

# Introduction



## ***It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit***

*"Canada is at a crossroads. After decades of neglect, First Nations are poised to become pivotal players. The path we take in reconciling this reality will shape the political, cultural and literal landscape of this country for generations.*

*The power of our nations lies with our youth. We must support them to be the change we seek.*

*Canada stands at a crossroads. But we have the advantage of knowing which path will take us forward. We need only do the right thing and work together for a new tomorrow."*

— Shawn A-in-chut Atleo  
National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations

The Assembly of First Nations has developed the *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit* as the basis for a comprehensive strategy to reach out to First Nations students, teachers, schools, communities, and the Canadian public in general. The resource is designed to bring together First Nations and non-First Nations people and foster a spirit of cooperation, understanding, and action.

### **First Nations Students and Education**

A number of events have led to a greater commitment on the part of Canada and Canadians to reinforce the importance of improving educational outcomes for First Nations students:

- On September 13, 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).
- On June 9, 2008, the Prime Minister of Canada made an official apology to former students of Indian residential schools.
- On June 21, 2010, the policy statement *First Nations Control of First Nations Education* was endorsed by Chiefs in Assembly.
- On November 12, 2010, Canada endorsed the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- On February 27, 2012, *Shannen's Dream*, a motion for equity in First Nations schools, was supported unanimously in the House of Commons.

*“School should be a time for dreams.  
Every kid deserves this.”*

– Shannen Koostachin (FNCFCS)

“In 2006, at least half of the on-reserve population aged 25 to 34 did not have a high school leaving certificate, compared with 10% for other Canadians of the same age.” (Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, p. 16) Given all of the data regarding First Nations graduation rates, it is generally agreed that the status quo isn’t working. To effect change, we must implement change. The *It’s Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit* is grounded in the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and reinforces First Nations teachings and values. Children who learn their culture and history feel better about themselves and find value in setting and working towards their goals. There is a growing awareness and sense of excitement, confidence, and pride in identity and culture among First Nations youth. They want to be successful, they want to learn, and they want to be contributors to their communities.

Likewise, we need more informed teachers with a better grounding in the knowledge and understanding of First Nations history and culture so they can inspire greater achievement in our students. There are still relatively few mandatory courses for either secondary or post-secondary students in First Nations issues. Despite many models of best practices, students are most often not taught this information unless teachers take it upon themselves in alternative school settings.

Systemic racism is often not deliberate or overt, yet an invisible set of ideologies (patriarchy, ethnocentrism, and Eurocentrism) has been built into Canada and must be toppled through education. The tool kit sets the stage for developing a new relationship and understanding of both historical and contemporary issues between First Nations and non-First Nations citizens. Especially in regions where First Nations populations are expected to skyrocket in the next 30 years, good communication between the non-Indigenous and the growing First Nations communities is essential to creating harmonious relationships and future opportunities for success.

## Objectives

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) developed the *It’s Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit* with the following objectives:

- Promote and enhance First Nations student success by preparing and collecting relevant resources for schools, teachers, facilitators, and other community stakeholders. Student success is defined in holistic and lifelong learning terms, involving academic proficiency as well as cultural proficiency as productive members of First Nations communities.

- Increase understanding of First Nations history and culture among Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations by providing relevant tools and resources. Components that are foundational to First Nations success in education include history, treaty relationships, inherent rights, sovereignty, culture, language, ways of knowing, oral traditions, Elders, the seven teachings, the environment (water, fire, earth, air), the Creator, survival and resilience, citizenship, identity, First Nations control of First Nations education, relationships, nationhood, wisdom, intelligence, role models, well-being, change, and leadership.

This document is designed to facilitate these objectives and direct student learning while studying First Nations issues. It can be integrated into existing unit planning or as a stand-alone set of “clusters” directed towards holistic and comprehensive learning. For more information, teachers are directed to “Education from a First Nations Perspective” on page 31 in the tool kit.

## Ideas and Starting Points

The overarching goal of the *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit* is to provide flexibility, adaptability, and usability—to provide ideas and starting points that ignite interest and understanding and lead to action. The resources in the tool kit are not intended to provide definitive solutions nor are they intended to be used in a prescriptive manner.

The enhanced *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit*, strengthened with resources from Manitoba to foster pride and instill courage in our youth, will facilitate transitions for all our learners throughout all stages of the lifelong learning continuum. The school-based aspects of the resource complement both First Nations and provincial curricula, and offer a teacher-friendly resource that can be used in creative and flexible ways.

The content and resources included in the *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit* are not a curriculum. However, these resources are relevant to and can align with curricula across all provinces and territories, especially in the following content areas:

- oral tradition
- stories and legends
- teachings
- art: music, dance, writing, theatre, singing
- traditional values and their importance
- barriers to the preservation of the oral tradition
- history

This resource contains a variety of components developed by the AFN and First Nations experts, in association with professionals in the field of education. Many of the components are national in scope and perspective.

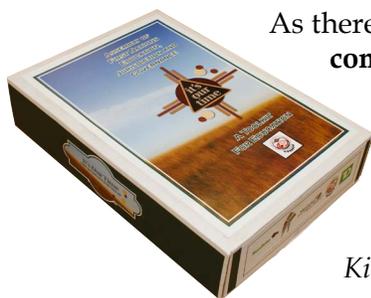
Other components belong to a Manitoba context and focus on First Nations issues and perspectives specific to Manitoba. Thus, the *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit* is, in effect, two separate tool kits—a national kit and a Manitoba kit. Each of the kits includes its own separate user's guide.

For more information on the history of this resource, please contact AFN:

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# ***It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit Teacher's Guide (National and Manitoba)***

This document is a collection of lesson plans and directives for educators who are teaching from the *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit*.



As there has been more than one edition of *It's Our Time*, **some of the components of the tool kit listed below may not be included in the particular version you are working with.** When these resources are referred to in this guide, alternative sources for accessing these materials are often provided. Where possible, the references in each cluster of this document also include online sources for the material. *It's Our Time: First Nations Education Tool Kit* includes the following components:

## **National Components**

- *National User's Guide*
- Plain Talks 1-25
- Cultural elements, including information on cultural protocols, talking circles, mascots, myths, and stereotypes, as well as cultural objects like a dream catcher, stone, sinew/string games, and Indian corn
- Wise Words cards and Reflection cards
- Customizable "Stay-in-School" poster
- Customizable "Honouring Role Models" poster
- Assembly of First Nations Declaration of First Nations
- Statement of Apology to Former Students of Indian Residential Schools
- AFN National Chief Phil Fontaine's Response to the Statement of Apology
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)
- Maps of First Nations
- Canada and the First Nations historical timeline
- *Kinikinik*, a play by Ian Ross
- *Don't Misuse Tobacco: Keep it Sacred* booklet
- *Plain Language Indian Act*
- *AFOA Dollars and Sense – Guidance for Aboriginal Youth*
- *SAY Magazine*
- Healthy Aboriginal Network graphic novels

- A USB stick, included with the tool kit, contains a variety of supplemental resources that provide additional content, context, and support for teachers and learners. These include fact sheets, information on national and regional organizations, and an extensive bibliography.

## Manitoba Components

There is also a regional edition of the tool kit that also includes the following Manitoba content:

- *Manitoba User's Guide*
- Values posters
- Treaties DVD
- Pocket-sized language survival booklets (*Dakota Wichoye, Dakota Sayings; Ikidowinan, Anishinabe Sayings; Neyinawewina, Cree Sayings*)
- *First Nations Teachings and Practices*
- *The Making of a Star Blanket*
- Manitoba Treaty Map
- Manitoba Map of First Nations
- *First Nations Perspectives: Vols. 1-4, 2008-11*

## 2018 Tool Kit

A 2018 edition of the tool kit includes the *National Plain Talks*, the *National User's Guide*, the *Manitoba User's Guide*, the Wise Words cards and Reflection cards, and the customizable "Honouring Role Models" and "Stay in School" posters. It also includes a package developed by the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC) that contains a series of full-colour posters depicting Indigenous values, a large treaty map, a map of First Nations in Manitoba, and a "History of MFNERC and First Nations Education in Manitoba" historical timeline. MFNERC has also included its publications *The Making of a Star Blanket*, *First Nations Teachings and Practices*, and *First Nations Perspectives: The Journal of the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, Volumes 1-7*, and three small Dakota, Cree, and Ojibway language survival booklets, as well as its *Elders Treaty Video Series DVD*.

## Curricular Connections

This document is intended to facilitate learning and to support educators using the tool kit as they teach a wide array of issues involving First Nations in Canada. It is specifically tailored to Grades 7, 8, and 9 and is congruent with many curriculum documents across Canada. There are many curricular connections:

I. *The Common Curriculum Framework: Aboriginal Language and Culture Programs, Kindergarten to Grade 12, Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education (WNCP) – Grades 7-8 and 9-10*

Intended to reflect the many voices and stories that comprise First Nations experiences in Canada, past and present, this curriculum is inclusive of all diverse cultural experiences. It provides teachers with information on Aboriginal education in western and northern Canada, and provides a historical context for learning, use, and respect of cultural knowledge, laws of relationships, colonization and reconstruction, and culture- and language-based education and rights. Aboriginal cultural perspectives are reflected in the framework through the three “laws of relationships”: Laws of Sacred Life (including respect for oneself), Laws of Nature, and Laws of Mutual Support. These laws are grounded in the belief that there is a sacred power greater than us and in the following related principles:

- All parts of creation are interconnected and manifest in the spirit of the Creator.
- Humankind must live in respectful relationship with all that has been created.
- Spiritual forces are gifts intended to aid survival rather than threaten it.

Here are the applicable sections of this curriculum that are integrated into this document:

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<b>1. Laws of Sacred Life—Respectful Relationship with Oneself</b>	1.1. Gift of Physical Self Each person is born sacred and complete and chooses how s/he will use his/her gifts. The Creator has given each person the gift of his/her body with the choice to care for and use it with respect.
	1.2 Gifts that Enable Learning Each person is born sacred and complete and chooses how s/he will use his/her gifts. The Creator has given each person the capacity and the choice to learn.
	1.3 Gift of Talent Each person is born sacred and complete and chooses how s/he will use his/her gifts. The Creator has given to each person strengths or talents to be discovered, and the choice to develop and share these strengths with others.

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<b>2. Laws of Nature— Respectful Relationships with Nature</b>	2.1	<b>Sustenance</b> The Creator has given the gift of nature to provide sustenance and a sense of place to those who live in harmony with it.
	2.2	<b>Sense of Place</b> The Creator has given the gift of nature to provide sustenance and a sense of place to those who live in harmony with it.
	2.3	<b>Harmony</b> The Creator has given the gift of nature to provide sustenance and a sense of place to those who live in harmony with it. All things in nature are in balance and harmony.
<b>3. Laws of Mutual Support— Respectful Relationships with One Another</b>	3.1	<b>Identity</b> People live in mutual support for identity and security.
	3.2	<b>Leadership</b> People live in mutual support for identity and security. Security is provided by leadership based on mutual support.

(WCP, p. 19)

## II. *Grade 9 Social Studies: Canada in the Contemporary World: A Foundation for Implementation*

*Grade 9 Social Studies: Canada in the Contemporary World: A Foundation for Implementation* helps students focus on the opportunities and challenges at the core of Canada’s contemporary plurality. They begin with an overview of Canada today, including its demographics, geography, and political organization. They examine the evolving stories of interaction among the people of Canada and the influence of the land on the development of Canada. They explore the historical and contemporary complexities of citizenship and identity, considering the challenges and opportunities that emerge when groups with differing identities and perspectives interact with one another. Contemporary Canadian questions and issues are examined within the global context. Students are given opportunities to explore how they may become involved in Canadian issues. Through this inquiry, they are enabled to become informed decision makers who are actively involved in their local, national, and global communities. Important student attitudes that are developed in Grade 9 include a commitment to democratic values, a willingness to take appropriate and ethical social action, and an appreciation of cultural diversity. Focus skills include critical thinking, informed decision making, consensus building, and skills related to negotiation in the exercise of active and responsible citizenship. Applicable learning outcomes include the following:

<p>Skills for Active Democratic Citizenship</p>	<p>Students will . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S-100 Collaborate with others to achieve group goals and responsibilities.</li> <li>S-101 Use a variety of strategies in conflict resolution.</li> <li>S-102 Make decisions that reflect fairness and equality in their interactions with others.</li> <li>S-103 Promote actions that reflect the principles of sustainable development.</li> <li>S-104 Seek consensus in collaborative problem solving.</li> <li>S-105 Recognize and take a stand against discriminatory practices and behaviours.</li> <li>S-106 Propose options that are inclusive of diverse perspectives.</li> <li>S-107 Make decisions that reflect social responsibility.</li> </ul>
<p>Skills for Managing Information and Ideas</p>	<p>Students will . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S-200 Select information from a variety of oral, visual, material, print, or electronic sources, including primary and secondary.</li> <li>S-201 Organize and record information in a variety of formats and reference sources appropriately.</li> <li>S-202 Select and use appropriate tools and technologies to accomplish tasks.</li> <li>S-203 Construct maps using a variety of information sources and technologies.</li> <li>S-204 Select, use, and interpret various types of maps.</li> </ul>
<p>Critical and Creative Thinking Skills</p>	<p>Students will . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>S-300 Plan topics, goals, and methods for inquiry and research.</li> <li>S-301 Analyze the context of events, accounts, ideas, and interpretations.</li> <li>S-302 Draw conclusions and make decisions based on research and various types of evidence.</li> <li>S-303 Reconsider personal assumptions based on new information and ideas.</li> <li>S-304 Analyze material and visual evidence during research.</li> <li>S-305 Compare diverse perspectives and interpretations in the media and other information sources.</li> <li>S-306 Analyze prejudice, racism, stereotyping, and other forms of bias in the media and in other information sources.</li> </ul>

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	<p>S-307 Propose and defend innovative options or solutions to address issues and problems.</p> <p>S-308 Evaluate information from a variety of sources to determine reliability, validity, authenticity, and perspective.</p>
Communication Skills	<p>Students will . . .</p> <p>S-400 Listen to others to understand their perspectives.</p> <p>S-401 Use language that is respectful of human diversity.</p> <p>S-402 Express informed and reasoned opinions.</p> <p>S-403 Present information and ideas in a variety of formats appropriate for audience and purpose.</p> <p>S-404 Elicit, clarify, and respond to questions, ideas, and diverse points of view in discussions.</p> <p>S-405 Articulate their perspectives on issues.</p> <p>S-406 Debate differing points of view regarding an issue.</p>
Core Concept: Citizenship	<p>Students will . . .</p> <p>KC-005 Give examples of ways in which government affects their daily lives.</p> <p>KC-009 Identify contemporary political leaders in Canada.</p> <p>KC-010 Describe responsibilities and processes of the justice system in Manitoba.</p> <p>KC-010A Describe Aboriginal perspectives on justice and law.</p> <p>KC-011 Identify ways in which democratic ideals have shaped contemporary Canadian society.</p> <p>KC-012 Assess the advantages and disadvantages of democratic processes in Canada.</p> <p>KC-013A Describe their responsibilities and rights as Aboriginal citizens in Canada and the world.</p> <p>KC-014 Describe current issues related to citizenship in Canada.</p> <p>VC-001 Appreciate democratic ideals in Canadian society.</p> <p>VC-002 Value their democratic responsibilities and rights.</p> <p>VC-003 Be willing to engage in discussion and debate about citizenship.</p>
Identity, Culture, and Community	<p>Students will . . .</p> <p>KI-016 Describe factors that shape personal, regional, and national identities.</p> <p>KI-017 Give examples of ways in which First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples are rediscovering their cultures.</p> <p>KI-018 Evaluate effects of assimilative policies on cultural and linguistic groups in Canada.</p>

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	<p>KI-018A Evaluate effects of residential schools on their own and other Aboriginal communities.</p> <p>KI-019 Describe effects of stereotyping and discrimination on individuals, communities, and regions.</p> <p>KI-020 Evaluate the influence of mass media and pop culture on individuals, groups, and communities.</p> <p>KI-020A Evaluate the influence of mass media and pop culture on Aboriginal identities and cultures.</p> <p>KI-021 Describe ways in which identity, diversity, and culture are protected in Canada.</p> <p>KI-022 Analyze current issues surrounding Canadian culture and identity.</p> <p>KI-023 Identify possible ways of addressing social injustices in Canada.</p> <p>VI-004 Be willing to consider diverse social and cultural perspectives.</p> <p>VI-005 Appreciate Canadian cultural pluralism.</p> <p>VI-005A Be willing to support the vitality of their First Nations, Inuit, or Métis languages and cultures.</p>
The Land: Places and People	<p>Students will . . .</p> <p>KL-024 Identify on a map distinguishing elements of the physical and human geography of Canada.</p> <p>KL-026 Analyze current Canadian demographics and predict future trends.</p> <p>KL-027 Give examples of opportunities and challenges related to First Nations treaties and Aboriginal rights.</p> <p>KL-028 Evaluate Canadian concerns and commitments regarding environmental stewardship and sustainability.</p> <p>VL-006 Respect traditional relationships that Aboriginal peoples of Canada have with the land.</p> <p>VL-007 Be willing to make personal choices to sustain the environment.</p>
Historical Connections	<p>Students will . . .</p> <p>KH-029 Describe factors affecting demographic patterns in Canada since the beginning of the 20th century.</p> <p>KH-030 Describe social and cultural injustices in Canada's past.</p> <p>KH-031 Identify significant events in the development of human rights in Canada.</p> <p>KH-033 Give examples of social and technological changes that continue to influence quality of life in Canada.</p>

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Global Interdependence	<p>Students will . . .</p> <p>KG-034 Give examples of Canada's connections with other nations.</p> <p>KG-035 Evaluate Canadian perspectives regarding current global issues.</p> <p>KG-037 Compare media portrayals of current issues.</p> <p>KG-038 Give examples of Canada's participation within international organizations.</p> <p>KG-041 Give examples of contributions of various Canadians to the global community.</p> <p>KG-042 Describe Canada's responsibilities and potential for leadership regarding current global issues.</p> <p>VG-012 Be willing to consider local, national, and global interests in their decisions and actions.</p> <p>VG-013 Value Canada's contributions to the global community.</p>
Power and Authority	<p>Students will . . .</p> <p>KP-043 Give examples of diverse approaches to conflict resolution.</p> <p>KP-044 Describe the division of power and responsibilities of federal, First Nations, provincial, and municipal governments.</p> <p>KP-045 Describe factors related to Aboriginal self-determination in Canada.</p> <p>KP-046 Give examples of ways in which people can individually and collectively influence Canada's political and social systems.</p>
Economics and Resources	<p>Students will . . .</p> <p>KE-048 Describe characteristics of Canada as an industrialized nation.</p> <p>KE-049 Evaluate implications of living in a consumer-based economy.</p> <p>KE-050 Give examples of the cultural, political, and economic impact of globalization on Canada.</p> <p>KE-051 Analyze possible consequences of their consumer choices.</p> <p>KE-052 Identify poverty issues in Canada and propose ideas for a more equitable society.</p> <p>VE-017 Be willing to consider the impact of their consumer choices.</p> <p>VE-018 Be willing to consider ethical questions related to sharing wealth and resources.</p>

### III. *Manitoba Education Social Studies Curriculum Framework of Outcomes*

This document contains components that are relevant to each of the general learning outcomes (GLOs) in Manitoba’s social studies curriculum framework of outcomes:

- Identity, Culture, and Community
- The Land: Places and People
- Historical Connections
- Global Interdependence
- Power and Authority
- Economics and Power

### IV. *Kindergarten to Grade 12 Aboriginal Languages and Cultures: Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes*

This is a comprehensive document that acts as an excellent guide for the teaching and acquisition of Indigenous information. In Section 4.1, “Specific Aboriginal Culture,” outcomes are stated in clear behavioural terms. For example:

- demonstrate awareness . . .
- identify . . .
- analyze . . .
- explain . . .
- describe . . .
- research and present . . .
- give reasons . . .
- give examples . . .
- explain and discuss . . .

This curriculum document is a valuable support for teachers and reinforces the underlying philosophy that “our way is a valid way of seeing the world.” See the following excerpt:

*From our Elders we gained new knowledge about some key principles underlying the philosophy and worldview inherent in all First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages.*

*We learned that fundamental spiritual principles cross all domains of knowledge and are expressed as sacred laws governing our behaviour and relationship to the land and its life forms. The basic concepts contained within each language make no separation between the secular and sacred aspects of language and culture; these remain a unified whole. This being the case, there exist implicit as well as explicit laws to regulate daily behaviour. Behavioural expectations are defined in relation to such things as the natural environment, the social and*

*moral order, the Elders and their traditional teachings, the rights to specific kinds of knowledge, the individual's participation in cultural life, and his or her personal growth and well-being.*

*Because relationships within the natural and human order, and the concepts embedded in the languages, are understood to be based on an immutable foundation of sacredness, what we do and say, by extension, implies a personal commitment to the sacred. Some key concepts defining these relationships are kinship (respect in relationships), protocol (conduct in ceremonies and social interaction), medicine (personal habits and practice in relation to health and spiritual gifts), ceremonies (roles and conduct), copyright (earning the right to knowledge), and oral tradition (expression of knowledge, its forms, and ownership). Learning a language, therefore, means absorbing the very foundations of First Nations, Inuit and Métis identity. As students begin to learn their language, they acquire basic understandings that shape their attitudes. The Elders tell of the power of the language to generate change and a sense of direction within the learner. Learning the first language becomes a powerful source of one's personal commitment to become healthy and to learn the ways of achieving a healthy environment once more.*

*Learning the language engenders respect for self, for others, and for all facets of nature, and this in turn strengthens the human capacity to stand together. Some internal conflicts may begin to be felt as the differences between mainstream and traditional First Nations language, culture, and lifestyles become more clearly defined in the mind of the learner. The Elders agree that a rift has been created between traditional identity and contemporary identity, but that fundamental values continue to bind the two together.*

*The Elders point out that principles such as love and sharing are consistent with the central purpose of teaching: to develop a person who understands why we do what we do.*

*Searching out these principles and applying them in different contexts is an important approach to reconciling the many contradictions that learners are likely to face while learning a First Nations language. The Elders stress, "our way is a valid way of seeing the world." (WNCP, pp. 14-16)*

First Nations have a rich and vital oral tradition. Information that was important to communities has been passed down from generation to generation through the spoken word. Elders and other members of the communities told, and continue to tell, stories that contain the wisdom and teachings of their First Nation at ceremonies and celebrations.

## **V. *Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into Curricula: A Resource for Curriculum Developers, Teachers, and Administrators***

This Manitoba Education and Training document is intended to assist Manitoba curriculum developers and educators as they integrate Aboriginal perspectives into new and existing curricula. It provides direction for the

integration of Aboriginal perspectives within the various curricula taught in Manitoba classrooms. The purpose of *Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into Curricula* is to enable teachers to facilitate students' understanding of Aboriginal perspectives in Manitoba. Each subject area will address the perspectives and accomplishments of Aboriginal peoples. It is intended to help Aboriginal students to

- develop a positive self-identity through learning their own histories, cultures, traditional values, contemporary lifestyles, and traditional knowledge
- participate in a learning environment that will equip them with the knowledge and skills needed to participate more fully in the unique civic and cultural realities of their communities

It is also intended to help non-Aboriginal students

- develop an understanding and respect for the histories, cultures, traditional values, contemporary lifestyles, and traditional knowledge of Aboriginal peoples
- develop informed opinions on matters relating to Aboriginal peoples

By achieving the above goals, it is hoped that the following outcomes will occur:

- improve the academic performance of Aboriginal students
- eliminate the stereotypes that exist in mainstream and non-mainstream cultures
- improve the quality of life of Aboriginal peoples
- increase the representation of Aboriginal people in post-secondary schools
- increase the representation of Aboriginal people in all sectors of the workforce

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