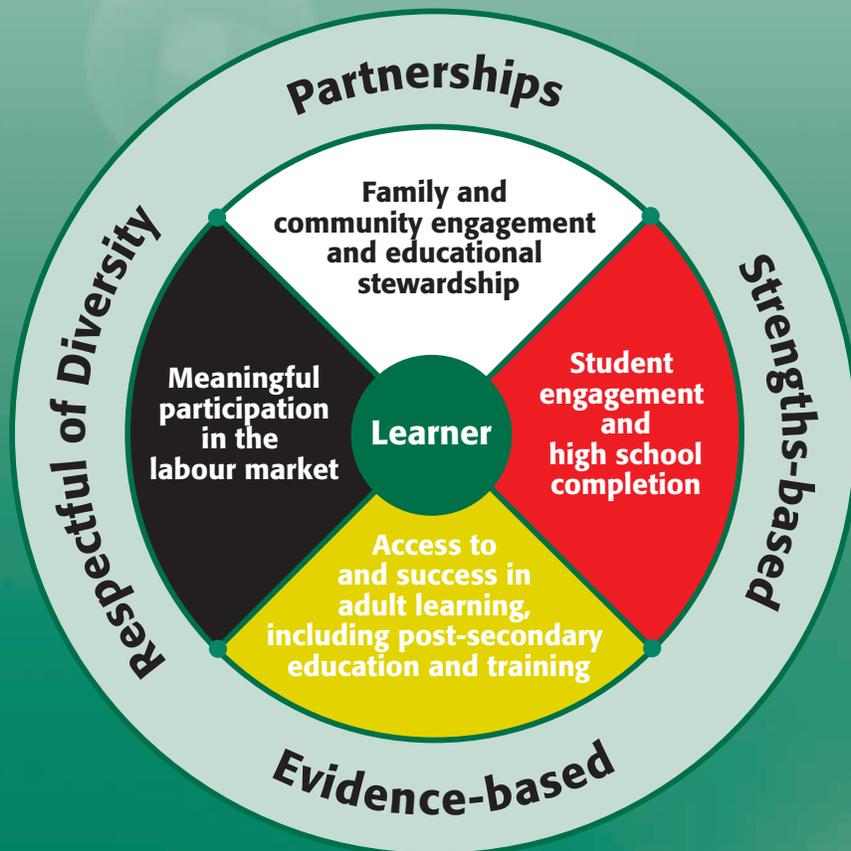


BRIDGING TWO WORLDS:

ABORIGINAL EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT ACTION PLAN

2008-2011



Bridging Two Worlds: Aboriginal Education and Employment Action Plan 2008 – 2011 was developed in consultation with Aboriginal¹ peoples and educational stakeholders to achieve four broad goals. The goals, outlined with long-term outcomes, objectives, and activities, are complementary and reinforce each other. As illustrated above, the Action Plan reflects a holistic philosophy of life-long learning which impacts the learner at the centre. Surrounding the learner are the goals and the guiding principles of the Action Plan. The title, *Bridging Two Worlds*, affirms the view expressed by Aboriginal peoples who were consulted, that Aboriginal peoples need to be comfortable and confident in their own ways so that they can live and contribute in both worlds.²

BACKGROUND

Building upon the *Aboriginal Education Action Plan 2004-2007, Bridging Two Worlds* is a renewed Action Plan. It incorporates existing activities, new opportunities, and lessons learned. The Action Plan is a work in progress and therefore, while the goals, long term outcomes and objectives will remain relevant over time, it is designed to be flexible so that strategic initiatives and specific activities will evolve in response to the changing needs of learners.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These principles are listed conceptually, rather than by priority. The Action Plan is intended to be:

- Responsive by using learners' strengths through a holistic approach based on culturally relevant activities within supportive learning environments.
- Respectful of Manitoba's diverse Aboriginal (First Nations, Metis, Inuit) peoples and support the sharing of Indigenous knowledge.
- Inclusive by building on new and existing Aboriginal-specific partnerships and strategies in consultation with communities, government departments, and other stakeholders.
- Innovative by incorporating research, evidence and a results-based evaluation approach that is culturally sensitive.

VISION

Full participation of Aboriginal peoples in society through education, training, and labour market participation.

MISSION

To support Aboriginal peoples' success in education, training, and labour market participation.

LESSONS LEARNED

Bridging Two Worlds is a framework for a multi-year, multi-departmental approach to Aboriginal education, training, and employment. The renewed Action Plan:

- builds on the accomplishments of the former Action Plan.
- aligns with the objectives of Manitoba's Closing the Gap Strategy to reduce disparities in socio-economic outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Manitobans.
- enhances flexibility to respond to new opportunities and learners needs.
- promotes partnerships among governments, communities, and other stakeholders.
- incorporates greater emphasis on the measurement of progress and accountability.
- presents clearer statements of Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles.
- reflects a stronger consultative and continuous engagement approach.

GOALS

Bridging Two Worlds aims to achieve four broad goals with corresponding long-term outcomes as outlined on the following pages. The objectives under each of the goals are listed conceptually, rather than by priority.

GOAL 1: Student engagement and high school completion

Long Term Outcomes are intended to increase:

- achievement in early and middle years
- retention rates
- credit acquisition
- the high school graduation rate

Objectives:

1. To work with Aboriginal organizations, schools and school divisions to incorporate strategic initiatives or activities that will infuse Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum and professional learning thereby ensuring the school experience is positive, relevant and meaningful for all students
2. To work in partnership with First Nations schools to support student success
3. To promote awareness of pathways and transitions to post-high school career and learning options with a focus on middle years to Grade 12
4. To promote parent³ and community involvement by developing and implementing initiatives and support materials that Aboriginal parents and community members will find useful and informative
5. To improve the ability to report on success in Kindergarten to Grade 12 learning by developing indicators, assessment, and evaluation processes respectful of the learning of Aboriginal peoples

Activities:

To meet these objectives, the primary focus will be in the areas of Teacher Education, Teacher Professional Learning and Curriculum. It is recognized that teachers play a vital role in enhancing student engagement and in providing a welcoming and inclusive environment for students. An important aspect in meeting the needs of Aboriginal learners is to strengthen opportunities for teacher preparation and professional learning. Having Aboriginal teachers in the classroom represents the first line of change in the education of Aboriginal children and youth. To increase the number of Aboriginal teachers in the province, long-term initiatives are being planned.

Key activities supporting the Goal 1 include:

- strengthening pathways to post-secondary education and training by supporting the creation of an Indigenous Teacher Education Model.
- strengthening pre-service teacher education by working with Faculties of Education and other partners to develop an Aboriginal teacher education strategy.
- strengthening in-service teacher training by working with school divisions and the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre to provide mentoring support for teachers in First Nations schools, and to identify students in First Nations schools who are interested in teaching as a career and support them on this pathway.
- strengthening professional learning by working with educators to make the transition from being culturally aware to culturally competent utilizing a resource training kit that highlights the cultural traditions of Aboriginal children and families.
- strengthening student engagement by working with schools to implement a Grade 12 Aboriginal Studies course intended to help all students in learning about the contributions of Aboriginal peoples, cultures, and histories.

GOAL 2: Access to and success in adult learning, including post-secondary education and training

Long Term Outcomes are intended to increase:

- participation in adult learning, including post-secondary education and training (parity)
- retention and completion of adult learning, including post-secondary education and training (parity)
- acquisition of credits and credentials

Objectives:

1. To support Aboriginal peoples in obtaining knowledge and skills that facilitate entry into post-secondary education and training
2. To increase participation in and successful completion of post-secondary education and training, including through the provision of financial assistance
3. To improve access through community-based adult learning opportunities
4. To ensure the educational experience is relevant and meaningful to Aboriginal students

Activities:

To meet these objectives, the primary focus is areas of early intervention, transition initiatives, and post-secondary access, affordability, and success. It is recognized that participation in post-secondary education and training is necessary to compete in today's global economy. Post-secondary education and training helps people achieve goals, continue to learn, pursue meaningful employment, and actively participate in civic activities. However, Aboriginal peoples are traditionally under-represented in education and within the workforce. Research shows that Aboriginal peoples face historical, social, economic, geographic, demographic, and cultural barriers that limit their participation. To address this under-representation and increase access, participation and retention in post-secondary education and training, Manitoba is supporting a number of initiatives which include:

- On-going funding to early intervention initiatives such as the Bright Futures fund will support innovative programs that encourage children to complete high school and to pursue post-secondary education. *Bright Futures*, new in 2008, was developed to fund community-based groups and partner schools to provide supports needed for inner-city, Aboriginal, and low-income students to complete high school and enter post-secondary education. An excellent example of this is Career Trek, a program that works with children, beginning at the age of 10, to expose them to a range of possible careers – experiences that keep them engaged in school and working toward post-secondary education.
- Scholarships and bursaries to help make obtaining post-secondary education more affordable and accessible. For example, the Helen Betty Osborne Foundation Awards and the MB Business Council Awards assist students with the cost of tuition, books and supplies, while the Aboriginal Medical Student Scholarship is designed to increase the number of Aboriginal doctors practicing in Manitoba.
- Funding for special ACCESS programs at post-secondary institutions, which provide post-secondary educational opportunities to Manitoba residents from under-represented groups.
- The establishment of the University College of the North in 2004, with campuses in Thompson and The Pas and 12 regional centres, provides Northerners with the opportunity to access learning programs in their own communities.
- A network of adult literacy programs and adult learning centres to assist adults with upgrading skills, obtaining secondary education credits, and with high school graduation leading to further education, training and employment opportunities.
- Essential Skills (ES) are defined as the foundation skills required to function in the workplace. ES assessment and training is being offered through various points of entry (i.e. employment centres, apprenticeship, and adult learning centres) to increase learner and client success for training and employment.

GOAL 3: Meaningful participation⁴ in the labour market

Long Term Outcomes are intended to increase:

- representation of Aboriginal peoples in Manitoba's workforce
- the number of Aboriginal peoples in sustainable employment in Manitoba
- youth employment, with a focus on previously unengaged youth
- the number of sustained Aboriginal businesses

Objectives:

1. To ensure Aboriginal peoples have the information and supports necessary to set and achieve career goals
2. To ensure Aboriginal peoples have the documented essential, employability and occupational skills, and the credentials to participate fully in the labour market
3. To strengthen employer engagement and investment in human resource development opportunities
4. To support Aboriginal engagement in entrepreneurship
5. To facilitate access to sustainable employment, including work experience opportunities

Activities:

Statistics Canada shows the number of Aboriginal peoples in their 20s is projected to increase dramatically, changing the profile of job seekers. In 2006, 66% of non-Aboriginal people were employed, compared with 65% Metis, 47% Inuit, and 38% First Nations peoples. This indicates Aboriginal peoples are overrepresented among the unemployed in Manitoba. To address this, Manitoba is focused on activities to increase labour force participation and address future skill gaps through activities which include:

- Career Development Initiative to develop the capacity of Aboriginal organizations to use culturally relevant career development resources.
- Igniting the Power Within initiative offering first-point-of-contact advisors and counsellors in Aboriginal communities with certification training to build capacity to use Essential Skills and Recognition of Prior Learning in their services.
- Employment Manitoba supports Aboriginal peoples in employment/career assessment, counselling, planning, skills development, specialized labour market programming, and financial supports. Aboriginal Liaison Officers work with industry sector associations, government and Aboriginal organizations to promote employment.
- Aboriginal Youth Mean Business website provides a directory of services and supports for Aboriginal youth, encouraging business development career options.
- Partners for Careers assists clients to secure employment, working with employers and training institutions to reduce unemployment and facilitate transition to employment in Aboriginal communities.
- Community-Based Apprenticeship Training provides northern and rural Aboriginal apprentices with career development options to complete their technical component of apprenticeship training in or near their home community.
- Hydro Northern Training and Employment Initiative and the Northern Manitoba Sector Council are examples of collaborative partnerships designed to develop and strengthen the northern Aboriginal workforce.
- The First Peoples Economic Growth Fund offers a variety of programs to assist eligible First Nations entrepreneurs to launch or build their own businesses.

GOAL 4: Family and community engagement and educational stewardship⁵

Long Term Outcomes are intended to increase:

- student, parent, family, and community engagement in education
- student, parent and family sense of belonging
- use of data to support community stewardship
- human resource capacity within Aboriginal communities

Objectives:

1. To support and engage in partnerships that enhance educational stewardship through increased dialogue with Aboriginal organizations and education, training and post-secondary education stakeholder groups
2. To enhance the capacity of Aboriginal communities to deliver training, to have access to tools and resources that support community economic development
3. To improve the process for data collection and using research that allows for community stewardship through increased dialogue and information sharing with research partners, Aboriginal organizations and education, training and post-secondary education stakeholder groups

Activities:

In recognizing that everyone has a responsibility for education, Manitoba works to ensure that parents, families, and communities have opportunities for active participation in education, training, and employment.

Aboriginal education and skills development is a priority provincially, regionally and across Canada. Manitoba continues to increase and maintain its partnerships to improve Aboriginal education, training and employment. For example, Aboriginal education is a priority of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). The CMEC declaration *Learn Canada 2020*, released in April 2008, reaffirmed CMEC's commitment to Aboriginal education and to eliminate the gap in academic achievement and graduation rates between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. CMEC Ministers committed to partnering with Aboriginal peoples to establish a new relationship with leaders in Aboriginal education that both respects jurisdiction and fosters partnerships on shared objectives. In February 2008, CMEC announced a Summit on improving Aboriginal achievement which was held in 2009. Manitoba actively participated in this event. The Summit report will be posted on the CMEC website.

Please forward your questions about *Bridging Two Worlds: Aboriginal Education and Employment Action Plan 2008-2011* to:

Aboriginal Education Directorate
Murdo Scribe Centre
510 Selkirk Avenue
Winnipeg MB R2W 2M7
Phone: 204-945-7886
Toll-Free in Manitoba: 1-800-282-8069, ext. 7886
Fax: 204-948-2010
http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/abedu/action_plan/index.html

¹ Aboriginal refers to First Nation, Metis, and Inuit peoples.

² Refers to the distinct world view of Aboriginal cultures and the western (or European) world view.

³ Parent refers to primary caregivers, who may be parents, family members, or other legal guardians.

⁴ Quality of work that appeals to individuals, is meaningful to their skills/talent, and is productive to employers.

⁵ Everyone has responsibility for education. Each individual has a role and responsibility for his/her own education and for the education of others. Everyone is valued for the contribution they make towards education.