

**Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative
Beaufort Delta Region
Minister's and Community Education Forums
Inuvik
May 3-5, 2011**

The Minister's Forum – May 3-4, 2011

The Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) and the Beaufort Delta Education Council (BDEC) brought together about 80 educators, education and community leaders, elders, and youth to discuss ways to improve Aboriginal student achievement. While all communities in the Beaufort Delta were well represented, although leaders were not able to be present for the duration of the forum.

The Leaders' Words

Richard Nerysoo, President of the Gwich'in Tribal Council, stressed the importance of talking about education. "We need to work together in a good way for our children. Children see how we treat each other and model these behaviours. They see how we treat our educators and they model these relationships too."

Mr. Nerysoo said that education is about gaining knowledge. Knowledge is gained in many different ways. We have many role models we can look to for knowledge and our children are looking to these role models. We have leaders in BDEC and the DEAs as well as parents who all have roles to play to help our children learn. Parents are responsible for providing a safe environment and the support needed for children to learn. They are the key to the success of our children and to keeping our students in school. We need to get parents engaged in education.

Nellie Cournoyea, CEO/Chair of the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, said that students need to know that education is very important. We all struggle with the 'how to' of education but we know that parent involvement, making education relevant, meaningful, and inspiring to students and providing a bridge between cultures are part of educational successes. Leaders need to inspire families and children and encourage a passion for learning among students and their parents.

Robert C. McLeod, MLA Inuvik Twin Lakes, said that learning is life long. He admires the many role models in the region including the many home grown professionals. They are so encouraging. He also expressed his admiration for all the work that educators do. He said that the most important component in the success of our students is the parents. "If parents don't get involved in education, it is an uphill battle for the students." "There is a whole world of opportunity for our children. The NWT has the best postsecondary support in Canada. Our students are very fortunate. This is a message that needs to be out there."

Aboriginal Student Achievement (ASA) Priorities

The discussion paper proposed four priorities for eliminating the achievement gap between Aboriginal and other students.

1. Early Childhood and Childcare:

- Quality school-based early childhood and childcare that reflects the local community and culture and ensures competitive staff wages and benefits.

- Full day compulsory kindergarten for all five year olds and optional junior kindergarten for four year olds.
- Help for parents to learn essential parenting skills.
- Partnering with NWT Health and Social Services for early childhood assessments, interventions, and special needs supports.

2. Student and Family Support:

- Positive student-home-school relationships built through counselling, teacher orientations, interagency training and involvement, and community support.
- In-school, alternative, and workplace programs and Aurora College-school and community partnerships to help youth complete their education.
- Resources and programs for successful transitions and to overcome barriers to success such as homework, tutoring, and library programs.

3. Aboriginal Language Curriculum and Resource Development:

- An Aboriginal language curriculum and resources in place by 2013.
- Stronger Aurora College Aboriginal language instructors' program with relationships with the Teacher Education Program (TEP), Teaching and Learning Centres (TLCs), mentors, and community members.

4. Literacy:

- More coordination and collaboration, literacy resource centres, and expanded literacy initiatives to improve literacy skills.

Participants at the Beaufort-Delta Minister's Forum discussed these priorities.

1. Early Childhood and Childcare

Success in the early years

Beaufort-Delta youth attending the Minister's forum agreed that success in the early years depends on families:

- Spending quality time together, promoting social interaction and physical fitness, and reading to their children.
- Ensuring that children get good nutritious food and adequate rest/sleep.
- Providing a safe physical and emotional environment with consistent discipline and boundaries.
- Teaching the language, traditions and cultural ways.

Youth said that early childhood programs and service providers and the community should mirror a healthy family environment. Programs and services should be run by educated caregivers who earn proper wages.

Forum participants from Inuvik said that families need to provide a nurturing, stable, stimulating (no TV), stress free, safe, and abuse/violence free home in order for children to have successes in their early years. Young children need to have strong personal interaction with at least one adult so that strong bonds are developed. Families also need to read in the home as this has a significant impact on school readiness. Parents also need to be educated about brain/human development so they are more aware of their child's needs. Participants from Inuvik suggested that child development courses could be offered by the schools.

Inuvik participants said that successes in the early years would be improved with affordable or free childcare and more early childhood spaces. Currently, there is an extensive waiting list for childcare in Inuvik. "There should never be a waiting list for any child needing early childhood programming." This situation may be exacerbated with the opening of the new Inuvik school because there is uncertainty about where the early childhood program will be located. Participants suggested that governments need to value home care/stay at home parents (e.g. through tax credits or other financial rewards).

Forum participants from Inuvik expressed concerned about the lack of engagement of children from very needy families in early childhood programs. They said that despite having the Kindersteps program in all BDEC schools, it is still challenging to involve all four year olds and their families in these programs. They suggested promoting Kindersteps through the work place and asking employers to release employees for one-two hours per month as ways to increase participation.

Early childhood programs

Aklavik, Fort McPherson, and Tuktoyaktuk have Head Start, Kinderstart, and/or CPNP early childhood programs in their communities. These programs meet the needs of young children and their families mainly because they exist, albeit with sporadic and inadequate funding. Some programs have staff with early childhood certificates, actively engage in program planning, or follow a half day programming model in order to open space for more children to participate. Participants from these communities said that early childhood programs don't meet local needs as evidenced by:

- Limited spaces and long waiting lists,
- Lack of priority in the community to designating early childhood space,
- Lack of fluent Aboriginal language speakers working in early childhood programs,
- Underpaid and under trained staff that results in "a revolving door of workers,"
- Lack of linkages with K-12 programs, and
- Lack of parent involvement.

Participants said that early childhood is the most important time for child development but unlike other jurisdictions that require certification and an extensive orientation, early childhood staff in the NWT are not required and often don't have any college or university preparation or standardized training. Those with training, learn on their own through Aurora College's distance education program.

Forum participants from Tsiigehtchic and Sachs Harbour agreed that more training / professional development is needed for early childhood staff with Aboriginal Head Start programs. Participants from these small communities said that early childhood programs like Kinderstart need to better involve parents and strengthen connections with the community as a whole "so that all community members are positively and proactively involved in raising local children." Currently, resources are lacking to facilitate parents' learning about early childhood development, especially to understand all stages of a child's development, and skills to deal with FASD, nutrition, sleep, stress, second hand smoke, and TV. Participants from Tsiigehtchic and Sachs Harbour advised home-based / door to door / person to person approaches with trained personnel as a way to improve parent involvement in early childhood development. They also advised:

- More access to professional health assessments (e.g. speech, OT, ped., hearing, vision),
- More efforts to engage and inform parents about assessment results,
- More focus on postnatal care, and
- Addressing early childhood development within the school health curriculum. "The health curriculum should teach students about childhood development, developmental delays, impacts of having babies too early including the expenses of having a family and how life changes with baby / family responsibilities."

There is also a need to take ECE's presentation on early childhood development to the communities .

Development delay or disability

Forum participants from Paulatuk and Ulukhaktok asked that data on developmental delay or disability in the NWT be more definitive and better sourced. To prevent delay or disability among young children, they said that more awareness and partnerships are needed to ensure that parents understand their responsibilities as parents. They said that youth need sex/family education classes in school beginning at the age of 10. Opportunities for parents to talk about child development are also needed. Parents and tots need learning experiences outside the school that help parents identify and prevent problems. Families need to know about brain development and the critical period between zero and three years of age. Participants from Paulatuk and Ulukhaktok said that learning about early childhood should be the focus of pre and postnatal care programming.

Beaufort-Delta youth attending the forum said that healthy pregnancies and nurturing are needed to prevent delay or disability. Youth said that pregnant women need to talk to their babies when they are in the womb. They need to continue talking, singing, laughing, counting, reading and playing with the baby when he/she is born. They said that most parents or caregivers aren't aware of how important early childcare is and that "there's more to it than just sending a child to Head Start or Kindergarten." Parents need to be educated about parenting basics, healthy foods/diet, dental health (e.g. "Little Teeth are a Big Deal" poster campaign), a healthy environment (smoke, drug and alcohol free homes), discipline (manners, listening, working with others, respect) and daily routines (e.g. bedtime so children get enough sleep).

Mandatory full day kindergarten for all five year olds

Participants from Tsiigehtchic, Sachs Harbour, and Inuvik agreed with the idea of mandatory full day kindergarten for all five year olds. They said that parents would be happy not to have to pay childcare fees for their five year olds. Currently almost all five year olds in Inuvik are enrolled in kindergarten.

While there is support for mandatory kindergarten, forum participants said that it is important to ensure that:

- Kindergarten methodologies are appropriate and that child development is the focus (e.g. play and culture-based, use the home language, and include social interaction and music).
- Aboriginal Head Start programs are continued and part of the graduation process into kindergarten.
- Parents have a voice in identifying their child's readiness for Grade 1.

Participants said that by making kindergarten mandatory, questions arise about the consequences for parents who do not send their children to kindergarten, and funding for the program. Currently operations funding for most programs is based on attendance.

Participants agreed that there is a need for close school-home communications to reinforce the importance of kindergarten. "We are currently not really speaking to parents about the importance of their child going to school everyday or the absolute benefit of brain and health development in the early years." They suggested that a "softer approach or a different way" is needed to engage parents in a more meaningful

way, especially parents who have little or no contact with the school and/or early childhood program.

Optional NWT- wide structured early childhood program for all four year olds in every community at no cost to parents

Forum participants agreed that every community should have an optional Head Start or preschool program for four year olds. These programs should:

- Prepare young children for kindergarten.
- Teach the Aboriginal language.
- Balance language and cultural teaching with other teachings.
- Accommodate all working and student mothers.
- Have an appropriate facility and infrastructure.
- Be adequately resourced with trained staff and funding for bilingual bonuses.

Participants said that early childhood educators should be encouraged to take the two-year TEP program. They also said that creating a “junior kindergarten program alone is not enough.” Parent involvement and understanding of child development are needed in all communities.

Locating an optional NWT-wide structured early childhood program for four year olds in a community school

Participants at the Beaufort-Delta forum identified pros and cons of locating a program for four year olds in the school. They said that schools are very structured and are not physically designed for young children (e.g. bathrooms are not close to the classroom). On the other hand, if the program is in the school, it would facilitate transitions to kindergarten and potentially “make the school a community school.” Others suggested that locating the program in the school might improve opportunities to ensure that early childhood programs are led by qualified, certified instructors who receive ongoing quality training and professional development.

2. Student and Family Support

Barriers and challenges preventing school successes

Beaufort-Delta youth attending the forum identified barriers to school success. In order of priority, the main barriers are:

- Bullying.
- Self-esteem issues/insecurities.
- Lack of sleep.
- Lack of parent/family support.
- Learning disabilities.
- Individual issues.

- Family violence.
- Drugs or alcohol.
- Laziness.
- Family issues including loss of loved ones.

Other barriers or challenges identified by youth were video games, boredom, poor nutrition, negative peer pressure, poor relationships with teachers, and attitudes of being “too cool for school.”

The youth brainstormed possible solutions to overcome barriers to school success. Solutions included having someone to talk to, surrounding themselves with positive people, and setting priorities. The youth also considered whether paying students to come to school would make a difference. They weren’t sure or didn’t believe that payment would make a difference. They agreed that paying people for good grades might help some students but not all.

Support needed from the home, school, and community

Beaufort-Delta educators attending the forum said that families, schools, and communities need to have high expectations of youth and share responsibility for their well being. Each of the three environments needs to have access to counsellors who are trusted to provide clinical support and guidance to individuals and families. The community and school need to find ways to promote literacy and improve library access. They also must do a better job of following-up on criminal records checks and navigating the ‘pardon’ process in order to facilitate the involvement of local people in the school (e.g. risk management and insurance forms are very complicated). In Inuvik, there is a need to support successful transitions for students from small communities.

Educators said that the family and community should enforce curfews. Homes need to offer a healthy family environment (e.g. nutritious food, quiet place for homework/ sleep, basic needs) and take responsibility for getting students to school on time everyday. The community needs to:

- Consider the impact of local events on student attendance;
- Encourage businesses not to allow students in their establishments during school hours; and
- Build partnerships with schools and families to support postsecondary transitions.

Educators said that schools need to address postsecondary transitional issues (e.g. financial, travel, links to home, traditional foods, mentoring/ guidance); have flexibility when dealing with transient families (e.g. finding alternative way for students in a magnet communities to complete courses online or in modules); and provide follow-up support for attendance (e.g. calls home). Literacy leaders suggested adding the Aurora College Developmental Studies/ ALBE program to K-12 programming as a preparation/ transition program to get students ready for postsecondary education (e.g. a required program rather than an upgrading option).

Helping families to help their children be successful in school

Elders and leaders attending the Beaufort-Delta forum said that families help to nurture a mindset of personal and academic achievement among their children. The ability to cultivate an attitude of achievement comes in part from parents who:

- Understand their rights and responsibilities as parents,
- Support and trust the education system,
- Ask questions of the system (for accountability), and
- Promote the importance of education.

Financial transparency is needed so that all stakeholders know how funding is allocated and used, especially for language, culture, and counselling. Families, communities, and schools need to work together to ensure that funding is in place for programs that attract, engage, and develop students (e.g. Aboriginal language and the YELS program). Families and communities also need to work with schools to ensure delivery methods that motivate students and promote learning.

Elders and leaders said that families need to heal from the effects of residential and federal day schools and address intergenerational issues. They need family support teams of counsellors and therapists who are well supported in the community “so these positions don’t get lost due to funding cuts.” Educators also need to be aware of the history of the north. Elders and parents need to see that schools are safe places to be, get involved in education, and be willing mentors especially in language classes. Parents need to be role models, live a healthy lifestyle, and get involved in the school as volunteers. Students need to have the confidence to ask questions about their education. They said that children need to understand that they are worthy of success. “Love and trust helps them get to that place where they feel worthy.”

Parents/grandparents participating in the forum said that they need to be better educated about the education system and support it. Everyone should be aware that education successes are the result of team work (e.g. parents, teachers, students, and siblings working together). Parents need open communications and to take the initiative to go to the school to talk to teachers and participate in award ceremonies and assemblies. There should be incentives for attending school and consequences for not (e.g. not getting to use the recreation facilities). At home, parents need to reinforce structure and routine (e.g. bedtime, curfew) and provide a healthy, ‘safe home’ without gambling, violence, or alcohol. Many grandparents don’t want to be parents again but they need to teach their children to be parents. Inadequate, overcrowded housing, lack of childcare programs, lack of leadership involvement in education, insufficient Aboriginal language educators, and lack of authentic culture-based education are also factors that need to be addressed to help children be successful at school.

3. Aboriginal Language Curriculum and Resource Development

Aboriginal language fluency and strong cultural knowledge

To be fluent in their Aboriginal language and strong in their culture, Beaufort-Delta youth said that their families need to encourage elders to teach traditional ways and language. Youth need to do traditional sewing, games, and land-based activities. At school, they said that there should be classes in sewing, language, history, and northern studies, and more time spent on culture and field trips on the land for hunting. In the community, youth said that it is important to promote Aboriginal languages through posters, classes, and dance, and to organize more trips, games, and drum dancing.

Unilingual participants attending the forum said that to be fluent in their Aboriginal language and strong in the culture, students need to be immersed in the language in all environments. They need exposure and opportunities to use the language through conversation, storytelling, books, radio, and self teaching resources such as Rosetta Stone and the Labrador computer based learning system. Families need to speak the language at home everyday. Communities need to show respect, celebrate, and promote the language in public meetings and other government activities. In the school, fluent Aboriginal language teachers supported by mentors and elders, an Aboriginal language curriculum and activities (e.g. 'word of the day'), and on the land experiences are needed. "We need to follow and model best practices that work and optimize kids' interests in technology." Unilingual participants said that the importance of the language should be emphasized, shame and fear dissipated, and pride instilled. "We need to realize that our elders and fluent speakers will not always be with us. We need to learn the language now! We need to teach everyone the Aboriginal language, not just the students. If we lose the language, we lose our culture and identity."

People who understand two languages but speak only one said that the education system needs to value and teach the Gwich'in and Inuvialuktun languages from K-12. Teachers should be encouraged to learn and use the languages. "Kids are little antennas. When they see their teachers learning the languages of the community they will know that it is important." The languages should be everywhere in the schools,

- In greetings and announcements.
- Through elders paid to be Aboriginal language mentors and role models.
- By using Aboriginal names in class to promote fun and connections.
- By using the language in drum dancing and singing (which have been revived recently).

Language learning should be extended throughout the community to parents and local organizations such as the youth centre and groups that host family / intergenerational activities. "It needs to be 'cool' so everyone wants to speak it!" Forum participants also said that there should be a department at Aurora College dedicated to culture and language that can support adults learning the language and using it in the home and community. Participants said that personal / social interaction rather than use of phraselators are the best way to learn the language.

Ways the regular school system can strengthen Aboriginal languages

Unilingual forum participants said that the regular school system could help strengthen the Aboriginal languages by:

- Having access to funding for full-time language teachers and elders in the school,
- Pursuing language immersion programming from K-12 or modeling programs after the “intensive French” program,
- More community or staff mentorships (e.g. fluent staff teaching non-fluent staff),
- Immersion courses for teachers,
- Making phraselators available in school programs,
- More in-depth language focused on-the-land programs, and
- Language classes for parents/adults to develop skills and confidence.

They also said that community leaders need to recognize that language is important and should be kept in the forefront of community life and politics.

Bilingual people attending the forum stated that “it is everyone’s responsibility to promote, respect, and value the language.” Aboriginal languages should be a higher priority of the school curriculum and taught in all classrooms from preschool to Grade 12. Immersion programs should be available for interested students. Immersion language camps should be established to make best use of Aboriginal language instructor skills and provide intensive training.

Schools need to work with local elders to engage them in teaching the language and culture. Further, “language cannot just be taught in the school as it is not the natural language learning environment. Learning the language from the elders is much more natural.” Mentorships between elders and youth and elders’ advisory groups could be created to support language teaching. Elders could advise the school and community organizations, and participate in activities to regularly expose children to the language and culture. Community organizations could make efforts to use the Aboriginal language in all activities.

Making the NWT K-12 school program more culturally relevant

Unilingual participants said that to make NWT K-12 school programs more culturally relevant, a fundamental shift in perspective and curriculum are needed. They said that it is time to consider developing an NWT curriculum that can be supplemented by the existing Alberta curriculum. There is also a need to update *Dene Kede* and *Inuqatigiit* materials and to teach teachers how to properly infuse *Dene Kede* and *Inuqatigiit* into course materials and into the classroom. They also suggested expanding on-the-land learning programs, bringing the languages to Aurora College programs, and supporting more community capacity building initiatives.

Bilingual participants said that the K-12 school program could be more culturally relevant if language becomes the central focus. To support the school, the community must use the language, make it visible, and evident everywhere “because the reality is that English is everywhere and efforts must be made to make the Aboriginal language the dominant language.” “The ‘time for talk’ is finished. It is time for action now and Aboriginal language must be the main priority. This needs to happen now!”

Bilingual participants said that everyone – schools, elders, Aboriginal organizations, and the community in general – shares the responsibility for heightening the profile and

use of Aboriginal languages. Partnerships are needed to discharge these responsibilities. They said that partnerships need to be strengthened among elders including retired Aboriginal language instructors/teachers, TLCs, school classrooms and early childhood programs. Further, efforts should be made to address issues associated with writing the language because many elders may not be familiar with new Roman orthography or electronic tools. Also, parents, the school, and the community need to work together to ensure that all K-12 students/classes spend time on the land each year (e.g. a month) where they can be immersed in the language. In the school, the current hours of Aboriginal language instruction should be increased.

Bilingual participants at the forum suggested that all Aboriginal language instructors in the schools should be paired with an elder who can assist them all day/everyday with language instruction and development. They also said that all Aboriginal language teachers must be aware of and able to access and use existing Aboriginal language resources. New resources should be developed in multi-media formats, put on a website/internet, and promoted as a way to teach and engage youth in language development and cultural knowledge.

Making the NWT K-12 school system better for all NWT Aboriginal students

Beaufort-Delta youth attending the forum described a K-12 school system that works for all NWT Aboriginal students. It would have its own school camp that promotes traditional ways (e.g. tanning hides, sewing, mukluk making, working with fur, hunting, trapping and fishing, traditional cooking dryfish and drymeat, dog mushing, on the land outings, snow shoeing, traditional dances). The school would have students spending more time with the elders having tea, storytelling, and going out on the land. There would be more cultural classes. They also envision older students guiding younger students, end of the week activities, more courses such as biology, geology, and CTS, a strong school spirit, positive attitudes, and no bullying.

Unilingual participants at the forum said that the NWT K-12 school system would be better for all NWT Aboriginal students without multi-grade classrooms and 'social passing'. They said that the school system might be improved by moving away from a grade system to a more outcomes-based approach or a grouping system (e.g. early primary or family groupings). They said that "grade levels are stigmatizing."

Forum participants who understand two languages but speak only one said that the school system would be improved for all Aboriginal students with a cultural-based K-12 curriculum (e.g. geese migration rather than apple trees, and land claims/people of the region rather than black history month). They said that the curriculum should promote gathering and documenting ancestral and local history, and draw on resources from the community and region including ICRC resources, story tapes, and transcripts. Textbooks should be regionally relevant for example, based on elders' journals/stories and the breadth of elders' literacy skills. They also said that fluency in an Aboriginal language should be a requirement for Grade 12 graduation.

Forum participants were asked if it is realistic to have a K-12 Aboriginal languages curriculum by 2013. Inuvialuit and Gwich'in language specialists agreed that it is achievable by:

- Building on the existing K-Grade 5 curriculum,
- Having people work on it full time, and
- Ensuring that communities and schools are committed to the languages.

"If there is a will, there is a way."

4. Literacy

Developing strong literacy skills

Beaufort-Delta youth said that to develop strong literacy skills, they need "lots more than reading and writing." They need the involvement of parents, elders, and community members, passing on knowledge, respecting traditions and northern people, and team work. They need to be involved so that "literacy is yesterday's problem."

For students to develop strong literacy skills, literacy leaders said that families need to begin reading to children at birth. Early childhood programs and schools should work with parents to model literacy skills. Educators need to teach study skills, and use more hands-on activities due to more tactile learning styles in the region. They need to continue literacy circles and the Four Blocks balanced literacy program and use social media to promote literacy skills. They should make efforts to address cyber bullying. Literacy leaders said that communities need to:

- Provide more books for families,
- Ensure that there is a staffed library with computers in every community,
- Seek funding to support programs for non-literate parents,
- Offer community reading clubs,
- Ensure that community health agencies catch developmental delays early (e.g. through health assessments using Nipissing charts).

There should be literacy partnerships among the home, school and community. In each of these environments, reading/literacy kits should be available to support reading. Standardized/ simplified funding should be accessible for literacy technology (e.g. Kindle e-readers) and training for parents so they are able to support a balance of traditional and modern text and technology.

Forum participants who work on Aboriginal language literacy said that families need to understand the meaning of 'literacy' and ensure that students feel supported. They said that literacy skills can be developed in nurturing environments that encourage success, through partnerships, and elder involvement. "Students need to reconnect with the elders and learn how to listen." They also said that it is important to use what the students know to build language and literacy skills and to recognize that youth "know more than we give them credit for." Students need to understand the 'sounds' of the language (not just A, B, C). There needs to be a willingness to spend time and money to

develop Aboriginal language and literacy skills among students. They also said that it is important to remove time limits to allow students to learn at their own pace.

Forum participants who work on family literacy said that strong literacy skills can be developed when families have literacy resources (e.g. books, computer, and pictures), encourage conversation, and have a positive attitude about learning. Families need to promote reading/ knowing the weather, the land, the trails, and other elements of day to day life. The community and school can help to develop literacy skills by expanding opportunities to demonstrate literacy in and after school. They also said that a basic shift in community support for literacy is required. This means that businesses and other community groups need to show support for the importance of school attendance, broadly promote the importance of education, and elevate the profile of early childhood programs.

Barriers and challenges preventing children from becoming capable readers by Grade 3

Forum participants who work on school based literacy said that there are many barriers and challenges preventing children from becoming capable readers by Grade 3. Unaddressed disabilities/ development delays are a significant concern given that schools often lack the resources to deal with these challenges. The reading abilities of students especially those with unaddressed development delay or disability, can be exacerbated by:

- Disruptions in instruction due to poor/ sporadic attendance,
- Lack of appropriate level or culturally relevant materials especially for emerging/ beginning readers,
- Lack of school-based literacy coaches in all schools,
- Lack of community-based literacy coaches who can work with parents in the home, and
- Multi-grade classrooms in which teachers may not be able to meet all student's needs.

People who work on school-based literacy also said that because children are avid users of movies and video games their learning does not go that "one step deeper" to comprehension (i.e. they are not being taught to question or engage). They also said that low literacy levels among parents, an attitude that succeeding is "not cool", and bullying (based on generations of lateral violence) also impact on children becoming capable readers.

Forum participants who work in family literacy said that absenteeism has the greatest impact on students becoming capable readers by Grade 3. Other factors impacting on a child's reading abilities include lack of awareness of the importance of reading or reading being a low priority in the home and overuse of electronic equipment. They said that reading abilities may not be nurtured in schools where teachers lack strategies or skills to teach multi-levels/ meet the different needs of students or do not have access to support systems to help students who have reading challenges.

Becoming a capable reader by Grade 3

People who work on school based literacy suggested several actions to help students become capable readers by Grade 3, including:

- Ensuring that early childhood programs are available to, and used by all children.
- Early identification and interventions for children who are struggling to read.
- More supports for parents to encourage reading in the home (“whatever it takes to get the parents on board”).
- Improving access to libraries and book bag programs.
- Incorporating both languages in reading programs.
- More culturally-relevant reading materials.

They also suggested literacy counsellors who could go into the home to help parents develop their own literacy without fear or embarrassment.

At the school level, people who work on school based literacy said that professional development in reading instruction is crucial so that educators can teach beginning readings, model fluent reading, and learn comprehension strategies “so students have deeper interaction with the story and make the connections.” They also said that it is important that all students follow the BDEC curriculum and a common assessment. Student’s reading skills could also be enhanced through music, buddy-reading relationships (older students modeling and reading with younger ones), and alternative areas in the school where students can read quietly and comfortably. A community-school library, community-based programming such as Moms ‘n Tots, Dads ‘n Sons, family literacy programs, and modelling by community leaders are also good ways to broaden interest in literacy and literacy skills.

To help children become capable readers, people who are involved in family literacy said that more investment is needed for school support staff and materials/resources including Aboriginal staff and resources, and libraries. They suggested building an integrated infrastructure of early learning, K-12 and adult literacy programs. Education programs and workshops are needed to encourage and support parents with low literacy skills and to help them teach literacy in the home. Through better communications with the home, schools could help parents to engage in more reading and other literacy activities such as storytelling, music, dance, and labelling. They said that signage/labelling is “key to developing vocabulary.”

Improving literacy development in early childhood and K-12 school programs

Youth participating in the forum said that literacy and learning are important to everyone. “Everyone should be devoted to education and to the language and culture.” They said that Aboriginal people are always willing to learn, be there for each other, and get involved in the community. The youth suggested that by building on the strengths of Aboriginal people, literacy development could be improved in early childhood and school programs. The strengths of Aboriginal people could be used to offer more fun and interesting activities that encourage learning at different levels, stimulate ideas, and encourage students to ‘think outside the box’. They also suggested that more youth facilities, teamwork, social programs/workers, volunteers, student-

elder buddies for music and drumming, and more artistic literacy such as drama and storytelling, would help to improve the literacy of all students.

Participants working on Aboriginal language literacy said that improving students' literacy skills depends on having well trained educators who understand the curriculum and have relevant resources. They said that in the absence of an Aboriginal language curriculum, TLCs need to be well funded to develop resources so that teachers are not left to 'wing it'. These participants agreed that students need to learn to read and write their own Aboriginal language as well as English in order to have strong literacy skills. To support Aboriginal language development, language groups should have interactive web sites (e.g. to hear sounds) and use podcasts that are of interest to students. These participants identified the need for more elder involvement, community/school libraries, and teachers dedicated and skilled at teaching K-3, 4-6, and 7-9 rather than K-9.

People involved in Aboriginal language literacy said that the Beaufort-Delta is fortunate to have good resources (e.g. smart boards) and successes in changing the ways that students are taught. But more change is needed. Changes required include:

- Dedicating space for language instruction to show its importance (e.g. an area in the library).
- Encouraging daily literacy activities (instead of just literacy week).
- Having an Aboriginal language award equivalent to traditional math and science awards.
- Involving Aurora College in more meaningful ways through for instance, establishing a language, literacy and culture department.
- Considering the introduction of a language law.
- Encouraging the community to "READ! READ! READ!"

Literacy leaders said that schools need to ensure solid reading skills by Grade 3. To achieve this, they agreed that schools should have less content specific outcomes in K-3 to concentrate on literacy and numeracy. They suggested engaging more northern and local authors and storytellers as ways to achieve literacy outcomes. All schools should have literacy coaches who stay current on the latest research and model/embed it in classroom instruction. They also recommended school-based intervention specialists and support staff (e.g. telelanguage staff, speech and language therapists, counsellors, and special needs support staff/programs) and early assessment/ intervention and assistance for parents to understand the importance of early diagnosis. Literacy leaders also said that parents need to be encouraged to send their children to early childhood programs. Parents need to understand the connection between early childhood development and academic achievement in K-12.

Forum participants working on family literacy said that parents need information and skills to understand how to promote literacy and limit distractions (TV/technology/games). They also said that the most skilled educators should be delivering programs in early childhood and K-3. All educators should have access to training and professional development opportunities. They also recommended early assessment and intervention during the preschool years and efforts to acknowledge and value/credit cultural skills

such as hunting, dancing, singing, trapping, and sewing. Further, attendance in cultural activities should 'count' at school.

People working on family literacy believe that schools and communities can work together to increase literacy skills through improving use of technology and promoting travel for cultural exchanges, skills competitions, science fairs, sports, historic fairs, music, debating, trade and career fairs, and research and presentations. The school can bring the community into the school and the community can bring the school into the community to reinforce the understanding that literacy and learning happens everywhere. They also suggested internships for Grade 12 students to promote career exploration and options for the future (e.g. college, trades, university, workforce, and parenting).

Is the Discussion Paper on the Right Track?

Ray Ruben, Mayor of Paulatuk, said that the discussion paper is on the right track. It is encouraging that the people attending the forum and the Minister are committed to this direction. **Gladys Edwards** from Aklavik agreed. She said that "we are here for the students." **Alex Ilsiak**, from Aklavik said that the discussion paper 'hits the nail on the head.' As past chair and member of BDEC, he said that the decision to support full day kindergarten was made some time ago but it has always been difficult to get support for it. Aboriginal language curriculum is very important. He said that he needs his language and is working on it because he feels incomplete without it. To be able to use the language, is to feel like a whole person and he wants to feel like a whole person. Literacy is critical but we shouldn't assume that this is only the school's job.

John Stuart Jr. from Tuktoyaktuk, was encouraged to see everyone gathered together to work on education. He asked everyone to keep working on the ASA priorities. **Liz Wright** from Fort McPherson, said that the ASA Plan is going in the right direction. The forum is positive and the ideas shared are very helpful. She encouraged everyone to make sure that the plan does not end up on the shelf but is implemented as the Minister envisions.

Denise Kurszewski, with BDEC in Inuvik, said that the ASA Preliminary Plan is on the right track but there is a need to get to the real issues impacting student achievement. "We need to define success. We need to confront critical issues such as colonization, historical traumas, and the intergenerational affects of trauma on students. We need to consider if absenteeism is a result of these broader social and historical problems." She said that there is a need to have northern evidence to truly understand these issues rather than data that comes from elsewhere, for example on early childhood. "We need to know about our own regions."

Sandra Elanik from Inuvik, agreed that it is important that decisions be made from the ground up so that they are appropriate to the community first, then the region and then the NWT.

Rosemarie Kirby from Inuvik, agreed that the ASA discussion paper is on the right track and by working together, we will get there.

Priscilla Haogak from Sachs Harbour, said that who would have thought that we would be trying to celebrate our cultures 30 years later (after trying to wipe them out). “Times are changing and it is encouraging that so many people care and are willing to work together to support the students.”

Beaufort-Delta Community Forum – May 5, 2011

Aboriginal Achievement in the Beaufort -Delta

Roy Cole, BDEC’s Superintendent, spoke about the region’s student achievement initiative. BDEC has held public forums in Tuktoyaktuk, Aklavik, and Fort McPherson and met with principals to set up home visits to talk about good attenders, poor attenders, and erratic attenders. He visited homes with community-school counsellors. In the 27 homes visited, there were no negative responses. The ‘kitchen table’ chats were very positive and productive. Three households have also called him to invite him back to their home. Every home is keen to support the education of their children but many are struggling with education and what it means. Parents need to know that they have the power to help. They can have expectations of their children, a curfew, healthy diets, spend good quality family time with their children, and make sure their children have time to do their homework.

Schools are trying to communicate with the home but these efforts are not working well. Schools need to do things differently. The school needs to be active in the community and the home. The forums are a good beginning but there is a need to continue community conversations about education.

Mr. Cole showed a Power Point on rethinking leadership. The presentation drew metaphors from several readings to communicate messages of humour, knowing oneself, having a vision, being a risk taker, engendering trust, positively handling change, having passion and commitment, making decisions, building relationships, and communicating including being a good listener.

Messages from the Keynote Speakers

To set the tone for community plans that support Aboriginal student achievement, community forum participants heard from **Alex Illasiak**, a long time education leader, and **Sarah Jerome**, NWT Language Commissioner, educator and long-time language activist.

Mr. Illasiak went to residential school in Aklavik for eight years between 1942-1950. In 1948/49, the then principal noticed that “some students were very smart. These students and the principal knew that if they went to high school they would make their parents very proud.” The principal asked his parents if he could go to high school. His mother said ‘take him because if he goes out in the bush he will freeze to death.’ Because there was no high school in the NWT, he went by boat (a month long trip) from

Aklavik to Hay River. He worked on the boat and was paid \$150 which he used for a train ticket to travel across Canada. He went to the residential school in Sault St. Marie and spent four years there. He was one of two students from Aklavik. Angus McPherson was the other student. Only three times during his time at school, he got 98% rather than 100%. He did well at school because he didn't have to worry about having a teenager's social life. He had no friends and no hobbies. He just focused on his schooling. Mr. Illasiak wanted to go to Ryerson but didn't have enough money so he and Angus went to Calgary to take a radio operator program. He started working with DOT in September 1955 as a radio operator.

In 1998, Mr. Illasiak became the chair of the Aklavik DEA. He spoke about the problems that the Moose Kerr School in Aklavik had in terms of truancy, violence, and poor attitudes about education. The principal came to the elders who talked about Aboriginal values, all the good values, human traits and Aboriginal traits that have sustained Aboriginal people. The principal asked the elders for advice on how to address the issues in the school and the idea was hatched to offer culture-based education. Moose Kerr had had a similar idea in the 1950s. The principal took all the positive human values and had everyone in the school memorize these values. Piece by piece and project by project, these values were put into action. Over the years, truancy has been reduced and apathy has been replaced by positive attitudes. Positive attitudes are key but it is very difficult to shift attitudes.

Mr. Illasiak referred to BDEC's mandate and how it is being implemented. BDEC needs help to surmount learning difficulties that many students have. Teachers are teachers, they are not learning psychologists. Referring to the Aboriginal Student Achievement Initiative, Mr. Illasiak said that Aboriginal people have lost their voice and pride. He explained that it bothers him today that he does not have the skills an Inuk should have. Without his language, he does not feel like a whole person. "We need to reclaim our Aboriginal uniqueness and reclaim our unique perspectives. The residential schools were an attempt to colonize Aboriginal students, a negative attempt to wipe out Aboriginal culture, beliefs, and language. We are in the process of reversing these trends. We can be optimistic that we can make a difference given that the top people in ECE are Aboriginal people. We need to be conscious that we are working for the health and well-being of our children now and six generations from now. We can be hopeful that future generations will make it right."

Sarah Jerome said that when she was young, she badly wanted to go to school. She went to residential school in Aklavik but it felt like being in a little box. She said that the anger started the very first day of residential school. She felt abandoned. As a young child, she enjoyed stories (as morals for learning) and developed strong literacy skills but residential school took all of that away. Twelve years in residential school made her ashamed of her family and culture. Elders don't often talk about residential school. It is just too painful. Abandonment is a huge issue (e.g. when parents came and then left and students were taken away). In 1973, she went back to the family camp and back to an immersion situation. She asked her mother how she had managed when all of her children were taken away. Her response was that it really bothered her but she had realized that she had had no choice.

Sarah Jerome said that after 12 years of residential school she was like a robot with no feelings, no voice, and no self-esteem. For a long-time white people represented

residential school but she knew that if she wanted to become a teacher that she would have to work with everyone. She understands that the people they call 'skid-row Indians' never were able to deal with these issues. They don't know how to get help or to deal with their pain. While residential schools are part of the past, it is something that has to be dealt with today. Colonization is alive and well. Others are still dictating timelines for others to heal. For example, the common experience payments get cut off in September and any abuse claims are cut off next September (2012).

Compared to family life where her parents were nurturing people, she found residential school the opposite. When she went to school in 1968, she was put in class 9C. This sent the message to everyone in the class that they were the dumb ones. From that time, she was determined to succeed. She went back to school at the age of 40 even though she had four little kids to raise.

The GNWT wanted to see 50% Aboriginal teachers in the NWT but there are many people who won't accept Aboriginal educators. Mrs. Jerome said that the TEP program opened the doors for many people. TEP grads had to prove themselves but as individuals, "many of us always put ourselves down." Aboriginal people who took the program and others who walk in both worlds are very smart people. Over the years she has come to understand that "I'm okay because God doesn't make junk."

Her vision is for all educators in the north to find out where our children are coming from and for students to be able to see themselves in the curriculum and the activities that engage them in learning. The Youth Entry Level Skills (YELS) is an example of a successful program. She wants the community to be more involved because it takes a community to raise a child. "We all need to be in this together."

Beaufort-Delta Community Plans

The eight communities in the Beaufort-Delta caucused to identify main education issues; efforts that are working for the success of Aboriginal students; issues that need to be addressed; and actions to support Aboriginal student achievement. Many participants commented on the quality of discussion, and the need to continue these conversations with leadership and community members. Community plans follow.

Beaufort-Delta Summary Report

The Sachs Harbour Plan for Supporting Student Success

Main Issues	Working Now	Need to be Addressed	What?	How?	Who & When?
<p>-Students going away for high school; primary care givers unable to provide support; and new lifestyle/ exposure to sometimes harmful things.</p> <p>-Requirement for Aboriginal people to adapt very quickly to a totally different way of life that doesn't always acknowledge strengths, knowledge, cultural values, and ways of knowing and communicating. "There are differences in how we communicate in English versus Inuvialuktun."</p> <p>-Students coming to school tired and uncertainty about how to reach parents to make sure their children are rested and get to school on time.</p> <p>-Poor housing causing teachers to leave. The community is continuously adapting to new teachers.</p>	<p>Attendance is increasing due to the success of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the breakfast program. -house to house pickup for students. -teachers' positive attitude and caring. -supportive parents who value education and impact others. -strong support networks that help some students in high school in Inuvik succeed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Supportive safe environment, 'parenting', and academic support for high school students in Inuvik. -To honour the rights of Sachs Harbour students, base decisions on students' best interests rather than the funding available. -Understanding the human costs of dropping out of school to encourage students to stay in school. -Equality for Sachs Harbour and increased attention from BDEC leaders (e.g. Sachs needs the same opportunities as bigger communities). -A residence for teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create a support network for local students going to high school in Inuvik. <p>-Reduce the incidence of tired students.</p> <p>Deal with teachers' housing issues by establishing a teachers' residence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use televideo equipment to connect parents-students. -Build a partnership between Sachs students and the DEA and visit/reconnect with students when in Inuvik. -Build relationships between parents and home boarding parents (e.g. parent visits and school-parent-Inuvik parent-child meetings). -In the long-term, seek BDEC funding to establish a Sachs student home in Inuvik staffed by house parents from Sachs. -Promote understanding of the impact of tired students. -Invite parents to express their thoughts/feelings about attendance/sleep and what they help they need. -Bring elders and youth committees together to organize community-based solutions. -Invite parents to an early morning activity/breakfast and opportunities to shadow students during the school day. -Post tidbits/facts on student fatigue on a community Facebook page. -At community activity nights (e.g. volleyball and drum dancing), send positive messages about getting to sleep early and to school on time. -Learn more about the issues, realities, and possible solutions. -Call a meeting of community leaders. -Network with the NWT Housing Corp, RCMP, and other communities to gather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -DEA and community members with students -DEA with community members and students. -DEA with the Mayor and other community leaders.

Beaufort-Delta Summary Report

			<p>-Increase awareness among other communities and leaders about Sachs Harbour's needs (e.g. " have our voices heard").</p>	<p>information/ideas.</p> <p>-Continue to participate and share in meetings like this ASA forum. -Showcase Sachs Harbour's skills, talents, and strengths. -Write letters to leaders. -Advocate to politicians for equal funding and resources.</p>	<p>-DEA with the Mayor</p>
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Beaufort-Delta Summary Report

			<p>-Systematically identify and address the various types of bullying.</p> <p>-Bring back the school-community counsellor position (this funding was cut in 2000). There was an effective relationship with the social worker and the school-community counsellor but now there is a gap. "The school-community counsellor was not just an eight to five school position."</p>	<p>-Investigate and follow-up on the subtle, 'hidden' bullying, and realize that all bullying (in the community, after school, in the home) filters into the school system.</p> <p>-Report bullying.</p> <p>-Tell the truth about the bullying to parents, counsellors and the RCMP.</p> <p>-Begin to talk openly about bullying to get the message across to parents that the issue of bullies/bullying can no longer be denied.</p> <p>-Educate parents and the community about the effects of bullying.</p> <p>-Bring in counsellors to directly address bullying.</p> <p>-Invite the parents to the school (if the students want this and the parents have time).</p>	<p>-DEA and community leaders and members. "Don't put a timeline on when bullying should be reported/dealt with because victims should always have the right to talk about it when they are ready."</p> <p>-School and DEA</p>
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The Paulatuk Plan for Supporting Student Success

Main Issues	Working Now	Need to be Addressed	What?	How?	Who & When?
<p>-Absenteeism/attendance. Attendance is declining in K-1 and Grade 10.</p> <p>-Parental involvement in education system (related in large part to alcohol use).</p> <p>-Remote location (e.g. three days of travel for a one day doctor's appointment).</p> <p>-A community focused lifestyle which is still somewhat nomadic and doesn't revolve around</p>	<p>-The want to achieve due to parental engagement.</p> <p>-Student Council.</p> <p>-Breakfast program (full year program for all grades).</p> <p>-Year round bus service that gets students to school on time that has a primary focus on K-6 with a 2nd lap that picks up older kids.</p> <p>-Continuity of staff. Staff efforts ensure that students come first.</p> <p>-Teachers attend community</p>	<p>-Attendance is a main priority and needs continued focus.</p> <p>-Counsellors are also a high priority.</p> <p>-Parents need to be educated about education (perhaps through teacher home visits and information about how parents can help their children).</p> <p>-Getting parents into the school and increasing their comfort level (perhaps through</p>	<p>-Parental recognition for efforts made to help student achievement (e.g. awards).</p> <p>-Make our school culturally and community oriented.</p>	<p>-Annual school recognition day/ceremony.</p> <p>-Build on school pride (e.g. house teams) that involves families and community.</p> <p>-Emphasize 'ownership' and 'pride' in what students do (e.g. timeline activity) and the legacy they leave.</p> <p>-Meld classroom and on the land activities/education.</p>	<p>-School and DEA.</p> <p>-School and DEA.</p>

Beaufort-Delta Summary Report

<p>education (e.g. the May geese hunt is a necessity of life rather than a choice).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Too few partnerships. -DEA visibility. -Poor attendance in the Head Start Program. -Negative impacts of social passing to students' self esteem (because they are not prepared for subsequent grades). -Boring/uninteresting programs. -Lack of staff commitment. Staff come for money and adventure. -Difficult housing conditions (rent, furnishings, room mates/ living arrangements). -High costs associated with promoting activities for students including consideration of weather and few funding options. -Choices for students rather than continuing the residential school system of 'no choice'. -Internet/ on-line learning is limited due to budgets. -Lack of career, education and personal counselling services. 	<p>events and have connections with the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -New / older teachers three day orientation. -Sports increases participation. -The school/ students fundraise to promote and increase the variety of activities. There is enthusiastic and high participation from all walks of life. -Activities/ programs that bring resource people into the community. -House teams, year book, and school clothing increase student pride. Attendance has increased from 30% to 90% in grades 11 and 12. -Attendance policy. -Modularization of subjects (e.g. language arts and mathematics). 	<p>volunteerism that is casual and does not require commitment).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of EAs in classrooms (that might be addressed if parents came with the child and had positive school experiences). -Elders in the school. -Involving 'grads' as motivators. -Traditional activities are a necessity and a reality and students return to school after time on the land. Planning for/ around these activities is needed to encourage participation and continuation of studies. -Teacher/ staff housing. -PD days (e.g. scheduled around traditional activities so students aren't losing more time out of class). -Internet connectivity. -Strategies to hold onto good teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Continuously build student-teacher relationships. -Expose young people to other people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Student-community project in history/ northern studies courses to develop a community time line to visually represent Paulatuk's history and stimulate parent interest. -Involve elders in the school to assist with programming. -Recognize elders through oral histories, visual aids, and artefacts (which should be in the community and accessible to students). -Include traditional music, dance, and activities in the classroom (as background noise to increase student exposure) and begin each day with a traditional song. -Have cultural activities that hook students and encourage their attendance at school (e.g. drum dancing instruction/ demonstrations). -Bring archived stories alive (e.g. use taped stories in the classroom). -Have more language use and orientations to traditions (e.g. morning message in the language and 'monthly' sentences). -Teacher involvement in the community through volunteering, home visits, community-teacher and teacher-community sharing, and community members working with new teachers to help them feel part of the community. -Travel opportunities. -Encouraging students to share their heritage and culture. -Encourage volunteer activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -School, DEA and community members. -School, DEA and community members.
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Beaufort-Delta Summary Report

The Aklavik Plan for Supporting Student Success

Main Issues	Working Now	Need to be Addressed	What?	How?	Who & When?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Grade 7-12 attendance, which worsens in senior high. -Grade level achievement. -Teaching many levels in one classroom. -Dynamic of older peer pressure in split grades. -Influence of older people on high school students (20 year old peers). -Inadequate or lack of timely acknowledgement of positive peer pressure. Negative peer pressure is swiftly addressed by the education system. -Early start time that is difficult for teens. -Sustaining interest in school for the whole year. -Access to traditional/ nutritional food. Pride prevents some students from admitting to hunger. -Lack of parent input (e.g. to identify home/student issues). -Uncertain home/family support, skills, and understanding about how to support their children and their education. -Uncertain relationships and communications between parents and teachers. Few positive parent-teacher relationships or relationships established before a child has difficulty in school. -Lack of guidance counselling to support student choices. -Too few partnerships between Aurora College, Student Employment Officers, and others to support postsecondary decisions. -Inadequate understanding of the importance of early childhood. -Silence about the power/hierarchy of families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -School doors are open and teachers are ready to teach. -Students with an intrinsic desire to learn. -After school sports program for K-3, 4-6, and 7-12, run by five high school students provides "a great cooperative experience." -Head Start program. -Preschool program/school partnership for orientation. -Meet and greet new teachers (elders adopt a teacher). -Fall and spring orientations and on the land activities that include teachers. -Grandparent day (classes adopt a grandparent). -Aboriginal language programs Monday-Thursday and a Friday cultural activity. -On the land program four times each year in partnership with local HTC/RRC/RWED. -K-Grade 6 leadership program with partners. -School ambassadors (Grades 7-9). -High school reps on community boards. -Leadership Resiliency Program (LRP) from Grade 7-12 (new). -Elders luncheons. -After school literacy program at the library that includes parents' sessions. -Elders advisory group (social/cultural foundation for school delivery and implementation of the growth plan). -10 years of the 'no junk food' policy. -October open house. -September parent's forum at the opening assembly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Equality of services among communities. -Guidelines communicated for social passing/inclusive schooling. -Separate rather than split K-3 classes. -Guidance counsellors. -Adjustments to school schedule. -More on the land components (take class learning outside the school). -Stronger partnerships for student learning. -Mandatory junior kindergarten program for four year olds. -Alternative schooling for small communities. -Senior high orientation/preparation program for postsecondary. -Celebrate/recognize parent involvement for whatever role parent's play (in class, school wide, functions) with a closing BBQ/feast/luncheon for the school year. -Parent survey to collect suggestions and concerns. -Initiate a parent advisory group. -Local resources/ interagency team effort to support student success. -More in-depth, purposeful and foundational culture in our school. -Teachers who recognize they are important role models and model positive attitudes 24/7. Their personal life choices are very visible. -School programming to include skill development in the trades as well as academics. The mobile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Promote interagency cooperation. -Preparation for post-secondary education. -Deal with past histories - Continue the 'adopt a teacher program'. -Encourage more literacy activities. -Investigate Grade 7-12 attendance trends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -BDEC/DEA forum that replicates the ASA forum in the community. -Work with the Hamlet to partner with the Income Support Worker to encourage clients (parents/ students) to volunteer at the school. -Senior student leadership mentorships. -Community meetings to discuss the past and learn from peoples' stories and define success (e.g. as walking successfully in both academic and cultural worlds, and readiness to take a variety of jobs). -Community feasts at the school and the Sittichinli Complex and traditional activities (dancing and drumming). -Elders or other community members mentor new teachers and the teacher reciprocates/ shares his/her stories. -On the land orientation activities so teachers learn the community history. -Start Big Buddies for reading. -Encourage BDEC and the GNWT to spend any excess funding on books for incentives, libraries, and acquiring cultural books and tapes. -Strengthen agency partnerships (e.g. with Health and Social Services) do home visits, do presentations/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -BDEC, DEA and School beginning in August 2011. -School. -DEA and other organizations. -School and DEA with elders and other community members. -DEA. -School and BDEC

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of visible community leaders to model and be involved in education. -Students who may be spoiled by getting things too easily. -Too few prayers in the school to acknowledge Aboriginal spirituality. -Lack of acknowledgement of the residential school legacy and its impact on attendance. -Lack of student awareness of employment opportunities. "We must help them see what comes after Grade 12. We need to create a desire to work and choose careers." -Limited tutoring supports that use games with young children and academics for older children. -Equality issues associated with the delivery of the Income Support program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -DEA/Principal orientation for Grade 7-12. -Safe School arrival program. -Grade 12-Teacher mentorship program. 	<p>trades unit should be permanent.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Continue the Safe School Arrival Program. -Continue the beginning of the school year assembly for parents and students. -Continue the after school exercise activities for teens focusing on incentives/ prizes/having fun. -Encourage young parents to actively participate in education. 	<p>newsletters/ radio messages about the importance of attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Educate students about attendance (using attendance graphs and class visits). -Honour parents who regularly send their children to school. -Hold an interagency meeting (ACC elders group, Moose Kerr School elders group, Justice, RCMP, H&SS) to educate families and students and coordinate a community strategy to address attendance (hosted by the school), sleep (hosted by H&SS), and early childhood (hosted by ECE) <p>-The school calls absent students every day.</p> <p>-Find ways to promote accountability and commitment to the community plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -School. -School. -School. -DEA and School.
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The Fort McPherson Plan for Supporting Student Success

Main Issues	Working Now	Need to be Addressed	What?	How?	Who & When?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Social issues such as gambling and drinking. -Developing partnerships with the Band and others. -Making better use of the resources we have. -Limited number of teachers/ resources for high school courses. -Staff turnover and yearly orientation/mandatory cultural orientation. -Visibility and participation of staff in local activities (e.g. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Positive attitudes about how children can learn. -Long term teachers. -On the land programs. -Youth Entry Level Skills Program (YELS). -Extracurricular activities. -Leadership Resiliency Program (LRT). -Sports teams/travelling. -Student Council. -Student agendas and backpacks inspire parental involvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Parenting programs/ workshops. -Radio messages about the importance of education. -Community campaigns featuring successes/ profiling role models. -Tutors. -Arts and cultural programs to give youth a sense of identity, place, and belonging. -Life skills. -Land based healing programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Inform parents, community members and leadership about the ASA Plan. -Continue to develop community specific actions in all four ASA priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Use local radio programs to inform the community about the ASA Plan. -Have agencies come into the school and have meetings in the school. -Advocate for more investment in curriculum including more hands on programs/ activities, grow new programs and classes (e.g. backpacks, agendas, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -DEA members and other people at the ASA forum will take all these ideas back to the community.

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<p>wanting to participate versus feeling obliged to participate). -Blaming parents and the community. -Acknowledging the positive and celebrating successes. -Poorly educated young parents. -Lack of support for the culture-based curriculum and lack of funding to support culture-based education training. -Parental participation in culture-based education training/ experiences. -Lack of daily home routines. -Grandparents having to take on parenting responsibilities. -Overcrowding in homes. -Social passing. -Technology gaps between the generations. -Effects of residential schools (e.g. trust issues in the system). -Lack of teacher housing.</p>	<p>-Option to have in-home parent-teacher visits. -School program information on the local radio station. -Financial incentive for above average students. -Parents/leaders telling their story in schools (successes and regrets). -Restitution program.</p>	<p>-Poor attitudes about school at a young age. -Funding and staff to avoid social passing. -Parent involvement in high school course selection. -Regular teacher, parent, student meetings regarding high school programs. -Career awareness/ training at a younger age. -A career counsellor. -Intergenerational meetings involving students to talk about residential school experiences and perspectives. -Band /Hamlet Council members to show interest/become involved. -Mandatory Head Start/ preschool program attendance and the importance of early childhood explained to parents. -Mandatory on the land teacher orientation (like the Tliche). -Teacher assistance program to learn about the curriculum. -Hiring support staff from the community.</p>	<p>-Inform community leadership/ parents about the importance of early childhood development.</p> <p>-Encourage school successes.</p>	<p>filmography /digital media) and culture-based programs. -Advocate for more local level staff at the TLC's. -Advocate for more school-based Gwich'in language lessons/classes and less sewing, more elders in the school, and a space for elders in the school. -Seek information about children with learning disabilities and update infrastructure (e.g. ramps, bathrooms). -Have parenting as a CTS course. -Implement mandatory kindergarten. -Revisit the attendance policy to make exceptions for students who are practicing their culture such as hunting and harvesting traditional foods. -Praise and celebrate students' success.</p> <p>-Advocate for higher qualifications for early childhood workers and on-the-job training. -Push for a bus for Head Start and kindergarten students.</p> <p>-Have after school study groups for Grades 10 -12. -Inform parents so they know their power to make the system accountable and have expectations of students to attend school. -Provide parent/ teacher home visits and other options. -Advocate for a career guidance counsellor. -Support parents to take responsibility with their children for their career path and achieving good grades. -Improve DEA and school staff communications. -Continue to involve students</p>	
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			<p>-Promote literacy.</p> <p>-Address the issue of social passing.</p>	<p>in education decision making, conferences and forums. -Provide easy to understand information about courses selection and postsecondary education choices starting in Grade 7, and reviewing in Grade 9. -Develop a scholarship for students in honour of (a) community leaders and encourage more students to take advantage of scholarships.</p> <p>-Lobby for a community library and a literacy coach. -Invite the NWT Literacy Council to talk about literacy and do a book making workshop. -Share responsibilities among agencies for writing a proposal on literacy.</p> <p>-Deal with such issues as attendance, early identification of students with learning delay, and initiatives to reintegrate expelled students. -Continue to use the restitution program.</p>	
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The Tsiigehtchic Plan for Supporting Student Success

Main Issues	Working Now	Need to be Addressed	What?	How?	Who & When?
<p>-Lack of parental involvement due to a generational and negative attitude about education as an 'institution' and the notion that school is 'not good'.</p> <p>-Separation issues (elders and youth, culture, and family) related to historical wrongs (e.g. colonization and residential schools).</p> <p>-Disconnect of teaching from elders and parents with youth and children.</p> <p>-Community apathy about school achievement (e.g. social promotion). "I don't have to do anything to pass..."</p> <p>-Attendance: parents not waking up or encouraging their children to go to school.</p>	<p>-Attendance based on minutes.</p> <p>-Increased number of key families involved (e.g. phoning school, more information to the school, letting the school know about community events).</p> <p>-Parent-teacher interviews (more flexible, more time) and creative ways to get parents to interviews.</p> <p>-Emphasis on culture-based education and home language continuation/ learning in school.</p> <p>-Children practicing language skills with elders.</p> <p>-Monthly celebrations of students' success.</p> <p>- Monthly meetings and more cooperation of DEA and school.</p> <p>-School wide strategic plan (three year rotation of CBE Dene laws in all core subject areas including integrating Dene laws into LA and Math curriculum.</p> <p>-'Kids in the kitchen' (elders and children).</p> <p>-Breakfast increases attendance.</p> <p>-Relationships built through new teacher cultural orientation (e.g. teachers buddy with cultural experts).</p> <p>-K-3 BDEC literacy initiative that emphasizes literacy learning (although it needs more 'teacher power at this level' and more books and literacy support).</p>	<p>-How do we get people to feel safe in educational settings?</p> <p>- More support and funding to work with <i>Dene Kede</i>.</p> <p>-Door to door conversations/ meetings, and visuals. to explain education system to families including the difference between school leaving certificate versus graduation. "Parents need to see the credit journey and encourage their kids to work for it."</p> <p>-Need to take a non-judgemental, non-threatening approach to teaching.</p> <p>-Support to help families heal from the intergenerational effects of residential schools, understand the danger of past misunderstandings/ feuds, and unlearn the status quo of passing on prejudices (e.g. raised on the land versus raised in town and the respect associated with it).</p> <p>-Increase/ improve support for technology in small schools.</p> <p>The Tsiigehtchic DEA report for April 2011 also raised six specific issues related to the ASA.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Get information from ECE on the residential school to use in health lessons to help people understand the history, generational effects, and impacts on families today. 2. Charts to present to parents and DEA showing days missed and how absenteeism affects the student's success from K-12. 3. Review comprehension levels and develop programs to make the connections between 	<p>-Build trust between the community and school.</p> <p>2. Language and cultural based programming.</p> <p>3. Establish a safe, welcoming outdoor classroom/ camp.</p> <p>4. Follow a Gwich'in 'calendar' of seasonal activities.</p> <p>5. Call for systemic change to encourage and support cultural resource people.</p>	<p>-Intergenerational healing to build trust and relationships, hear peoples' voices, help students understand history/ culture and identity, celebrate in the community and school, and learn ways to express love and caring.</p> <p>- Retain staff for the following year.</p> <p>-Celebrate 'Dene laws' school-wide.</p> <p>-Offer food programs.</p> <p>-Celebrate events in the school and community.</p> <p>-Change communications from negative to positive.</p> <p>-Share information on parent's educational rights and responsibilities.</p> <p>-Advocate for a full-time Aboriginal language and culture teacher.</p> <p>-Implement <i>Dene Kede</i> as the guiding curriculum.</p> <p>-Work toward a culture-based school.</p> <p>-Recognize elders as the lead teachers for taking positive steps towards teaching Gwich'in values.</p> <p>-Involve elders, community members and students.</p> <p>-Seek community funding partnerships for the camp.</p> <p>-Establish a Gwich'in seasonal calendar.</p> <p>-Advocate to BDEC for ways to support cultural resource people.</p>	<p>-DEA, school staff and leadership are role models and need to support capacity building initiatives and help to secure funding for all initiatives.</p> <p>-Ongoing timeframe for all initiatives.</p>

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		<p>attendance and achievement. Do away with the social passing because it has been in effect for the last 40 years or more.</p> <p>4. Develop strategies and identify funding sources to get extracurricular and other programs into the school.</p> <p>5. Develop whole community strategies to address bullying and its effects including building bridges to start healing connections in the school, homes, and community. The most important steps come from the homes.</p> <p>6. Deal with impacts of boarding home by building bridges between the school and parents involved through better communications.</p>		
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The Inuvik Plan for Supporting Student Success

Main Issues	Working Now	Need to be Addressed	What?	How?	Who & When?
<p>-Poor or sporadic attendance.</p> <p>-Lack of home / parent support for child's learning.</p> <p>-Homes suffering from family violence, divorce / separation / substance abuse, and gambling.</p> <p>-Impact of parents or grandparents affected by the residential school (estimated to affect 80% of students working with the school counsellor).</p> <p>-Multiple discipline issues in classrooms.</p> <p>-Poor economy / little work and lack of home routines among unemployed parents.</p> <p>-Students hungry in the morning and after lunch, coming to school tired / not getting enough sleep.</p> <p>-Lack proper early morning, lunch and after school care (lack of community services for families) so some children are at school from 7:45am to 5:00 pm).</p> <p>-Students in after school tutoring</p>	<p>-More public participation.</p> <p>-Schools actively trying to address the deep rooted social issues of students / families / community through more emphasis and integration of services to tackle social issues underlying educational issues.</p> <p>-Good teachers.</p> <p>-School counselling programs (e.g. SAMS has a community school counsellor and a therapist / counsellor) to support academic achievement).</p> <p>-Physical activity during break times using treadmills and fitness centre.</p> <p>-Fun school events, social events, talent shows, school home teams, lunch games / activities, school movie nights, house teams program, student leadership council, student expeditions (field trips and on</p>	<p>-A properly funded integrated services approach in both schools to help students / families to ensure multiple services are available at all times regardless of student enrolment or formula funding.</p> <p>-Parenting programs.</p> <p>-A <u>funded librarian</u>. The library needs to be fully staffed and properly resourced.</p> <p>-More focus and effort on "borderline" students to keep them in school.</p> <p>-Much more focus and a plan to get parents involved with their child's education and into the school in meaningful ways.</p> <p>-School food programs.</p> <p>-Balancing the "catch 22" situation of smaller class size with providing other needed services.</p> <p>-Review and revision of inclusive schooling funding to</p>	<p>-Create a school(s) ASA Committee to look at review and address areas of concern including: parent engagement, specific needs of Aboriginal students, tutoring services, counselling and support services, career and postsecondary awareness, local services that have relevant programs and funds, outreach programming to get into the homes, seeking youth opinions / voices, involving youth / adult role models, school-work opportunities to expose students to different careers, and potential community partnerships (e.g. with Aboriginal organizations, industry / businesses, and Aurora College).</p>	<p>- Get feedback / ideas from all staff.</p> <p>-Send information out to the community and call the first meeting.</p> <p>-Review the budget for both SAMS and SHSS.</p> <p>-Conduct a public meeting to discuss the budget and look at areas where others can help to enhance programs, particularly Aboriginal culture and language programming.</p> <p>-Provide information and to open up community dialogue on school priorities, the community education plan, and public / parent engagement.</p> <p>-Meet with youth to hear their suggestions and ideas for improvement.</p> <p>- Identify services / programs to better meet student needs (e.g. counselling, tutoring).</p>	<p>-School principals.</p> <p>-Establish ASA Committees and have meetings at both schools before June 2011.</p> <p>-Potential members of the: <i>SAMS ASA Committee</i> are: Aboriginal Head Start, Early Childhood staff, Children's First Society, Health and Social Services, reps from Aboriginal organizations, elders, BDEC staff responsible for inclusive schooling and literacy, Family Counselling, Department of Justice Family and Youth program.</p> <p>-Potential members of the: <i>SHSS ASA Committee</i> are: Chamber of Commerce,</p>

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<p>program as a childcare rather for tutoring.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Students unaware /not exposed to university /postsecondary options (but senior secondary students wish to tour various colleges and universities but costs are high / prohibitive). -Negative perceptions of the quality of Aurora College programs (e.g. thinking they are sub-standard). -Gap between students able to access Aboriginal Head Start and /or early childhood programs, especially for children of families who can't afford childcare. -Students disengaged and using iPods in class. -Lack of sufficient counselling services in both schools. -Services to support families /students who are just beginning to deal with the residential school trauma. -Transition support for home boarding students. -Issues associated with students moving back and forth between BDEC schools and communities. 	<p>the land, culturally appropriate programs including those outside the school), BDEC events (soccer, tournaments, dances).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sports and extracurricular activities rewarding those students with good attendance /achievement. -Tutoring programs. -Recognition of student achievement in assemblies. -Exposure to the College when Inuvik high school students used the campus during school renovations. -Up to three program support teachers at SAMS assisting teachers with special needs students. -Professional learning committees for teachers. -Targeting students who require extra help /support. -Tutoring programs at both schools. 	<p>have the necessary support to help all students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increased public /parent communication about how inclusive schooling funding is allocated. -Discussions about the Inuvik super school (e.g. will outlying communities want to send their children to Inuvik?). -Addressing needs of students who have left school early including parent involvement. -Engaging students (perhaps through more physical breaks or rearranging the school timetable /schedule). -Addressing the concept and culture of "parental volunteerism." -Getting employer support /buy-in for parents to attend /volunteer at school activities (e.g. casual leave). -Understanding why regular attenders are still not achieving academically and are not engaged in learning (e.g. what is /is not happening in our classrooms that prevent students from learning and being engaged?). -Understanding declining engagement among students in Grade 6. -Examining research on gender for middle /junior high students. -Regular Aboriginal leader engagement in the community and schools so they are aware of what is happening, the successes and the issues / problems. -Clear explanation of inclusive schooling to address the "social passing" issue. -More positive messages about Aurora College programs and promoting them to students in Inuvik. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen Grades 8-12 career awareness. - Review the school attendance policy of the schools /BDEC. -Make early childhood a priority. -Work to connect /coordinate all early childhood services / programs and funds (e.g. prenatal, ECE early childhood, Aboriginal Head Start, Healthy Families). - Take the opportunity to start 'fresh' created by the new school to make it a positive community based and culturally relevant place to gather for local events and host various events (e.g. have all name plates and signs done in three languages, and pictures of graduates to honour students). 	<p>private sector /industry, Aurora College, Aboriginal Parent Advisory Group, reps from Aboriginal organizations, youth reps from Leadership Group, elders, Family Counselling, Department of Justice Family and Youth program</p>
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Participants

1. Maureen Pokiak	DEA	Tuktoyaktuk
2. John Stuart Jr.	Community Corp.	Tuktoyaktuk
3. Agnes Cudmore	BDECI	Tuktoyaktuk
4. Hayden Stuart	youth	Tuktoyaktuk
5. Effie Gruben	youth	Tuktoyaktuk
6. Anna May McLeod	DEA	Tsiigehtchic
7. Shelia Cardinal Blake	DEA	Tsiigehtchic
8. Chevaughn Blake	youth	Tsiigehtchic
9. Cynthia Wagner	BDEC	Tsiigehtchic
10. Gilbert Thrasher Sr.	BDEC/Inuvialuit Region Corp.	Paulatuk
11. Ray Ruben	Hamlet	Paulatuk
12. Lily Ann Green	DEA	Paulatuk
13. Jessica Schmidt	BDEC	Paulatuk
14. Dakota Reidford	youth	Paulatuk
15. Bessie Lennie	youth	Paulatuk
16. Mary Kudlak	DEA	Ulukhaktok
17. Sadie Joss	DEA	Ulukhaktok
18. Joshua Oliktoak	Hamlet	Ulukhaktok
19. Charles Bryant	BDEC	Ulukhaktok
20. Rheanne Kanayok	youth	Ulukhaktok
21. Brandon Okheena	youth	Ulukhaktok
22. Simon Kudlak	youth	Ulukhaktok
23. Elliot Malgokak	youth	Ulukhaktok
24. Liz Wright	DEA	Fort McPherson
25. Anita Koe	DEA	Fort McPherson
26. Shirley Snowshoe	First Nation	Fort McPherson
27. Riley McLeod	youth	Fort McPherson
28. Maria Snowshoe	youth	Fort McPherson
29. Annie Buckle	DEA	Aklavik
30. Gladys Edwards	DEA	Aklavik
31. Velma Illasiak	BDEC	Aklavik
32. Alex Illasiak	elder	Aklavik
33. Charmaine Norman Goose	youth	Aklavik
34. Bambi Amos	DEA	Sachs Harbour
35. Priscilla Haogak	Mayor	Sachs Harbour
36. Role Cole	BDEC	Inuvik
37. Denise Kurszewski	BDEC	Inuvik
38. Jean Boudreau	BDEC	Inuvik
39. Camillia Gray	BDEC	Inuvik
40. Reg Carpenter	BDEC	Inuvik
41. Sandy Carpenter	BDEC	Inuvik

42. Roman Mahnic	BDEC	Inuvik
43. Janette Vlanich	BDEC	Inuvik
44. Shane Brewster	NWTTA	Inuvik
45. Robert Charlie	Gwich'in Tribal Council	Inuvik
46. Mary Ann Ross	Gwich'in Tribal Council	Inuvik
47. Paul Watter	BDEC	Inuvik
48. Paul Devlin	BDEC	Inuvik
49. Rosemarie Kirby	elder	Inuvik
50. Liz Hansen	elder	Inuvik
51. Annie Modeste	elder	Inuvik
52. Doug Robertson	Aurora College	Inuvik
53. Marja van Nieuwenhuyzen	Aurora College	Inuvik
54. Sandra Elanik	IRC	Inuvik
55. Alex Kudlak	youth	Inuvik
56. Denise Ritis Voudrach	BDEC	Inuvik
57. Rory Voudrach		Inuvik
58. Jade English	youth	Inuvik
59. Sarah Jerome	elder	Inuvik
60. Nellie Cournoyea	IRC	Inuvik
61. Richard Nerysoo	GTC	Inuvik
62. Robert C. McLeod	GNWT	Inuvik
63. Kathleen Mullin	ECE	Yellowknife
64. Linda Kalbun	ECE	Yellowknife
65. Susan Hopkins	ECE	Yellowknife
66. Teresa Watson	ECE	Yellowknife
67. Don Morrison	ECE	Yellowknife
68. Rita Mueller	ECE	Yellowknife
69. Vanessa Baron	ECE	Yellowknife
70. Adrian Richards	ECE	Yellowknife
71. Joanne McGrath	ECE	Yellowknife
72. Blake Wile	ECE	Yellowknife
73. Brandee Penney Keeping	ECE	Yellowknife
74. Ron Cleary	ECE	Yellowknife
75. Angela James	ECE	Yellowknife
76. Kristen Prendergast	ECE	Yellowknife
77. Roy Erasmus	ECE	Yellowknife
78. Dan Daniels	ECE	Yellowknife
79. Jackson Lafferty	ECE	Yellowknife
80. Lois Little	facilitator	Yellowknife