills workshop
- diabetes education
- parent-teacher learning circle and supper

Contact: Jim Hardy, Assistant Superintendent; e-mail jhardy@rrsd.mb.ca

Seven Oaks Community Aboriginal Teacher
Education Program

The purpose of this program is to increase the number of Aboriginal staff members and in particular, teachers in our school division. Aboriginal paraprofessionals are provided with an opportunity to complete the requirements of an integrated B.Ed./B.A. while working full or part-time in schools. Candidates work in the school division from September – April while attending classes part-time. From May – July they attend university classes on a full time basis. An increase in Aboriginal staff members allows our Aboriginal students to see themselves reflected in the positive role models of our staff. Aboriginal staff assists us in incorporating Aboriginal perspectives into curricula for the benefit of all our students.

Contact: Betty Ash, Assistant Superintendent; phone 586-8061 or e-mail betty.ash@7oaks.org

Winnipeg

Aboriginal Education Support Teachers

Four Aboriginal Education Support Teacher positions have been established to assist staff and/or students in designated schools in the areas of program and professional development. The Aboriginal Education Support Teacher works collaboratively with the District Superintendent of Schools, Director of Aboriginal Education, Aboriginal Education Consultants and Aboriginal Cultural Advisor to facilitate this work. The Aboriginal Education Support Teachers are responsible for:

- providing in-class modeling, coaching and consultations for identified teachers;
- providing participating teachers with in-servicing related to effective practices in the integration of Aboriginal perspectives across the curricula;
- researching and developing resources and materials for teachers;
- assisting with regularly scheduled meetings for Aboriginal Achievement contacts from each school in the district; and consulting with school administrators regarding District and school initiatives in the area of Aboriginal education.

Aboriginal Support Worker

There are currently 18 schools in the WSD that have Aboriginal Support Workers. The focus of this program is to develop positive relationships amongst the school, the parents, and the community. Specifically the program promotes mutual understanding and builds contacts and communication between all participants. There is particular emphasis on providing encouragement and support to families to be actively involved with their child(ren)'s education.

Under the direction of the school principal, the Aboriginal Support Worker:

- provides support to parents to build contacts and increase communication between families, school and community;
- acts as a liaison between school and parents;
- facilitates and coordinates workshops for parents;
- coordinates cultural activities; and
- networks with outside agencies and community organizations.

Aboriginal Cultural Advisor

The position of Aboriginal Culture Advisor has been established in the Winnipeg School Division. The Cultural Advisor is responsible for providing assistance (professional development workshops, school/classroom presentations, and resources) to staff, students, and families in the area of traditional Aboriginal culture.

Professional development workshops include topics such as: Aboriginal Awareness; Beyond Awareness—Cultural Competency; Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives; and Traditional Teachings.

Contact: Robert N. Chartrand, Director of Aboriginal Education; e-mail rchartrand@wsd1.org