



Simcoe County
District School Board

Urban First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Pilot Project



2008-2009

Interim Report to the Urban Aboriginal Education Pilot Project Steering Committee

“...this project has been absolutely great for the schools and their communities of staff, parents and students. I can see the positive difference in many students, and have enjoyed watching their trust in us grow.”

UAEP Staff Member

September 2009

**SIMCOE COUNTY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
URBAN ABORIGINAL EDUCATION PILOT PROJECT
INTERIM REPORT
2008-2009**

On behalf of the Urban Aboriginal Education Sub-Steering Committee, the Simcoe County District School Board is pleased to present our Interim Report for the 2008-2009 school year to the co-chairs of the Steering Committee of the Urban Aboriginal Education Project.

In September 2008 the Simcoe County District School Board was selected to implement the goals of the Ontario Ministry of Education Urban Aboriginal Education Project in Barrie Ontario. Terms of Reference and guiding principles were established by the Sub-Steering Committee. All strategies and implementation activities are based on the following guiding principles:

- foster and promote Aboriginal student success;
- promote respectful relationships among all participants;
- incorporate the Aboriginal traditions of holistic education and worldview ;
- foster parental/family/community engagement;
- provide professional development for SCDSB teachers; and
- be collaborative, supportive and inclusive.

Barrie Central Collegiate, Barrie North Collegiate, Cundles Heights Public School, and Andrew Hunter Public School were our four pilot schools. These were selected on an “assumption” of a higher proportion of Aboriginal students. Since the inception of the pilot project, a significant number of Aboriginal students have identified as First Nation, Métis, or Inuit through the Voluntary Self-Identification Process.

This interim report consists of six sections: 1) description of all activities completed as of June 2009; 2) a summary of preliminary findings based on research undertaken by the Simcoe County District School Board; 3) a revised workplan outlining all planned implementation activities for 2009-2010; 4) our site’s approach to internal evaluation; 5) financial statement detailing expenditures as of August 30, 2009; and 6) revised project budget.

“I wish that when I was a little child like you, I had something like this.”

*Brenda Ingersoll
Native Trustee
SCDSB*

Respectfully
Lisa Ewanchuk
Principal, First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education

Section 1 – Activities completed as of June 2009

Sub-Steering Committee Membership

The Sub-Steering Committee members represent First Nation and Métis communities within the City of Barrie and federations. Although we have actively attempted to recruit Inuit representation, we were not successful in our search.

Patrick King	Barrie Area Native Advisory Circle
Lance Triskle	Barrie Native Friendship Centre
Scott Carpenter	Métis Nation of Ontario
Brenda Jackson	Barrie and Area Native Advisory Circle
Jan Beaver	Ogemawahj Tribal Council
Compton Kahn	Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre
Maryann Fifield	Georgian College
Elizabeth Dewey	Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation
Janet Bigham	Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario
Russell Atkinson	Ontario Principals Council
Janis Medysky	Superintendent of Education
Lisa Ewanchuk	Principal of Aboriginal Education
Angela Bosco	Facilitator for Aboriginal Education

The Sub-Steering Committee was active in providing leadership, direction and advice throughout the 2008-2009 implementation year. Their input informed the implementation of our project activities. During the official launch of the project at Andrew Hunter Elementary School, each available member participated by addressing the audience and presenting each school with a Medicine Wheel, Métis Sash, Inuit canvas artwork and a Dreamcatcher.



Scott Carpenter & Lance Triskle make presentation to Barrie Central Principal Russell Atkinson during our official launch at Andrew Hunter Elementary School on December 4, 2008

“This is really a new era for education and it’s wonderful to see mainstream embracing the wisdom and knowledge of the aboriginal culture.”

Patrick King, BANAC

2008-2009 Implementation Activities

Student Supports

Child and Youth Workers

The Child and Youth Workers (CYWs) have been instrumental in supporting First Nation, Métis and Inuit student social, emotional, physical and academic well-being in the four pilot schools. As the front line staff member, the CYWs roles and responsibilities included:

- 1:1 support
- Coaching and mentoring
- Linking and coordination of Aboriginal service agencies with families
- Liaison between home and school
- Identification of community supports
- Supporting students in the classroom
- Organizing cultural activities in the student Lodges
- Working with guidance and attendance counsellors
- Supporting IEPs and behaviour plans
- Participation in SNCs and Case Conferences as required
- Communicating program with school staff, families and organizations
- Participating in cultural awareness activities
- Ongoing support for research objectives

As our numbers indicate, accessing the services of our Child and Youth Workers has been very successful. In consultation with our SCDSB Freedom of Information/Records Management Officer, we developed the form *Consent for Referral to the Urban Aboriginal Education Project Team*. Working with school administrators and Guidance departments, forms were distributed to students based on existing school knowledge of Aboriginal Ancestry and through informal program information sessions. Information about the services of the CYW and UAEPP Program was shared with school communities through school newsletters. School staff also received an information memorandum informing them of the CYW services in their schools. Our CYWs attended school staff meetings as well. As word “got out” about our Child and Youth Worker services and program activities, more students came forward on their own to inquire and receive a consent form.

Consents for Referral

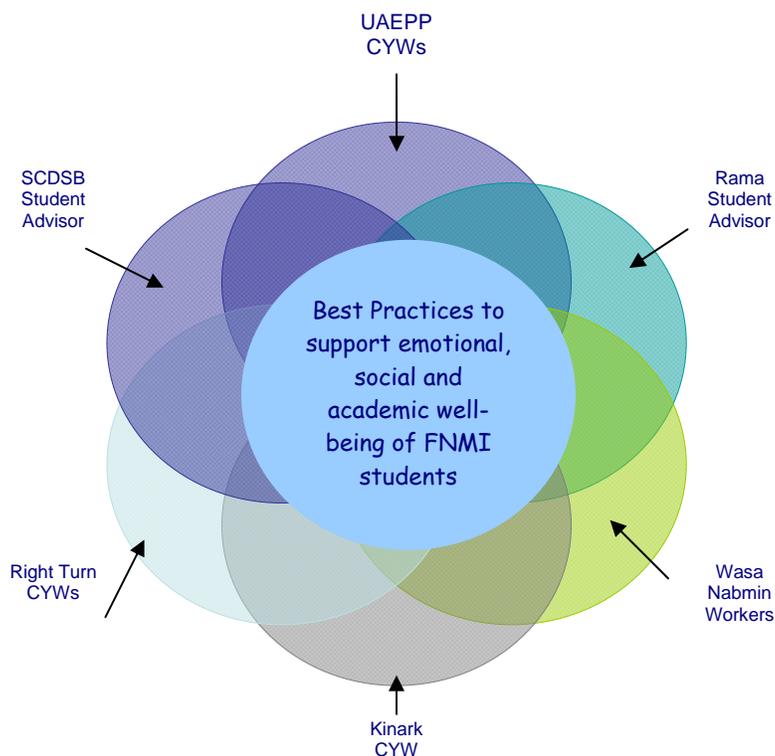
As of June 2009 we had 87 students (41 elementary & 26 secondary) who received support services of the UAEPP Child and Youth Workers. All of these students have consents on file, with the exception of 3 secondary students who are over the age of 18. Of the 87 students, 21 have received direct 1:1 support. 13 students referrals were made to the specialized support services at the Barrie Native Friendship Centre, Enaahchtig Healing Lodge and to the Barrie Native

Advisory Circle (BANAC). In a few cases, the Child and Youth Workers have actively participated in case conferences at the request of parents or school administration. Families have expressed the importance of having UAEPP CYW participation and support during these times. Throughout the course of the year, we have had a number of requests from other City of Barrie schools to have the CYWs come and work at their schools.

Networking

A collegial and collaborative networking group of student support workers was established during the year. Participants of the networking sessions included: the UAEPP Child and Youth Workers, the Program Coordinator of the Barrie/Georgian Bay Native Friendship Centre's Wasa-Nabin Program, SCDSB Native Student Advisor, Rama's Native Student Advisor, Kinark Child and Youth Worker and the board's Right Turn CYWs. The purpose of these sessions is to share best practices in addressing the emotional, social and academic needs of our students. Figure 1 illustrates how the knowledge and experience that the student support workers bring to these sessions create a consistent, integrated and community response to the social, emotional, and academic needs of FNMI students.

Figure 1



Student Lodges/Access Centres

Creating a nurturing and caring student environment where “it’s okay to be Aboriginal.” each of the four pilot schools had designated classroom space. With the support of our Facilities Department, each school was able to open a closed classroom to be used as a First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Student Lodge/Access Centre. The rooms were utilized by our project staff and students for cultural activities and a location for our CYWs to meet individually with students.

“I was unsure about this project and self identifying my child. I have 3 children, 2 in elementary and 1 in secondary. I was worried that it would be a negative thing and not a positive. Now I can see that these rooms are reflecting a positive atmosphere and I am glad my children can use them to learn about their culture.”

-parent

A quote from a Child and Youth illustrates how effective the Lodge was in supporting the well-being of students.

We have seen the direct effects on some of the First Nations and Metis students who attended The Lodges. They learned something about their culture, treated The Lodge as “theirs”, talked freely, and grew in self esteem and in pride of their ancestry. It was wondrous to see the change in some of the students! I noticed these differences in both elementary and secondary students. It felt good to know that students trusted me!

-Child and Youth Worker

Cultural activities to support identity building and student engagement were held in the Lodges. Traditional teachers and Elders were asked to conduct talking circles, provide teachings about the Circle and Métis traditions, and to share their knowledge on how finger weave, make dreamcatchers, rattles, and other crafts.



A more detailed “student perspective” on the Lodge is provided later in this report.

Summary Table of Activities

SCDSB Strategies	SCDSB Achievement Indicators	SCDSB Activities
<p>Organize the “Urban Aboriginal Education Team” who will, under the direction of the Principal, develop and implement the strategic one year plan for the Barrie pilot project.</p> <p>Provide appropriate resources to schools to enhance awareness.</p> <p>Encourage and facilitate student work in schools and community centres.</p> <p>Refocus parent/teacher interview opportunities to encourage parental engagement.</p>	<p>FNMI students in the site schools will be more engaged and view themselves as meaningful participants of the school community.</p> <p>Increased student involvement in extra-curricular activities.</p> <p>Increased interaction among FNMI students and staff/guidance/student success</p> <p>A welcoming and nurturing environment will be created at site schools</p> <p>Increased parental engagement in schools/attendance</p> <p>Increased interaction between Aboriginal organizations in the Barrie area and SCDSB.</p> <p>Increased integrated school and community response to social & emotional issues of students in site school</p>	<p><u>Student Supports</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child and Youth Worker 1:1 • Child and Youth Worker involvement during SNCs and Case Conferences • Child and Youth Worker Group Activities in the Lodges • Elementary Open Houses • Cultural Celebration - Culminating Activity • Community Information Sessions • Student Surveys • Restorative Approaches for Respectful Relationships • Talking circles • Circle Teachings • Gen. 7 • Youth Teaching Youth • Student murals on display at MacLaren Art Centre • Student work on display at the Barrie City Centre <p>* Increasing number of student support requests from elementary and secondary schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation with BANAC and Aboriginal Capacity Building Circle
<p>Provide professional development for school staff on Aboriginal worldview and cultural teachings.</p>	<p>Increased staff awareness in each school</p> <p>Increase in focus dialogue among staff on differentiated instruction and assessment</p>	<p><u>Program Supports</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom and library books • Métis Cultural Experience – Classroom visits • Métis Roots Classroom

<p>Develop capacity among SCDSB educators through Aboriginal PLC based on best practices in teaching of Aboriginal students and continued learning of cultural understandings.</p> <p>Site schools and staff participating in the PLC will be provided with resources to enhance their awareness of Aboriginal cultures and information.</p> <p>Implement an early literacy program with specific cultural components.</p>	<p>strategies for FNMI students</p> <p>IRT modeled lessons in each school</p> <p>Resource kits in each school to support curriculum</p> <p>Native Studies course implemented</p> <p>Increased library resources</p> <p>Staff handbook and student agenda insert will be accessible to all SCDSB staff and students</p>	<p>visits – Finger Weaving and Jigging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UAEPP PLCs • Lunch and Learn • Enaahtig Healing Lodge Native Awareness Training for staff of pilot schools • Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking Circles • Inuit • Shannon thunderbird • NAC Guest speakers • Field Trips <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Teaching Youth • Petroglyphs • Talk is Free Theatre • Curriculum units: • Staff Handbook draft • Supporting classroom teachers
<p>Provide appropriate resources to schools to enhance awareness.</p> <p>Organize community consultation sessions in schools and Barrie Native Friendship Centre.</p>	<p>Each school will have a display in their front foyers symbolizing FNMI cultures</p> <p>Increased regional awareness of the pilot</p> <p>Ongoing community information sessions/updates will have taken place</p>	<p><u>Awareness</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom and library books • Métis Cultural Experience – Classroom visits • Barrie Central Woodworking building display cabinets • Enaahtig Healing Lodge and Education Centre • Lunch and Learn



Curriculum Support Materials

Elementary

Full lesson plans and extensions follow the Think Literacy document. At this point, each lesson plan requires an assessment piece and differentiated instruction techniques to complete. Review of content, blackline masters and sources will need to occur before completion. The format chosen to represent the lesson plans is that of the “Think Literacy” documents which are current and in use by teachers in Intermediate grades. It includes a page of lesson description, curriculum links, resources and background. The main lesson page is a three part, before, during and after lesson format. Although Junior grades do not use the Think Literacy documents, reading and writing strategies from Guided Reading and Writers Fountas and Pinnell, CASI and EQAO have been added.

Primary	Junior	Intermediate
First Nations Drum	Symbols of Canada	Inuit Art
First Nations Dance		Métis Art
First Nations Music		

The following is a unit on the Seven Grandfather Teachings in connection with SCDSB Commit to Character. The unit has a junior/intermediate focus.

Characteristic	Title (Cultural Group)
Respect, Truth, Wisdom	A River Ran Wild
Respect, Love, Wisdom	Fiddle Dancer
Love, Bravery,	Sky Dancers
Love, Humility	Tiktala
Bravery	The Red Sash
Introduction Piece (all 7)	Vision Seeker
Bravery	Rabbit and Bear Paws
Respect, Humility, Honesty	I Like who I am
Bravery and Love	Shin-chi’s Canoe
Love	Shi-shi-etko

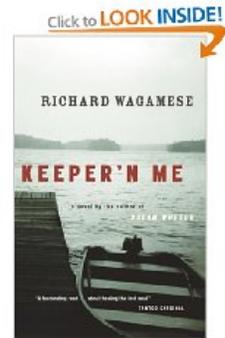
Highlighting the First Nation and Métis communities in and surrounding Simcoe County is a final element of the elementary curriculum resource development.

Primary	Junior	Intermediate
Place Names	Mnjikaning Fish Weirs	Arthur Shilling
	Kitchekewana	

Secondary

Curriculum resources to support the following secondary courses have been developed:

Grade 11	English - Keeper 'n Me
Grade 9/10	Foods and Nutrition
Grade 9	Geography: Ecozones/Forestry
Grade 9	Geography: Travel and Tourism
Grade 9/10	Art - First Nation, Métis and Inuit Art in Canada
Grade 10	Canadian and World Studies
Grade 11	Canadian Law



Both elementary and secondary resources require review from a community Elder. It is our intention to mass produce this work for our elementary and secondary schools.

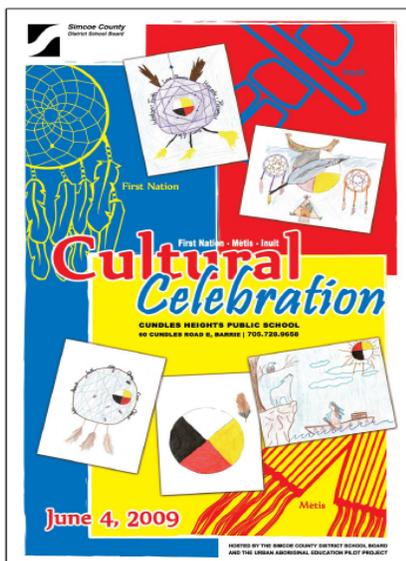
Cultural Celebration

As the culminating activity for the pilot project, a Cultural Celebration was organized at Cundles Heights Public School. Demonstrations by First Nation drummers and dancers and Métis Roots were provided for the staff and students involved in the pilot. A celebratory DVD was created to document the event. The impact of the celebration is evident through these voices from the teaching staff at Cundles.

“This celebration gave me a sense of true culture and will help me work with my students”.

“I wish that this could have been done earlier.”

-members of the staff at Cundles Heights Public School



Section 2 - Summary of Preliminary Research Findings

“Spontaneous Laughter and Good Marks:” Creating Conditions for Success of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students in Simcoe County District School Board.

Executive Summary

This report was commissioned as part of the Simcoe County District School Board's (SCDSB) Urban Aboriginal Pilot Project. The focus of the project is as a contribution to the development of sound approaches to success for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in district classrooms. It focuses on contributions made by the people most directly involved, First Nations, Métis and Inuit students, parents and educational leaders in the communities served by the board. The results have the potential to inform the development of a model which will lead to enhanced success for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students within SCDSB schools.

Methodologically, this study depends exclusively on approaches developed by Indigenous researchers and scholars locally and globally. Guided by the SCDSB Sub-Steering Committee's goals and Research & Evaluation Services protocol, researchers solicited narratives of school success related to First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in the SCDSB. Circlework groups and individual interviews with twenty students, eight parents and ten educational leaders, most of whom were either parents or grandparents of children in SCDSB schools, form the basis of this study. While the knowledge gleaned may contain few surprises to those knowledgeable in the field of Aboriginal Education, its importance lies in the immediacy and the specificity of the stories we hear and read. These words are not from a distant school board and not from some other time: they articulate the issues facilitating successes, and sometimes lack thereof, for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students currently in the schools of the SCDSB. They are the words of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students seeking to live good lives as they strive to become thoughtful, happy adults in their ancestral lands. They are the words of First Nations, Métis and Inuit adults who continue to see education broadly defined as the key to their dreams of healthy children and healthy communities. They are the words of adults whose histories with schools and communities leads to some distrust of schools and yet whose commitment to the power and possibility of education is relentlessly driven by a love for their children and grandchildren.

The results raise a number of questions for further investigation, gesture to several courses of action for the SCDSB and provide the basis for developing recommendations for the establishment of a new model of successful education for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students. Professional development initiatives and teacher education programs are two potential sites for making a difference to current programs. Participants felt that, while some changes can be addressed

fairly easily, only with commitment on the part of all involved and long term planning will there be the deep changes needed to strengthen the relationships between First Nations, Métis and Inuit students and their schools. Throughout the study, participants reminded those who listened that there is no one model for all First Nations, Métis and Inuit students. As varied a group as any other, their distinctiveness comes with their ancestral ties to this land we now call Canada.

What the People Said: Results of the Study

1) Classroom

- Intellectual engagement
- Build on student interests
- Process thoughts
- Differentiated instruction
- High expectations for achievement
- Open door for Elders
- Safe place for emotions
- Respect
- Nutrition
- Teachers demonstrate concern “are you okay”
- Respect, trust and empathy
- More physical activity
- Access to physical world
- Space to think
- Things to be softer & more muted
- Safe place where physical needs are met

“We want the school to be more peaceful, helping others, rather than just disrespecting them.”

Grade four student

“Create a welcoming place where it’s okay to be Aboriginal.”

2) Curriculum

- More FNMI texts
- Hands on experiential learning
- Celebrating wholeness
- Know where you are coming from, before you know where you are going
- Develop sense of pride – history, culture, art
- Incorporate culture into units
- Embedding within existing curriculum (inclusion)
- Language classes
- Spirituality/beliefs e.g. Seven Grandfathers
- Culturally based art projects
- Celebrate contributions of Aboriginal People
- Teaching the true history

“Help us to find what we are good at.”

Grade eight student

3) School Environment

- Natural surroundings – make use of trees, garden areas, natural light
- Circulating art exhibits
- Dedicated gathering space e.g. Lodge or house, decorations
- Invite speakers
- Aboriginal Counsellors
- Administration “on board”
- Aboriginal music
- Celebrating cultural activities

*“You can tell walking into a school if they are
Aboriginal conscious.”*

4) Community

Community Partners

- Input at Board level and classroom
- More parental involvement at Board level (elected positions, voice in funding)
- 3 year, 5 year, and 10 year planning
- Involve community as this unfolds
- Lasting teaching practices even when funding runs out

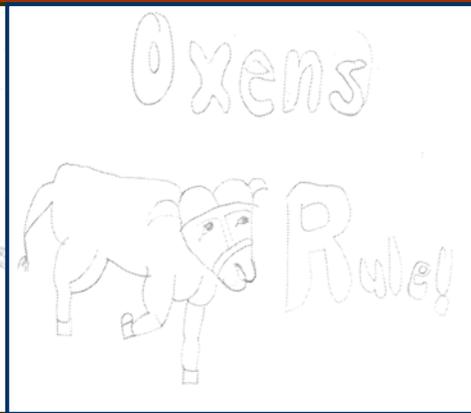
Teacher Education and Professional Development

- Need to have course on FNMI perspectives in university and in teacher education programs
- More teacher professional development

*“The teachers are where you affect change.”
Educational Leader*

The quotations on the right hand side are taken from “Spontaneous Laughter and Good Marks;” Creating Conditions for Success of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Students in the Simcoe County District School Board. Report prepared for the Urban Aboriginal Education Pilot Project, January 2009.

UAEPP



Student Perspectives

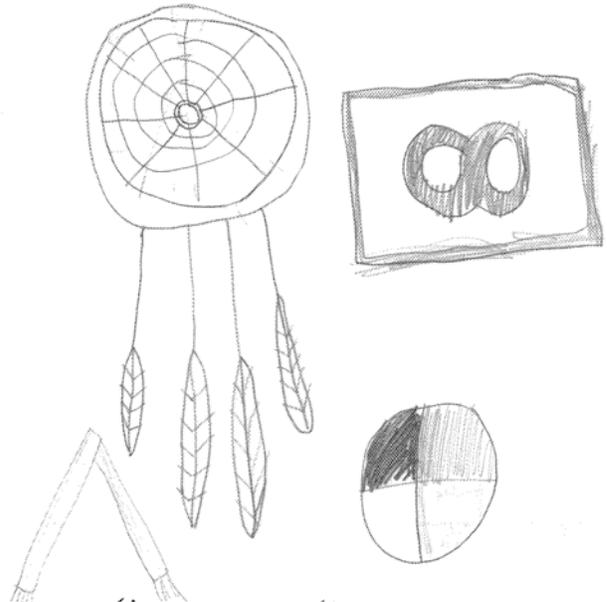
Urban Aboriginal Education Pilot Project

Executive Summary

August 2009

Executive Summary

The Urban Aboriginal Education Pilot Project (UAEPP), initiated in January, 2008, invited four 'site' schools in Barrie to embrace the infusion of Aboriginal content into regular school teaching while recognizing the unique learning needs of Aboriginal youth. The project included several cultural activities, whole-school awareness initiatives, the development of a physical space ("The Lodge") where students could become involved in activities rooted in Aboriginal culture, the presence of Child & Youth workers and Resource Teachers as supports for both staff and students. This document is a compilation of reflections of elementary students' response to the project. Their perspectives and contributions have helped to offer valuable insight into the benefits and challenges of the Urban Aboriginal Education Pilot Project (UAEPP). Many thanks are offered to these students for their time, thoughtfulness, and honesty.



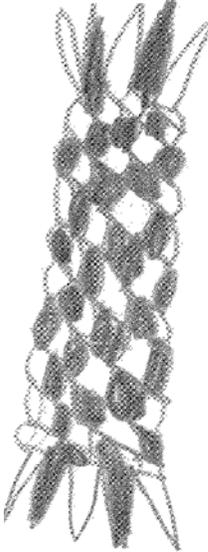
1. Objectives

The development of identity and agency of Aboriginal youth is a critical part of supporting their learning needs. The Policy Research Initiative (Horizons, 2008) notes that 'Spaces to congregate with peers, take a break from having to meet expectations, share experience and gather information are critical' (p.11) to open doors for Aboriginal youth. The UAEPP gathered information from the community about what would help foster greater cultural understanding in our schools. The community responded that there needed to be a welcome environment at schools as well as a separate area for Aboriginal cultural development, echoing the findings of the Policy Initiative. The UAEPP undertook to address these two concerns. The first concern was addressed by infusing Aboriginal culture into activities and classrooms while the second concern was addressed by establishing a "Lodge" in each site school.

At the end of the first year of the project, an interim evaluation was undertaken to determine some of the benefits and challenges of the UAEPP. This report is a summary of the results of that evaluation. The objectives of this report are to

determine whether the program made an impact on student experience and cultural growth.

2. Lodge Activities



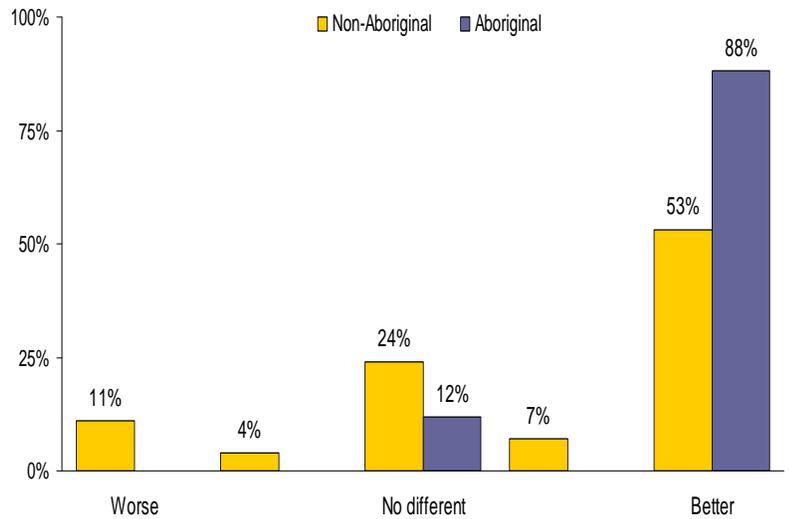
Students reported to have enjoyed the activities associated with the Lodges and to have learned about Aboriginal peoples. When asked what it was that they liked the most about the activities, grade 3 students enthusiastically wrote such comments as, *'Helping other people'* and *'I liked it because it was challenging'*.

Older students (grades 4 – 8) were asked what they learned in the activity and some responses included,

'How the art is amazing'
'I leard to Respect others and They will respect you back', 'I

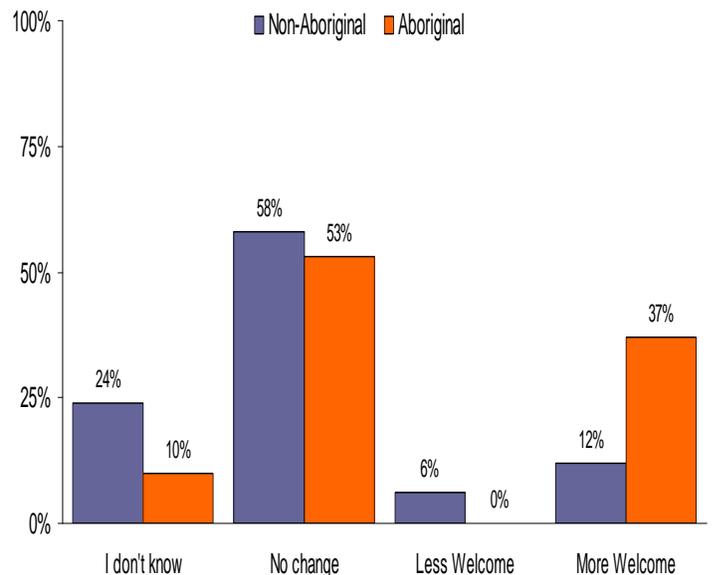
learned that all beliefs are important', and 'I learned how to say I like your shirt'.

Although half of the students indicated that doing the lodge activity made them feel 'better' about themselves, a clear majority of students who had self-identified as Aboriginal had this sentiment, as seen in the graph to the right.



3. Welcome Environment

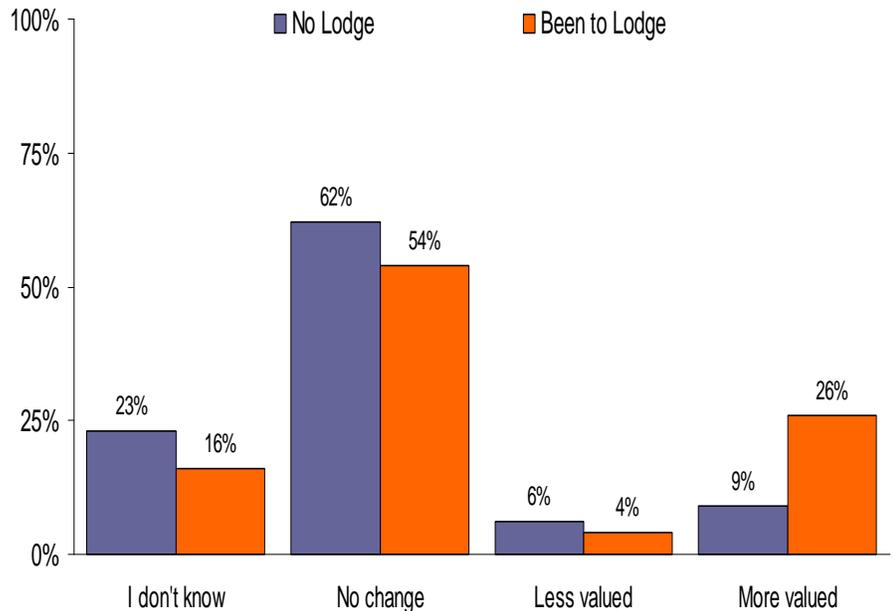
Students indicated that, in general, they felt 'pretty' or 'very' welcome at school. For grade 3's, 85% felt welcome, while for students in grades 4 though 8, 73% felt welcome. When asked if their feeling of being welcome had changed since the UAEPP, students answered differently, depending on whether they had been to their Lodge. As can be seen below, a quarter of those who had been to the Lodge felt more



welcome since the UAEPP while 9% of those who had not been to the lodge felt more welcome since the UAEPP. An important difference emerged between students who had self-identified as Aboriginal and those who had not. Over a third of Aboriginal students indicated that they felt more welcome since UAEPP while just over 10% of non-self-identified students indicated this change (right).

4. Feeling Valued

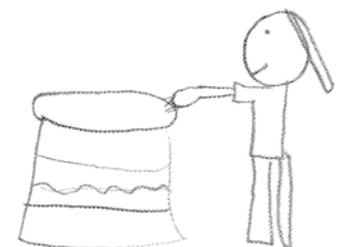
Fifty percent of students indicated that they felt 'pretty' or 'very' valued at school. When asked whether their feeling of being valued had changed as a result of the UAEPP, students who had been to the Lodge were more inclined to a positive response, as seen to the right.



5. Aboriginal Content

In general, younger grades (4 – 5) indicated that they learned about Aboriginal art if it were being taught in classes, while older grades indicated that they were learning about Aboriginal culture and history. Indeed, when asked in which classes students were learning about Aboriginal peoples, younger grades were more inclined to say 'Art' while older classes were more inclined to respond with 'Social Studies'.

One of the main goals of the program was to infuse Aboriginal content into classrooms such that students would increase their understanding of Aboriginal peoples. When students were asked whether they knew more about First Nation, Métis, Inuit in the project year than in the year before. 79% of grade 3 students indicated that they learned 'way more' or 'some more'. Of the older students who had indicated that they had participated in a Lodge activity, 72% noted that the activity had given them a better understanding of Aboriginal peoples. They reported to have learned about Art, Culture, History, Spirituality, Language, and Government.



Comfort with Material

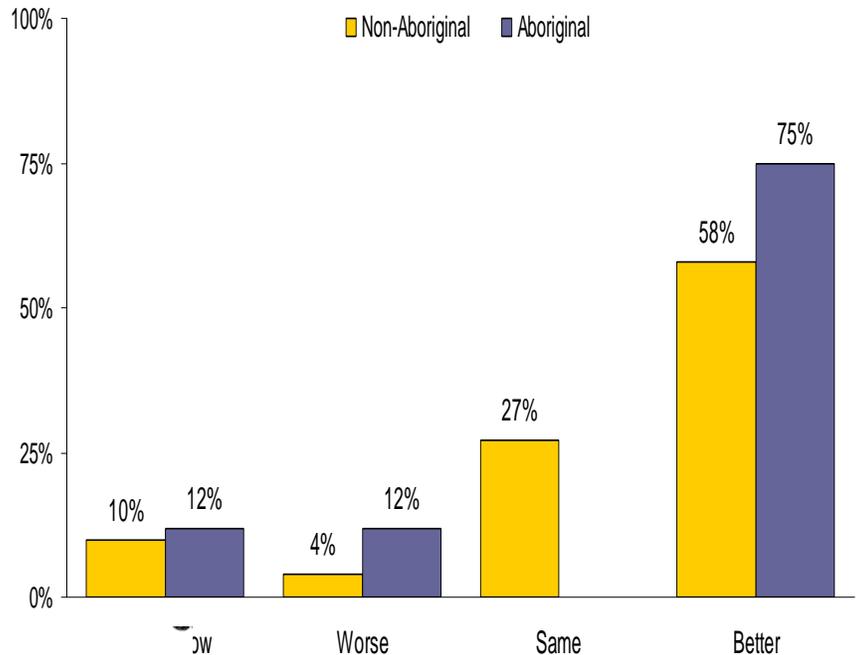
Students were asked how comfortable they were when Aboriginal content was discussed in class. 91% of grade 3 students indicated that they felt either 'pretty' or 'very' comfortable, while 61% of older students had the same responses. For older students, if they had visited the Lodge at their school, 81% noted that they were pretty or very comfortable learning about Aboriginal content, while 52% who had not been to the lodge had this level of comfort.

I thought of Aboriginal people around the camp fire.



6. Changes

Grade 3 students were asked if school was different because of the UAEPP. 61% of students indicated that school was better. When this question was analyzed by ancestry, proportionally more self-identified Aboriginal students indicated that school was better since the UAEPP than non-Aboriginal students. This difference is seen on the right.



The Schools Speak

This project builds on and complements Simcoe County District School Board's earlier report entitled "Spontaneous Laughter and Good Marks: Creating Conditions of Success of First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students in the SCDSB." While that study focused on the perspectives of First Nation and Métis students, parents and educational leaders, this report shifts focus to the people within the schools: teachers, principals and support staff as well as the staff of the Urban Aboriginal Education Pilot Project (UAEPP). Because this research was conducted after the first year of the project was underway, the results of this study also include something of a formative evaluation of the effects of the UAEPP during its first months. This report presents the results of the Board's continuing investigation into the factors influencing school success for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students. At the same time, it provides a set of baseline understandings of what the people most directly involved in schools have to tell us. The results of the work provide suggestions for all those involved in education in the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) concerning best practices in addressing questions of the student success. In addition to the practical dimensions of the report, those involved indicate a clear understanding of the need for sustained action to support Aboriginal student achievement. In keeping with the plans for a long term project to support Aboriginal student achievement, the report becomes one more support in the on-going and ever evolving challenges of building sound policies and practices to promote success for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students within the schools of the SCDSB.

Methodology

As with the Spontaneous Laughter report, a number of existing studies served as foundation for this work. Building on the community direction given in the Barrie/Midland/Orillia Final Report and others, the research continued honouring collaboration with stakeholders. Maori scholar, Professor Russell Bishop's seminal work, *Whakawhanaungatanga: Collaborative Research Stories* and Cree scholar, Verna St. Denis's community-based research provide examples of the approach taken which is consistent with that developed earlier with the community. In this case, the narratives focused specifically on seeking direction from teachers, administrators and support staff in schools that address the needed support for First Nations and Métis students in their studies.

In total we conducted face to face research conversations with approximately 30 people. The principal researcher interviewed administrators from the four schools as well as the school staff connected with the UAEPP. The research assistants, both doctoral students from York University and both of Aboriginal ancestry, interviewed or conducted circlework with teachers and support staff from the four project schools. All participants volunteered and school board protocol regarding interviews with human participants was strictly adhered to. In examining the existing transcripts, the researchers determined that saturation point had been

realised in that additional interviews were bringing in little new information. They also had interviewed and conducted circlework with all those who volunteered.

As it is important to assess First Nations, Métis and Inuit students' needs for success in schools in the particular context of the SCDSB, this research had the goal of moving beyond existing knowledge. Many educators are familiar with the history and current circumstances of Aboriginal students' school experiences. These often include the legacy of residential schools; intergenerational mistrust of schools; and deficit theorizing on the part of some school personnel. While some students have achieved considerable success, far too many are not as successful as they should be. The focus of the interviews was on aspects of schooling which are deemed to be working well in addition to those seen to be goals for the future in order to enhance First Nations, Métis and Inuit students' successes in schools.

The approach to the interviews and circlework was semi-structured and participant-led as far as possible. The assumption underlying this approach is a fundamental respect for the person's experiences and a commitment to seeking the insights arising from and available in the articulation of these experiences. A predetermined list of questions served as a guide to the exchanges and were made available to the participants prior to the start of the conversations. Researchers began with a broad question and continued their questioning by listening carefully to initial responses and then following up on specific areas raised by other study participants. Throughout the interview, the predetermined questions were available to all and used as a guide when necessary. Participant-led research such as this allows the opportunity for much deeper revelations of the issues at hand. At the same time, the researchers who are all experienced in working in contexts related to First Nations, Métis and/or Inuit education did not hesitate to probe any areas that came up in the conversations and that were seen to be useful to the question of student success or lack thereof.

Interviews and circlework conversations were tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. In this way, the people's own words inform the analysis. Researchers do not rely on memory or their own notes alone. This allows the inclusion of at least some of the words shared with the researchers as appropriate and revealing. Analysis begins with seeking themes which arose across interviews. Glaser and Strauss's constant comparative method served as a loose guide to the process. Other sources of data include researchers' notes, previous reports, the original proposal, photographs and some documents from the staff of the UAEPP. The final report lays out issues that arise in several places across the interviews as well as recommendations out of those themes. It also introduces some maverick elements that may be informative to the goals of the project. The principal researcher and research assistants worked together on all aspects of the research from preparing the questions, conducting the interviews and circlework groups, analyzing the transcripts and contributing to the final report.

Section 3 - Revised 2009-2010 Workplan

Month	Activity
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-post, interview and hire 3 CYWs and 1 Itinerant Resource Teacher • Set up Student Lodges • Planning with staff and pilot schools • Budget and Reporting • School visits – ongoing • CYWs in schools – ongoing Sept-June • PLC Schedule for pilot schools and 4 additional urban schools (Steele Street PS, Johnson Street PS, Terry Fox ES and Eastview SS) • Using aggregated elementary and secondary student achievement data from June 09 and EQAO data, develop student achievement plan with literacy and numeracy goals
October Binaakwe Giizis Student Lodge activities to reflect month	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLC, 5 teachers per school, once/month until May – focus on implementing best practices in classrooms with FNMI students – Action Research – and on cultural knowledge • PLC focus – Circlework/focus groups with teachers & Aboriginal Veteran's • Resourcing • Teacher and student pre-assessment surveys at 4 additional schools • Lunch and Learn Series at pilot schools • Start student activities in the lodges • Quill to Quill at Andrew Hunter and Cundles – “Falling Leaves Moon” • Curriculum development K-2 Writing Contract for Quill to Quill • Community Information sessions/open houses at pilot schools in lodges • Send draft curriculum resource documents for review • Conduct survey of parents whose children have accessed Child and Youth Workers • Planning for Elementary First Nation, Métis and Inuit Learning Resource Basket • Secondary Course Writing Projects: 3 English (Three Day Road, Bone Dance & Night Wanderer), Gr. 9&12 Geography and Law – based on expectations from the Teacher's Toolkit. • Chad Solomon (Rabbit and Bear Paws) • Three Sisters Teaching • Fall Feast • IT twin with Inuit school • SCDSB Staff handbook for review • Student logo contest and poster contest for National Aboriginal Day • Begin CYW team meetings with a focus on identifying best practices for supporting student well-being and responding to immediate student needs
November Baashkaakodin Giizis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present “Spontaneous Laughter and Good Marks” and “The Schools Speak” to Principals and Vice Principals • What the People Said – School Self Assessment Tool for “What the People Said, Creating a welcoming place where it's okay to be Aboriginal.” • Elementary Lunch/Afterschool Speaker Series for school staff • Wahta presentation by Shirley Hay • Inuit presentation in schools • PLC focus on Elder/Senator protocols and community resources available to students and families and Haudensaunee presentation from Wahta • All completed curriculum to sub-steering committee • Aboriginal Veterans

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Louis Riel Day
December Minado Giisoonhs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susan Carter – Inuit presentation to primary classes • Roll up of What the People Said School Assessment Tool • PLC focus – Elder/Senator protocols and community resources available to students and families – how to access • Layout for the Child and Youth Worker's Guide to Supporting First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students • Winter Feast
January Minado Giizis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PLC focus – Métis awareness and learning model • First Nation, Métis and Inuit Services in Barrie for SCDSB Students • Elder/Senator Protocol and Resource Directory for SCDSB schools • Language class at Andrew Hunter
February Makwa Giizis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin Sub-Steering Committee interviews for internal evaluation • PLC focus – Inuit guest speaker, learning model • Language class at Cundles • Submit secondary Course Writing Projects: 3 English (Three Day Road, Bone Dance & Night Wanderer), Gr. 9&12 Geography and Law for review by committee and Elders
March Onaabidin Giizis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring Feast • Arthur Shilling/Noval Morriseau Art studies.
April Popogami Giizis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate all elementary and secondary curriculum resources • UAEP staff interview for internal evaluation • Lodge focus – Mother Earth
May Nimebine Giizis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth to Youth • Send to printing • PLC focus – post assessment surveys and school staff interviews/focus groups • Garden at Cundles
June Waabigonii Giizis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 8 Celebration of First Nation, Métis and Inuit Cultures • Summer Feast • Introduce Elementary Literacy & Learning Basket • Introduce Secondary Curriculum Resource Binder • Introduce SCDSB Staff Handbook

Simcoe County District School Board UAEP Deliverables

1. Elementary Literacy & Learning Basket
2. Secondary Curriculum Resource Binder
3. SCDSB Staff Handbook
4. Navigating First Nation, Métis and Inuit Services in Barrie for SCDSB Students
5. Elder/Senator Protocol and Resource Directory for SCDSB schools
6. Child and Youth Worker's Guide to Supporting First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students

Section 4 - Approach to Internal Evaluation

Internal Evaluation for the Urban Aboriginal Education Pilot Project

The proposed internal evaluation of the Urban Aboriginal Education Pilot Project will focus on factors contributing to the success of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students in the four designated schools of the Simcoe County District School Board. The sources outlined below and others to be determined by UAEPP staff, advisory committee members and others involved will serve to inform the internal evaluation report as the culminating work of the pilot project. The research approaches will include designing, developing, administering and analyzing surveys for teachers and selected groups of students; designing and implementing interview and circlework (focus group) schedules; and gathering relevant information and materials from staff involved in the project. The latter will include existing foundational reports, those developed throughout the project and other primary sources of data such as various forms of staff records. All of these sources will be analyzed in relation to the original proposal and then synthesized into a final report.

In conjunction with the original proposal for the Urban Aboriginal Education Pilot Project, the design of the internal evaluation will draw on the results of the initial research conducted in the fall term of 2008 with First Nations and Métis parents, students and educational leaders. In that report, definitions of success, the classroom, the curriculum, the school environment and the broader community and family were seen as key dimensions influencing school success for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students. It is anticipated that these key factors will serve as a starting point for the evaluation. The final report will consist of a synthesis of all relevant materials cited above and will include explicit recommendations for a sustainable model to promote success for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students that arises from this one year project.

It is to be completed for September 2010

SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR THE REPORT

Generally the evidence that will inform the report will come from primary research in the form of surveys, interviews and circlework groups, project-related evidence in the form of documents as well as other materials including several existing context-specific reports. Pre-existing interview and circlework transcripts from the earlier phases of the project research components will be re-analyzed along with the new materials. Additional interviews will be conducted where deemed necessary for full reporting and evaluation.

- I. **Surveys** will be designed, administered and analyzed for the following groups:
 - A. Grade 3 students at additional schools

- B. Grade 4-8 students at additional schools
- C. Pre and Post Secondary student survey at Eastview SS
- D. Pre and post teacher survey for teachers at additional schools
- E. Pre and post surveys for Grade 3 students at Cundles Heights and Andrew Hunter
- F. Secondary student survey for Barrie North and Barrie Central students

II. Qualitative Investigation

- A. Interviews with SCDSB Administrators
- B. Interviews with Administrators of four schools
- C. Circlework focus groups/Interviews with teachers from four schools
- D. Interviews with UAEPP staff
- E. Interviews with other identified school staff
- F. Circlework/Interviews with UAEPP Sub-steering Committee
- G. Other relevant interviews to be determined by the Steering Committee and Project Staff.

III. Documentary Evidence (to be gathered and used in consultation with those involved)

- A. Aboriginal Principal's records
- B. Aboriginal Education Facilitator's records
- C. Staff records
 - 1. Attendance
 - 2. Events
 - 3. Issues
 - 4. Journals
 - 5. Others as identified by the principal, facilitator and other staff
- D. Other evidence such as student work; photographs of the Lodges, events, and video to complement the written report.

IV. Documentary Evidence (existing)

- A. "Spontaneous Laughter"
- B. Report from Phase 2 of the Research: Administrators, Teachers and UAEPP staff
- C. Project Proposal
- D. FNMI Framework
- E. Urban Aboriginal Task Force: Barrie/Midland Orillia Final Report
- F. Others as identified by the Steering Committee and Project Staff

