



# Urban Aboriginal Education Project Progress Report *(As of June 2009)*

Submitted by: Lakehead District School Board

## **BACKGROUND:**

The following information is a report of the Urban Aboriginal Education Project and the initiatives that transpired during the 2008-2009 school year. The UAEP also partnered with a research team from Lakehead University to provide informative data on the progress of the project so far. This information has also been included, *Preliminary Scan Report* (June 18, 2009). This is one of two parts of the research process. The second part consists of sharing circles with specific groups to collect more detailed information.

Within the UAEP, there are 4 themes: Staff, School, Aboriginal Student Supports and Connecting for Success. Under each theme there are many priorities that are being implemented through the UAEP which are shown below.

### **Staff**

- **Professional Development**
- **Aboriginal Education Coordinator** *Renamed: Project Manager*
- **Aboriginal Education Advisor** *Renamed: Aboriginal Community Liaison & Partnership Officer. This position is Board Funded and information regarding this position is not included*

### **School**

- **Welcoming Environments**
- **Appropriate Aboriginal Content, Resources and Materials**
- **Aboriginal Curriculum Modules**
- **Later Literacy Program**

### **Aboriginal Student Supports**

- **Family Connections**
- **Aboriginal Transitions & Mentoring**
- **Aboriginal Role Models & Cultural Programming**
- **Elder Supports**
- **Aboriginal Navigator (Social Support Worker)**
- **Alternative Education Programs**

### **Connecting for Success**

- **Community**
- **Aboriginal Parent/Guardian Advocacy Program**
- **Community Capacity Building**

### **The priorities for each theme will include:**

- **Priority**
- **Strategy to improve Student Success**
- **Details**
- **Documentation**
- **Link to FNMI Framework**

- **Indicators of Success**
- **Update** (*as of June 2009*)

**Priority: Professional Development**

**Strategy to improve Student Success**

- Build capacity for culturally inclusive effective teaching, assessment and evaluation practices.
- Build capacity to support identity building, including the appreciation of Aboriginal perspectives, values and cultures by all students, school board staff and elected trustees.

**Details**

- Develop professional learning teams that focus on the needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit students. These learning teams will focus on classroom based strategies, communication strategies, Aboriginal perspectives, values and cultures.
- Initially, participants will include those who have taken AQ courses, ETFO courses or institutes on effective practices and those who are teaching NS or NL courses. The learning community will enable teachers to further develop their understanding and support them during implementation in the classroom. This will be extended out over the school year to include two teachers per school.
- The participants will eventually become “Aboriginal support personnel” to take their learning to another level within the school environment by sharing strategies and knowledge acquired through participation with other staff.
- The learning teams will invite participation from community partners, Confederation College and Lakehead University and involve other community partners to expand and enhance knowledge.
- To enhance student learning, focus on getting youth active in the community through participation in various community cultural events, such as Thompson Highway play performance and Fall Harvest.
- Continue to offer and seek other PD opportunities for learning, knowledge sharing and collaboration e.g. Summer Institute
- Continue to facilitate PD Aboriginal cultural awareness sessions with all staff building on what has occurred in 07/08 e.g. Release of Aboriginal Presence In Our Schools A Guide For Staff

**Documentation**

- Minutes and agendas of meetings/sessions
- Resources acquired from learning teams
- Number of staff participants
- Impact analysis: Survey/Feedback document

**Link to FNMI Framework**

- Goal #1 High Level of Student Achievement Strategy 1.1
- Goal#3: High Levels of Public Confidence Strategy 3.2

### **Indicators of Success**

- At least two teachers from each elementary school and six teachers from each secondary school will have participated in the professional learning sessions.
- Teachers will have tried at least one new strategy per professional learning session in their classrooms and reported back to the learning community on the impact in their classroom.
- Staff, through a survey indicate an increased use effective teaching strategies.
- Principals will be able to identify effective classroom-based strategies being implemented in the classrooms.
- All schools including all staff will have had “part 2” of Aboriginal Cultural Awareness sessions.

### **Update (*as of June 2009*):**

- Educational Learning Teams developed a First Peoples Resource Collection for all schools which includes samples of Aboriginal items and books/resources that reflect the FNMI people and perspectives.
- A minimum of two teachers from each elementary school and six teachers from each secondary school participated in ongoing professional learning sessions that build capacity for culturally inclusive effective teaching, assessment, and evaluation practices using the collection. Teachers created and tried lessons from the books that were purchased and focused the lesson on their school’s SMART Goals, PLC, and curriculum.
- A half-day Ojibway Language Workshop was provided for any/all Lakehead Public Schools staff.
- The Native Studies teachers participated in the Native Studies Professional Learning Community
- Through the English Language Learners (ELL) program, FNMI books were purchased and lessons were created and tried all grade 9 – 12 compulsory English classrooms.
- Through the preliminary research conducted by Lakehead University’s research team, teachers were given an opportunity to provide their input on the progress of the project; feedback was provided at the end of each professional learning opportunities and workshops as well.
- Community partnerships have been established to compile traditional and historical information and input while creating the grade 10 civics module; seeking community input regarding the preliminary research of the project; community cultural and traditional teachers provided teachings for elementary and secondary teachers; and the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee provides regular feedback to the project’s progress.
- Schools (teachers, administrators, staff, secretaries) received the first cultural awareness session that focused on the Aboriginal Presence in Our Schools Guide and community relations. Introductory session was conducted for secretaries on welcoming environments.

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**Priority:** Aboriginal Education Coordinator - *Renamed: Project Manager*

### **Strategy to improve Student Success**

- Coordinate the resources and supports for Aboriginal Student Success.
- Build capacity to support identity building, including the appreciation of Aboriginal perspectives, values and cultures by all students, school board staff and elected trustees.
- Build capacity for effective teaching, assessment and evaluation practices through at the elbow coaching in classrooms and participation in school based professional learning communities.
- Build capacity to improve literacy and numeracy skills through the coaching model and professional learning communities.
- Provide support to secondary teachers teaching new Native Studies courses.
- Reduce gaps in student achievement through supporting precision goal setting and targeted, research based instructional strategies in schools.

### **Details**

- Supports our Aboriginal Education initiatives in grades K - 12.
- The Aboriginal Education Coordinator is critical in: supporting the implementation of student achievement initiatives to improve Aboriginal students' literacy and numeracy skills, building capacity for effective instructional, assessment and evaluation practices, delivering professional development "at the elbow" for teachers and support staff, and assisting with the implementation of Board and Ministry initiatives pertaining to Aboriginal Education. Assist schools on an individual basis for example, working with Aboriginal youth by conducting monthly talking circles.

### **Documentation**

- Action plan
- Minutes

### **Link to FNMI Framework**

- Goal #1 High Level of Student Achievement Strategy 1.1
- Goal #2 Reduce Gaps in Student Achievement Strategy 2.1

### **Indicators of Success**

- Direct support for teachers in pilot schools.
- Improved achievement of self identified Aboriginal students as measured by EQAO Primary and Junior Reading, Writing and Mathematics Assessment, Grade 9 Mathematics Assessment and OSSLT assessments by 10% over 2007/2008.
- Improved credit accumulation rates self identified of Aboriginal students over 2007/2008

- Improved graduation rates by 2012 of self identified Aboriginal Students

**Update** (*as of June 2009*):

- The project manager planned and facilitated regular professional development sessions for teachers, while connecting with community traditional teachers. Each session focused on teachers having the opportunity to learn about cultural/traditional practices; in teams, teachers created lessons from the FNMI books (from the First Peoples Resource Collection) and connected these lessons to their PLC and school literacy goals.
- The project manager organized and facilitated the project's Later Literacy program. Invited literacy professionals from the Lakehead board and other boards. This program provided hands on training for the Educational Assistants that work with FNMI students. Facilitators supported the program with planning and incorporated literacy strategies and FNMI resources/texts.
- The Aboriginal Education Resource teacher worked at the elbow with classroom teachers. Teachers also received additional support in compiling resources and texts that reflect FNMI perspective, values and beliefs.
- The project manager oversaw the secondary PLC programs and professional development sessions that were planned by the Secondary Aboriginal Education Resource Teacher

<b>SCHOOL Project</b>	<b>Urban Aboriginal Education</b>
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**Priority: Welcoming Environment**

**Strategy to improve Student Success**

- Build capacity for environments that are supportive for learning.
- Reduce gaps in student achievement through environments and classroom resources that reflect the lived experiences of the student population.
- Increase parental participation in schools by creating an environment that is inviting.

**Details**

- Work with other district school boards to develop and conduct an environmental scan that would assist schools with defining and measuring environments that are welcoming to Aboriginal students, parents and families; visit best practices in other jurisdictions. For example, some items may include signage, translation, orientation events, travel, development of materials, etc... Youth will take an active role in the development of materials, taking ownership and creating a sense of belonging to the school.

**Documentation**

- A template will be developed to identify welcoming, inclusive environments.

- Lists of resources purchased or developed.

**Link to FNMI Framework**

- Goal #2 Reduce Gaps in Student Achievement - Strategy 2.2
- Goal #3 High Levels of Public Confidence - Strategy 3.2

**Indicators of Success**

- A minimum of four pilot schools will have used the scan, identified improvements that can be made to the environment and gathered feedback from focus groups.
- Increased participation of First Nation, Métis and Inuit parents in education.
- Eased school transitions for First Nation students/families coming from First Nation communities.

**Update (*as of June 2009*):**

- Five schools were selected to participate. Each school reviewed the Welcoming Environment Draft and visited two exemplary schools that demonstrate a welcoming environment for their high FNMI populations.
- Recommendations have been compiled of what will be included in each of the five schools with the input and advise of the AEAC committee. The four areas that will be investigated are: (i) Environment; (ii) Practices and Attitudes; (iii) Outreach; and (iv) Resources and Instructional Practices.

**Priority: Appropriate Aboriginal Content, Resources and Materials**

**Strategy to improve Student Success**

- Build capacity for effective teaching, assessment and evaluation practices.
- Build capacity to support identity building including the appreciation of Aboriginal perspectives, values and cultures.

**Details**

- Connected to environmental scan (assessment and infusion throughout).
- Incorporate meaningful First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultural content/resources into curriculum and school environment allowing youth to recognize their identity built within their surroundings, developing a sense of pride and belonging.

**Documentation**

- Tracking tool e.g. Resources /materials to avoid
- Suggested resources

**Link to FNMI Framework**

- Goal #3 High Levels of Public Confidence - Strategy 3.2

### **Indicators of Success**

- Build capacity to support: Aboriginal student identity and student success, and staff.
- Accurate and reliable Aboriginal content, resources and materials being utilized and integrated in the schools/classrooms.
- An increased comfort level for teachers to embed/teach Aboriginal content in the curriculum. Teachers will feel reassurance that the resources/materials being utilized are appropriate.

### **Update (*as of June 2009*):**

- Numerous books with FNMI perspective have been purchased for all elementary and secondary schools.
    - First Peoples Resource Collection
    - Graphic Novels (Intermediate/Senior Grades)
    - Ojibway/Native Studies
    - ELL (English Language Learners) Program
    - Later Literacy (Grades 7/8)
    - Grade 10 Civics.
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### **Priority: Aboriginal Curriculum Modules**

#### **Strategy to improve Student Success**

- Build capacity for effective teaching, assessment and evaluation practices.
- Build capacity to support identity building including the appreciation of Aboriginal perspectives, values and cultures.
- Reduce gaps in student achievement.

#### **Details**

- Integration of educational opportunities to improve the knowledge about the cultures and histories of First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples and our shared Canadian history for all students. Participating youth will be able to share information about their diverse specific backgrounds and experiences, developing a rich awareness of diversity among all students.
- To be implemented in Grade 11 Civics and Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 compulsory English courses.

#### **Documentation**

- Developed curriculum modules.

#### **Link to FNMI Framework**

- Goal #1 High Level of Student Achievement Strategy 1.1

### **Indicators of Success**

- Internal feedback/pre and post survey for teachers to complete.
- Aboriginal students engaged – improved attendance, course completion.
- An increased appreciation and understanding of Aboriginal cultures and traditions.
- An increased comfort level for teachers to teach sensitive topics.
- Equity and Respect for Diversity.

**Update (*as of June 2009*):**

- With the guidance of program staff, the Aboriginal Education Teacher, Aboriginal Community Liaison and Partnership Officer, secondary teachers have developed units of study on treaties, the Indian Act, residential schools, and current issues that affect Aboriginal people, as well as lessons based around Aboriginal literature.
- As the modules are finalized, English and Civics teachers are having the opportunity to provide input and participate in a training session on the content and delivery of the module.
- Curriculum modules have been created for Grade 10 Civics compulsory credit
- Students will develop a rich awareness of the diversity among our student population and improve their knowledge of the cultures and histories of First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples and our shared Canadian history. Through the ELL program, books have been purchased and lessons have been created to utilize in all compulsory English the classrooms.

**Priority: Later Literacy Program**

**Strategy to improve Student Success**

- Build capacity for effective teaching, assessment and evaluation practices.
- Enhance support to improve literacy and numeracy.
- Results from DRA 4-8 will be used as an assessment for learning tool that will inform classroom instruction

**Details**

- Under the direction of a facilitator, Educational Assistants will work with students in grade 7 and 8 to close gaps in literacy achievement in pilot schools.

**Documentation**

- Reading Assessments used
- Literacy Strategies used
- Overall results

**Link to FNMI Framework**

- Goal #1 High Level of Student Achievement – Strategy 1.1
- Goal #2 Reduce Gaps in Student Achievement – Strategy 2.2

### Indicators of Success

- An improvement as measured by the DRA 4 – 8 for students participating in the later literacy program.

### Update (*as of June 2009*):

- Five Educational Assistants (EAs) were hired (1/2 day) to work in five schools
- Under the direction of the Facilitator, the EAs worked one on one with students to in Grade 7 and 8 to close gaps in literacy achievement.
- The EAs and Facilitators received five training sessions on literacy strategies and cultural awareness.
- Data on student improvement was collected, and feedback was given at the end to evaluate the success of the program. Additional literacy resources were provided to each school.

<b>ABORIGINAL STUDENT SUPPORTS Education Project</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Aboriginal</b>
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### Priority: Family Connections

#### Strategy to improve Student Success

- Parental Engagement and parent/student supports to improve student achievement.
- Foster supportive and engaged families and communities.

#### Details

- First Nation, Métis and Inuit parents will participate and learn how to be actively and directly involved in the education of their children, specifically in supporting reading and writing and by participating in a variety of support networks such as life skills, access to community supports, and education opportunities.
- The community will be involved in the delivery of content within a school setting.
- In the afternoon, through the Adult Education Centre, parents will have the opportunity to enroll in high school credit courses if they are working towards their High School Diploma.

#### Documentation

- Attendance/participation in the FC program and in-school activities
- List of resources, curriculum, speakers
- List of community partnerships and their role
- Parent feedback/participation form
- Number of parents acquiring high school credits

#### Link to FNMI Framework

- Goal #2 Reduce Gaps in Student Achievement Strategy 2.2
- Goal #3 High Levels of Public Confidence - Strategies 3.1 and 3.3

#### **Indicators of Success**

- The program will be developed in at least two school sites one north zone and one south zone.
- Increased participation of First Nation, Métis and Inuit parents in the education of their children.
- Fostered parenting skills.
- Improved attendance.
- Positive parent/student/community/ school relations.
- At least x parents will participate in high school credit courses.

#### **Update (*as of June 2009*):**

- Active involvement by families and guardians fosters student learning and achievement, improves student attendance, and creates positive parent and school relationships.
- Facilitated by the Adult Education Centre, parents met to discuss parenting and how to assist their children in school. They also had the opportunity to enroll in high school credit courses to work towards their high school diploma. Parents were supported in their pursuit of credits.
- This program was (and is) currently being offered at McKellar Park School and St. James School, in collaboration with the Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre.
- Partnership with Friendship Centre has helped increase participation and provided valuable resources and support.
- Resource bank in development; speakers/elders contacted to provide support.
- Three participants have acquired their high school diploma to date and looking at post secondary education as an option.
- A handbook was also created that provided additional resources, tools, and strategies for parents/guardians.

#### **Priority: Aboriginal Transitions and Mentorship**

##### **Strategy to improve Student Success**

###### Transitions:

- Build capacity for effective teaching, assessment and evaluation practices.
- Provide additional support to reduce gaps in student outcomes.

###### Mentorship:

- Build capacity to support identity building, school transitions and student leadership that will reduce the gap in student outcomes and build public confidence in the community.

#### **Details**

#### Transitions:

- Provide additional academic, cultural and community supports to ease transitions for Aboriginal students, e.g. Tutor assistance, Access to Elder(s), participate in events and activities to create community awareness.
- Conduct a diagnostic assessment.
- Review school based early screening and intervention programs.
- Four school sites

#### Mentorship:

- The Aboriginal mentorship program will expand to all secondary schools from one school with the primary focus being on developing youth leadership skills.
- The Aboriginal mentors will receive support such as an orientation, leadership and personal self development opportunities, supports for supplies/resources such as literacy materials to be utilized with proteges of elementary schools. A recognition event to celebrate these efforts will be held in partnership with Northwestern Ontario Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards.
- Aboriginal students will volunteer as mentors or protégés to empower Aboriginal youth, to be involved in school and community cultural activities.

### **Documentation**

#### Transitions:

- Number of First Nation students participating
- List of community partners
- Attendance
- Student survey

#### Mentorship:

- Number of participants (mentors, proteges, community involvement)
- List of occurred activities
- Manual developed
- Impact analysis

### **Link to FNMI Framework**

#### Transitions & Mentorship:

- Goal #1 High Level of Student Achievement Strategy 1.1
- Goal #2 Reduce Gaps in Student Achievement Strategy 2.2
- Goal #3 High Levels of Public Confidence - Strategies 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3

### **Indicators of Success**

#### Transitions:

- Eased transitions to urban living and school for First Nation students as measured by focus group feedback.
- Nurtured strong positive relations with First Nation parents, students and community.
- Improved attendance and student retention.

#### Mentorship:

- Four secondary schools will pilot the Aboriginal Mentorship Program.

- Participating Aboriginal mentors will become more involved in the community and school activities.
- Aboriginal role model connections between mentors and proteges.
- Student engagement in the school, classroom and community.

**Update (*as of June 2009*):**

**Transitions & Mentorship**

- The transition program provides additional academic, cultural, and community supports to ease transitions for Aboriginal students who move to a new urban environment. In addition to social and emotional supports, schools have implemented a credit course that focuses on esteem, identity, and ensuring students have the essential literacy skills necessary to be successful in other content areas.
- Transitions teachers received monthly training sessions to aid in their delivery of culturally appropriate literacy based activities
- Connected to a Native Studies secondary credit course, Aboriginal students participated in a series of leadership and personal self development opportunities both in the classroom and in the community. The mentors then shared their talents by working with protégés from elementary schools with a focus on reading.
- Students in the mentoring program attended a leadership camp led by a First Nations group from Sault Ste Marie which was held at Kingfisher Lake Camp in Thunder Bay.
- All secondary schools are piloting the Aboriginal Mentoring Program.
- Mentors have received recognition at 2009 Northwestern Ontario Aboriginal Youth Recognition and Achievement Awards.

**Priority: Aboriginal Role Models & Cultural Programming**

**Strategy to improve Student Success**

- Build capacity for culturally inclusive and effective teaching practices and programs by integrating meaningful First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultural perspectives, teachings and activities to accommodate different learning styles, to meet the learning needs of all teachers and students, and to involve the Aboriginal community.
- To promote empowerment, self-identity and self-esteem building in First Nation, Métis and Inuit students.
- Integrate cultural programming that educates the whole child into the classroom curriculum.

**Details**

- Integrate Aboriginal cultural activities and utilize Aboriginal Role Models in the classroom(s), and within the schools. This will be connected to curriculum,

building cultural awareness, specifically enriching for youth as it creates a connection to school and community.

- Experiential learning for Aboriginal students delivered through links to community. This opportunity will allow teachers to understand and experience working with Aboriginal peoples that will build awareness on relationship building, protocol, and cultural teachings and expand learning in the classrooms. Students embrace a culturally significant way of learning.
- Regularly, through participation of community partners such as Neighbourhood Capacity Building Project Urban Aboriginal Strategy and Children's Centre Thunder Bay, staff will work with teachers and students at a number of schools to integrate Aboriginal culture into the classroom.
- Examples of programming may include Anishinaabe Music Circle, the teachings of the Seven Grandfathers, traditional stories, and some Ojibway language. Staff also work in partnership with teachers to integrate Aboriginal culture across the curriculum. They also provide prevention/ intervention programming for students focusing on key three areas; parenting, the YES group (drug and alcohol), and mental health (including grief, trauma as well as girls' self esteem)

#### **Documentation**

- Develop a cultural resource list and protocol for reference
- Number of cultural visits in the classrooms
- Number of artists and student participants
- Analysis to inform future program design/development
- A description of the cultural program
- Record of participation
- Feedback

#### **Link to FNMI Framework**

- Goal #1 High Level of Student Achievement Strategy 1.1
- Goal #2 Reduce Gaps in Student Achievement Strategy 2.2
- Goal #3 High Levels of Public Confidence - Strategies 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3

#### **Indicators of Success**

- Each school or a classroom of each school would have participated in one cultural activity involving an Aboriginal artist(s).
- Teachers requesting further future visits from Aboriginal Role Models and cultural programming activities.
- Student engagement in school and the classroom.
- Students' ability to connect to the curriculum
- A better understanding by all students and staff participants of our shared history.
- Improved student engagement.

**Update (*as of June 2009*):**

- The UAEP teamed up with the *Learning Through The Arts* program and created an integrated arts program in all elementary schools. A local Aboriginal artist or artisan delivered a series of lessons to all Grade 7 students and additional classes in K - Grade 6 schools.
- Aboriginal artists connected their traditional talents to the curriculum, build cultural awareness and serve as role models to students of all cultures.
- Collaborative training and planning occurred amongst the Aboriginal artists and participating teachers.
- Schools have participated in a variety of community events, engaged guest speakers, and participated in Aboriginal Cultural Sensitivity training.
- These Aboriginal artists/artisans also presented at the monthly First Peoples Resource Collection cultural/traditional teachings sessions (elementary and secondary)

<b>ABORIGINAL STUDENT SUPPORTS Education Project</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Aboriginal</b>
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**Priority: Elder Supports**

**Strategy to improve Student Success**

- Enhance supports to deliver curriculum in a culturally sensitive, appropriate, and respectful manner.

**Details**

- Access to Elder(s) is available for in the classroom, school, after school, within the board, among staff and students.
- Elder(s) support can be provided by engaging students in traditional teachings, active role models for students in the classroom, create a welcoming and engaging environment accepting for all, develop awareness among teachers of instructional methods through oral communication to enhance the learning of all First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students, encouraging youth to further engage in school activities.
- An Elder would also assist with the integration of educational opportunities to significantly improve the knowledge of all students and staff about the rich cultures of Aboriginal People.

**Documentation**

- Attendance
- Number of participants (Elders, students, teachers)
- Feedback
- Impact analysis
- Resources acquired from Elder(s)

**Link to FNMI Framework**

- Goal #1 High Level of Student Achievement Strategy 1.1
- Goal #2 Reduce Gaps in Student Achievement Strategies 2.2
- Goal #3 High Levels of Public Confidence Strategy 3.2

#### **Indicators of Success**

- Participating teachers feel comfortable working with an Elder(s).
- Teachers have engaged elders to participate in classrooms.
- An increased comfort level for teachers delivering the Native Studies curriculum to all students (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal).
- Increased opportunities for knowledge sharing and relationship building among teachers, the students and the Aboriginal community.
- Aboriginal role model connections between the Elder and students.
- Student engagement in the school, classroom and community. Improved from 2007-2008 student attendance and credit accumulation rates for self-identified Aboriginal students

#### **Update (*as of June 2009*):**

- Elders engaged students and classroom teachers in traditional teachings, while serving as role models for students in the classroom, creating a welcoming and engaging environment that is accepting for all. They also developed awareness among teachers of instructional methods through oral communication, and encouraged youth to further engage in school activities.
- Local community Elders/Senators were accessible by Board/school staff/students to provide advice on various UAEP initiatives, be involved in school/board functions to conduct openings/closings remarks, and be available for advice and wisdom, cultural teachings and support.
- A draft Elders Protocol was created with input from the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee.

#### **Priority: Aboriginal Navigator (Social Support Worker)**

#### **Strategy to improve Student Success**

- Provide social/emotional support for students.

#### **Details**

- Promote and support students' social, emotional and academic achievement through direct service, consultation, collaboration and coordination.
- Advocacy and support for students and their families including linkages with services that promotes student success. Opportunities for youth to learn about mental health issues and other health issues such as suicide, diabetes, addiction, or gambling.
- Assist in the development of success plans for students that focus on strengths and address areas of need.

- Coordinate and/or provide professional development and training for staff/students including prevention programs or programs that assist in accessing community supports.

#### **Documentation**

- Minutes of training sessions
- Sample success plans
- Case load tracking

#### **Link to FNMI Framework**

- Goal #2 Reduce Gaps in Student Achievement Strategy 2.1 and 2.2

#### **Indicators of Success**

- Increased attendance rates
- Fewer lates
- Parental engagement
- Increased credit accumulation

#### **Update (*as of June 2009*):**

- A Social Worker was hired to work with high risk students in elementary who:
  - Promoted and supported students' social, emotional, and academic achievement through direct service consultation, collaboration, and coordination.
  - Advocated for and supported students and their families to link with services that promote student success.
  - Provided opportunities for youth to learn about mental health issues.
  - Assisted in the development of success plans for students that focused on strengths and addressed areas of need.
  - Provided professional development and training for staff/students including prevention programs or programs that assist in accessing community supports.
  - Consulted with Board administrators when requested to support students and families when an identified risk area has been identified
  - Collaborated with community service providers to plan and co-ordinate services that would benefit the students and their families
  - Communicated with all parties involved in supporting the student and family for student success.
  - Provided direct service to students and families including assessments of strengths and needs within context of family and school and community.

**Priority: Alternative Education Programs**

**Strategy to improve Student Success**

- To provide a variety of programs to meet the varied learning needs and learning styles of students.

**Details**

- Secondary Alternative programs will operate both in all high schools and in off-site locations. The focus for learning is on student strengths. A student plan for closing the gap, addressing needs, and earning credits ensures the voice of our youth is heard.
- Alternative programs provide students with non-traditional ways to demonstrate success including experiential learning, work placements and mentorship opportunities. These programs have a proven track record of helping all students reach their full potential, and graduate.

**Documentation**

- Descriptions of the programs designed.

**Link to FNMI Framework**

- Goal #2 Reduce Gaps in Student Achievement - Strategy 2.1

**Indicators of Success**

- Increased credit accumulation
- Increased graduation rates over the long term
- Increased attendance

**Update (*as of June 2009*):**

- Secondary Alternative Education programs operated in all high schools and at off-site locations.
- Individual student plans were created to focus on student strengths, address student needs, and supported students earn credits.
- Alternative programs provided students with non-traditional ways to demonstrate success including experiential learning, work placements, and mentorship opportunities.
- Through the Urban Aboriginal Education Project, an Educational Assistant was hired to work with, and support students in the Connections Program located at the former Forest Park School.

<b>CONNECTING FOR SUCCESS Project</b>	<b>Urban Aboriginal Education</b>
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**Priority: Community**

**Strategy to improve Student Success**

- Continue and increase efforts to engage and work with First Nation Education Authorities, community partners and First Nation, Métis and Inuit parents on Aboriginal student achievement and success.

#### **Details**

- It will include ongoing dialogue with First Nation Education Authorities, Urban Aboriginal community and involvement in community activities/efforts. These would include, but are not limited to the Northwestern Ontario Aboriginal Achievement Awards, Parent Symposium, Fall Harvest, First Nation Student Community Orientation Event, Community Feasts and seasonal cultural celebrations – many of which focus on engaging the youth in the community and fostering the school-student-community-home relationship.

#### **Documentation**

- List of agencies
- List of activities
- Agendas of meetings
- Minutes
- Local advertisements and communication of events
- Number of participants (student, board staff, community)

#### **Link to FNMI Framework**

- Goal #1 High Level of Student Achievement – Strategy 1.2
- Goal #2 Reduce Gaps in Student Achievement – Strategy 2.2
- Goal #3 High Levels of Public Confidence – Strategies 3.1 and 3.3

#### **Indicators of Success**

- Number of community partnerships created
- Increased opportunities to share knowledge and collaborate
- Opportunities to educate students and educators about the rich cultures and histories of First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples

#### **Update (*as of June 2009*):**

- The Aboriginal Community Liaison & Partnership Officer was (and is) involved in various local committee groups such as Community Coalition Unified for the Protection of Children & Youth, Aboriginal Interagency Council, Fall Harvest Planning Committee, Northwestern Ontario Aboriginal Youth Achievement & Recognition Awards Committee, Aboriginal Employment Resource Committee, Community Advisory Committee (UAS-NCBP), Thunder Bay Against Racism and Discrimination (TBCARD), Lakehead University Aboriginal Advisory Council, and Advisory Council for Confederation College.
- Information on community events was shared with internal staff to establish school and community connections and to provide learning experiences for all.
- The Board has established an external working group (comprised of First Nation Education Counsellors/Education Authorities and key board staff) to

- discuss transitions and develop strategies for easing transitions for FN students; as well many other partnership community meetings occur to nurture working relationships (e.g. Urban Aboriginal Strategy Community Advisory Council).
- Ongoing school/board and community connections are made, along with referrals to various agencies to access community supports, culturally appropriate programming that provide cultural teachings, emotional and social supports e.g. Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre (various programs), NCBP-UAS Pilot at Churchill, Anishnawbe Mushkiki, CCUPCY, New Experiences (Children Centre Thunder Bay).
  - The Board is represented in various external parent events to nurture relationships, outreach and connect to community, parents and students.
  - Schools are connected to various community contacts for supports (such as translation services, Elders/Senators, role models, cultural resource people, artists, specific subject presentations, social and emotional supports for students).
  - Schools invited various community agencies to participate at school level events such as orientation night, feasts, parent events where parents/students will receive access to community information, resources and supports.
  - The Board worked with various community partners to cost share and plan community events and future cultural activities that will contribute to student success eg. Scott Carpenter (Metis Cultural professional development for staff), Fall Harvest, National Aboriginal Day, Raising Aboriginal Voices, Welcome First Nation Student Orientation Event, Northwestern Ontario Aboriginal Youth Achievement & Recognition Awards, Matawa First Nation Student Orientation, Paint the Town.
  - The Board is outreaching to First Nation communities to nurture relationships and form new partnerships that will contribute to Aboriginal student success.
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**Priority: Aboriginal Parent Guardian Advocacy Program**

**Strategy to improve Student Success**

- Providing parents and guardians an opportunity to access an advocate if they wish to utilize one for additional supports. An advocate can be seen as a support person, helper, friend and/or interpreter.

**Details**

- Aboriginal parents/guardians would be recruited as volunteers to provide in-school support for other Aboriginal parents/guardians and staff.
- The Aboriginal Parent/Guardian Advocacy Program is to assist parents and guardians:
  - who may need additional supports to achieve an understanding of education practices, policies and procedures
  - to reach a resolution to concerns regarding their child/children/student's needs
  - to connect with community resources

- to become engaged in their child/ children/ student's education.
- Aboriginal parent/guardian advocates may also assist with:
  - student registrations
  - teacher/student interviews
  - parent/school meetings and open houses
  - translation services

#### **Documentation**

- Protocol developed
- List of orientation and training activities
- Number of school visits conducted by Aboriginal advocates
- Orientation resources provided to Aboriginal parents/guardians
- Number of Aboriginal parents/guardians involved in education

#### **Link to FNMI Framework**

- Goal #1 High Level of Student Achievement Strategy 1.2
- Goal #3 High Levels of Public Confidence Strategies 3.1 and 3.3

#### **Indicators of Success**

- The program will be in one elementary and one secondary school where there is a high Aboriginal student population.
- The number of interested volunteered Aboriginal parents/guardians advocates.
- Improved school and parent/guardian/ student/community relations.

#### **Update (*as of June 2009*):**

- The Aboriginal Parent/Guardian Advocacy Program was developed to assist parents and guardians:
  - Who may need additional supports to understand education practices, policies and procedures.
  - To reach a resolution to concerns regarding their child's needs.
  - To connect with community resources.
  - To become engaged in their child's education.
- Aboriginal parent/guardian advocates may also assist with student registration, teacher/student interviews, parent/school meetings, open houses, and translation services.
  - An advertisement for recruitment of advocates occurred in March 2009.
  - A total of 15 interested applications were received.
  - An orientation training book has been developed.
  - First introductory session to the program and meet/greet occurred in May 2009.
  - Applicants participated in a screening process.
  - Volunteer advocates will be accessible by parents/guardians/staff of Aboriginal students in the Fall of 2009.
  - Ongoing training will be provided to the advocates.
  - An ongoing assessment and evaluation will be conducted

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## **Priority: Community Capacity Building**

### **Strategy to improve Student Success**

- Build capacity to support identity building, including the appreciation of Aboriginal perspectives, values and cultures by all students, school board staff and elected trustees.

### **Details**

- The Board will continue to nurture existing relationships with the Aboriginal community partners and seek to build new partnerships through the Aboriginal Education Advisor. The UAEP Local Steering Committee and the Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee will continue to be instrumental in providing direction and feedback on the UAEP project and other matters relating to Aboriginal Education.
- The UAEP Local Steering Committee is comprised of the following agencies:
  - An Elder and Senator
  - Dilico Ojibway Child and Family Services
  - Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board
  - Office of the Federal Interlocutor
  - Northern Nishnawbe Education Council
  - Negahneewin College
  - Indian Youth Friendship Society
  - Regional Multicultural Youth Council
  - Métis Nation of Ontario
  - Oshki-Pimache-O-Win
  - Lakehead University
  - Seven Generations
  - Neighbourhood Capacity Building Program (Urban Aboriginal Strategy)
  - Shkoday Abinojiiwak Obimiwedoan
  - Ontario Native Women's Association
  - Fort William First Nation
  - Nishnawbe Aski Nation

### **Documentation**

- Agenda
- Meeting minutes

### **Link to FNMI Framework**

- Goal #3 High Levels of Public Confidence Strategies 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3

### **Indicators of Success**

- Number of community partnerships created
- Increased opportunities to share knowledge and collaborate
- Opportunities to educate students and educators about the rich cultures and histories of First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples

**Update (*as of June 2009*):**

- Ongoing partnership with various community organizations.