

Voice, Vision and Leadership

**Interim Report of the Joint Task Force
on Improving Education and Employment Outcomes
for First Nations and Métis People**

December 3, 2012

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Our sincere thank you to the individuals, community leaders, organizations, agencies and scholars who shared their vision, expertise and even cautions about the future directions set by any recommendations we might make. Your contribution is highly valued.

The Joint Task Force acknowledges the support of the Saskatchewan Educational Leadership Unit (SELU) team who provided the organization and research so necessary to the timely completion of this segment of our work.

The Joint Task Force Members



Gary Merasty is Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility at Cameco Corporation. He grew up in a small reserve community in northern Saskatchewan. Gary is a former Member of Parliament and former Grand Chief of the Prince Albert Grand Council. He is a board member of the NorthWest Company and has held numerous board positions including Chair of the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority, Westwind Aviation, Prince Albert Development Corporation, and the Northern Lights Community Development Corporation.

Gary is known in the province for his community support, advocating for better public policies for First Nation and Métis issues, education, infrastructure and northern development. Gary has been recognized for his years of commitment to public service and business. In 2005, he received the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal and in 2006, the University of Saskatchewan named Gary as one of the Top 100 Alumni of Influence and he received an Honorary Diploma for Business from the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Arts and Sciences. He holds a Master of Education and a Bachelor of Education from the University of Saskatchewan.



Rita Bouvier is a teacher who has served in leadership roles in education at home and abroad. Her lifelong interest in Aboriginal education and social justice have often spilled over to community volunteer and consultancy work, such as Saskatchewan's Northern Governance Task Force, Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research, the Independent Oversight Committee on Métis Elections Saskatchewan, and Iskwewuk E-wichi-witochik - Women Working Together, Education International.

After retiring from the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, Rita served as a Coordinator with the Canadian Council on Learning-Aboriginal Learning Knowledge Centre partnership at the University of Saskatchewan.

She currently freelances as a researcher and community-learning facilitator working with various public institutions and private sector organizations. Recent projects include reviewing support for Aboriginal languages in the NWT, preparing a literature review on Indigenous bilingual [immersion] education, reviewing the Cree Bilingual Education Program in Cumberland House, reviewing the Clearwater River Dene School Transitional Immersion Program and examining practices associated with Aboriginal student achievement. Her work has also included facilitation of a school board - tribal council partnership, co-facilitation of an initiative serving a high Aboriginal student population with Saskatoon Public Schools, and the development and delivery

of a leadership program in Fostering Respect and Dignity for Relationships in the Workplace for the City of Saskatoon. Recent work includes collaborative research and development for the proposed Indspire (formerly the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation) Institute and Indigenous Voices, a staff and faculty professional learning program on Indigenous Education at the University of Saskatchewan.

Rita holds a Master of Education degree from the University of Saskatchewan. She was awarded an Eagle Feather by peers in 2006, the Arbos Award for her commitment to the profession by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation in 2006 and the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Literacy Award (Practitioner Category) in 2010.



Don Hoium is serving as the Executive Director of the Saskatchewan League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents (LEADS). Don began his career as a teacher in 1979 with Saskatoon Public Schools, where he held increasingly senior positions. He became the Assistant Director of Education with Saskatoon East School Division and joined Saskatchewan Learning in 2000 as Director of Special Education; he has also held senior positions overseeing School^{PLUS}; Capacity Building and Accountability Branch; and Accountability, Assessment and Records Branch.

Don joined Regina Public Schools as Superintendent before assuming the role of Director of Education in 2007. Don retired from the director's role in 2011.

Don has also served as the Saskatchewan representative on the Canadian Council of Ministers of Education's Strategic Management Committee and as a Canadian representative on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Educational Indicators Networks for both regular education and special education.

He currently serves as a board member of the Saskatchewan Health Quality Council and the Regina Trades and Skills Centre. He is a past president of the Saskatchewan League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents.

Don is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan. He earned a Bachelor of Education degree with Great Distinction and a Master of Education with a specialization in the Education of Exceptional Children.

Letter of Transmittal

To: Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations
Government of Saskatchewan
Métis Nation - Saskatchewan

From: The Joint Task Force on Improving Education and Employment Outcomes in
Saskatchewan

Please find attached the Joint Task Force's interim report titled ***Voice, Vision and Leadership***. The title summarizes our overall task – to listen to the voices of the communities, to seek the vision for action, and to provide action recommendations to the leadership within the province in order to improve the outcomes in education and employment for First Nations and Métis people.

Voice, Vision and Leadership is intended to provide an update for the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, the Government of Saskatchewan and the Métis Nation – Saskatchewan, as well as all those who have participated in the dialogues or have an interest in the work of the Joint Task Force.

It shares the mandate entrusted to the Joint Task Force; describes the manner in which the Joint Task Force went about its work; provides the context for the work of the Joint Task Force; and, provides a midpoint perspective on what the Joint Task Force has seen, heard and read.

Sincerely,

Gary Merasty
Chair

Rita Bouvier
Panel Member

Don Hoium
Panel Member

Executive Summary

In March 2012, the Government of Saskatchewan (Province) and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) established a three-member Joint Task Force on Improving Education and Employment Outcomes in Saskatchewan (Joint Task Force). The Province also entered into a partnership with the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan (MN-S) to ensure the perspectives of Métis people, communities and organizations were represented in the work of the Joint Task Force. These partnerships cross jurisdictional boundaries. The 12-month mandate of the Joint Task Force is to provide a report and recommendations that identify evidence-based public policy, program and practical approaches that have the greatest potential for positive impact on education and employment outcomes on- and off-reserve. As part of its mandate, the Joint Task Force prepared an interim report to provide a midpoint perspective on what the Joint Task Force has seen, heard and read.

The interim report describes how the Joint Task Force went about its work which included consultations with students, community members and leaders, stakeholder organizations and authorities in education and employment across the province. The Joint Task Force also undertook research which will be used to inform the final report. The interim report briefly outlines two aspects of its research: first, research to gain an understanding of the depth and breadth of pertinent previous research and commissioned reports; and, second, primary research *with* First Nations and Métis people focusing on their experiences and ideas about education and employment, and to identify and describe existing “lighthouse” programs and practices.

The Joint Task Force recognized from the beginning that its work was not isolated nor insulated from historic and current community, provincial, national and even international events. The interim report describes some key considerations and factors that influence the complexity of its work.

The Joint Task Force travelled to 16 communities holding 63 individual and public consultations with over 820 people between May and November 30th, 2012. The Interim Report identifies prevalent themes that emerged from the voices of consultation participants and submissions in four target areas - early childhood; prekindergarten to grade 12; post-secondary; and labour-force attachment.

As the public phase and consultations end on January 15, 2013, the Joint Task Force will continue its work to write a final report by focussing on analysis and synthesis of what they have learned from the consultations and research. This will include seeking more detailed information or feedback from key informants. The final report and recommendation are to be submitted in late March, 2013.

Introduction

In March 2012, the Government of Saskatchewan (Province) and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) established a three-member Joint Task Force on Improving Education and Employment Outcomes for First Nations and Métis People (Joint Task Force). The Province also entered into a partnership with the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan (MN-S) to ensure the perspectives of Métis people, communities and organizations were represented within the work of the Joint Task Force. This unique undertaking, which crosses jurisdictional boundaries, represents a bold step to positively impact the lives of First Nations and Métis children wherever they live, are educated and seek employment in Saskatchewan.

All partners agreed that current gaps in education and employment outcomes for First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan are unacceptable. The partners expressed a shared vision of a prosperous province where all people have access to a high quality of life. In undertaking the Joint Task Force, the parties agreed that the following were the desired outcomes:

1. Improved early childhood outcomes and the transition to school;
2. Improved high school completion rates;
3. Improved completion rates for post-secondary education;
4. Improved labour market participation and attachment;
5. Improved quality of life and enhanced self-sufficiency; and,
6. Stronger education systems with improved return on investment in preK-12 and postsecondary education and training.¹

"The Joint Task Force represents a unique undertaking, crossing jurisdictional boundaries, with the goal of impacting the lives of First Nations and Métis children wherever they live in the province of Saskatchewan. The partners need to be commended for this bold step."

-Gary Merasty, Chair

The mandate of this Joint Task Force is to provide a report and recommendations that identify evidence-based public policy, program and practical approaches that have the greatest potential for positive impact on education and employment outcomes on- and off-reserve. In addition, the Joint Task Force is to identify policies, programs and practices that are not having the desired

¹ May 2011. *Agreement between the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the Government of Saskatchewan to Work Together to Establish a Joint Task Force on Improving Education and Employment Outcomes in Saskatchewan.*

impact and propose changes or elimination. In identifying approaches for implementation or elimination, costs and potential reallocation of spending are to be considered.

The terms of reference set out these objectives for the work of the Joint Task Force:

1. To recommend and prioritize evidence-based public policy, program and practical approaches in relation to the themes articulated in the project scope. These approaches will positively impact education and employment outcomes and have the potential for province wide application.
2. To identify current issues, barriers and/or ineffective approaches and recommend changes or elimination.
3. To identify investments, potential costs and savings associated with the recommended approaches identified in objective one and the changes recommended in objective two.
4. To arrange for literature reviews, analysis and advice that will inform the development of the recommendations.
5. Engagement in the process will extend beyond the parties (e.g. Métis Institutions, Tribal Councils, First Nation Band Councils [education portfolios], and Office of the Treaty Commissioner, First Nation and Métis Provincial Education Advisory Committee).²

Although the Federal government chose not to participate, the Federal mandate and its programs and services, which impact the lives of Saskatchewan citizens and their education and employment in the province, cannot be disregarded by the Joint Task Force.

The role of the panel was to plan the process, meet and hear from First Nations and Métis people and all the stakeholders in the education and employment sectors in the province, report on an interim and ongoing basis, and submit a final report to the Province, the FSIN and the MN-S in March 2013.

Based on these premises and mandate of the Joint Task Force, four target areas - **early childhood; preK to grade 12; post-secondary; and labour-force attachment** - were identified as the focus. To guide its work, the Joint Task Force aspired to the following principles:

- Conduct the mandate *with* communities, organizations, educational systems, employers, and governments using a gifts/strengths orientation and building on successes;
- Respect the diversity of First Nations and Métis in Saskatchewan and their right and responsibility for the education and well-being of their children;
- Embrace learning as lifelong, holistic, and experiential, rooted in language and culture;
- Acknowledge that cultural/language communities have the right to define success and articulate their aspirations;
- Embrace the value of Indigenous knowledges (ways of being, knowing, valuing and doing);

² May 2011. *Agreement between the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and the Government of Saskatchewan to Work Together to Establish a Joint Task Force on Improving Education and Employment Outcomes in Saskatchewan.* Appendix B.

- Promote a long-term view for capacity development and sustainability in governance and financing structures with well-defined mutually beneficial partnerships, roles and responsibilities; and,
- Strive for accountability as an ethical and shared responsibility to the students and their communities by teachers, schools, boards of education, departments of education and governments.

As the Joint Task Force began its work, it was clear that the task was very broad and daunting in the range, scope, entrenchment and history of the issues. Acknowledging that the task of making changes is huge and multi-faceted, the Joint Task Force believes that the final report with its recommendations needs to reach across political ideologies and governments in terms of what is at stake and the work that is required. In this way, it is hoped that solutions will not start and stop with political cycles and agendas.

Purpose of the Interim Report

The Joint Task Force has prepared this Interim Report for the partners, and all those who have participated in the dialogues or have an interest in the work of the Joint Task Force. The Interim Report will:

- Share the mandate entrusted to the Joint Task Force;
- Describe the manner in which the Joint Task Force went about its work;
- Provide the context for the work of the Joint Task Force; and,
- Provide a midpoint perspective on what the Joint Task Force has seen, heard and read.

The Joint Task Force hopes the Interim Report will create opportunities for further dialogue and exploration of themes as the Joint Task Force continues its work to craft the final report to be submitted by late March, 2013.

Context

The appointment of the Joint Task Force occurred during a specific context and its work was not isolated nor insulated from historic and current community, provincial, national and even international events. This section seeks to convey pieces of the context that have impacted its deliberations.

The Joint Task Force began with the assumption that First Nations and Métis people have not accrued the same or **equitable benefit** from the education systems for various systemic reasons, both historical and social, and as a result, have not been able to benefit from the economic opportunities existing and created.

The Joint Task Force was aware of the **many collaborative initiatives** taken by both First Nations and Métis people *with* various provincial and municipal institutions, organizations and governments since the mid to late 60's that have netted positive results socially and economically. Some key examples include:

- First Nations Educational Authorities;
- Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College;
- First Nations University of Canada;
- Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research;
- Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies;
- Dumont Technical Institute;
- Teacher Education Programs such as NORTEP, SUNTEP and ITEP;
- Northern Professional Access College (NORPAC); and,
- common regional working stakeholder tables for training and employment.

While the emphasis of the Joint Task Force's work was on recommendations that could be scaled up to have the largest impact in the province, it was understood that in order to effectively propose and analyse future directions, it needed to **acknowledge historical and current obligations** that frame our relationships. It also needed to **understand barriers and challenges** which stand in the way of reaching equitable outcomes in education and employment for all of the province's population.

"Part of Saskatchewan's identity is First Nations and Métis."

-participant

People who live and do business in the province must understand that, just as part of Saskatchewan's identity is based on immigration, part of Saskatchewan's identity is First Nations and Métis. Fulfilling **Treaty and historical rights and obligations** are the basis for a shared and prosperous future.

The Joint Task Force is aware that there is a significant public policy challenge in the unique combination of **three socio-political issues** that create obstacles and impede progress in addressing economic and social disparities for First Nations and Métis across Saskatchewan. The first is **geographic marginalization**. The majority of First Nation and Métis communities are situated in remote or rural areas with limited community development infrastructure. Over half of self-identified First Nations individuals live off-reserve and 75% of these individuals live in urban centers³ - often in the ‘inner city’ which can be as isolating as remote or rural communities with limited community infrastructure.

The second is a **demographic polarization**. While the age distribution of the non-Aboriginal population of the province moves into an over fifty demographic, 55% of the province’s First Nations and Métis population is under age 25 as compared with 31% of the non-Aboriginal population⁴. Furthermore, the First Nations and Métis population is a minority at about 15% of the total population.

The third issue is **jurisdictional chaos**. There exists an intricate and complicated set of relationships and jurisdictions among First Nations and Métis people and governments. These relationships and jurisdictions extend across many systems including justice, education, health, social services, economic development and environmental protection. They are often cited as the source of system inability to respond to the needs of First Nations and Métis people.

“Jurisdictional issues abound... they are tiresome and appear endless.”

- Joint Task Force

Each of these three issues creates a public policy challenge. Taken together, these three socio-economic issues create significantly more complexity and intense challenge for public policy design and application in addressing the disparities.

The Joint Task Force reviewed the work of **previous task forces and studies**, which identify the issues and barriers that caused the widening gap in outcomes of overall well-being between First Nations and Métis people and non-Aboriginal residents of the province.

The Joint Task Force was cognizant of the recent work of a number of national and international organizations.

In September 2007, the United Nations adopted the **Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**⁵ which set an international standard against which nation state behavior can be judged.

³ Statistics Canada. *Saskatchewan Aboriginal Peoples*. <http://www12.statcan.ca>.

⁴ Elliott, D. *Selected Characteristics of the Saskatchewan Aboriginal Population*. 2009.

⁵ *Summary of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. 2007.

Although Canada initially voted against the Declaration, in 2010 Canada endorsed it and reaffirmed commitment to build on a positive and productive relationship with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples to improve the well-being of Aboriginal Canadians and a desire to move forward together.

The **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada** recently released an interim report.⁶ Their report provided a summary of their community consultation activities, articulated the barriers to completing the commission's work in a timely fashion (by 2013) and made twenty recommendations in five areas: the operation of the commission, education, support for survivors, reconciliation and commemoration.

The **National Panel on First Nation Elementary and Secondary Education for Students on Reserve** released its report⁷ in early 2012 offering principles and recommendations to guide the path forward for improving education outcomes for children who live on reserve. Stating that the Chiefs had not provided a mandate to create the National panel, the First Nations Education Council (FNEC) of Quebec, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) and Nishnawbe Aski First Nation (NAN) of Northern Ontario published a joint report outlining their view of the priority actions to improve First Nations education.⁸

There are many elements affecting the **quality of life** for Saskatchewan people and there are many documents available which report and interpret particular data sets or categories of measures or indicators. Quality of life can include rates for poverty, housing availability,

"Don't confuse the culture of poverty with the culture of the people."

- Gary Merasty

employment, violent crime, youth incarceration, obesity, birth weight, childhood mortality, diabetes, infectious diseases, happiness, feeling safe, sport and recreational activities, arts and cultural opportunities, social assistance and many more. While there are many variances and nuances to how 'quality of life' is defined, in nearly every category First Nations and Métis people generally experience a lower quality of life often attributed to poverty and racism.

Saskatchewan is clearly enjoying an economic boom. **The Province recently released its vision for continued economic growth** that "builds on the strength of Saskatchewan's people, resources and innovation to sustain Saskatchewan's place among Canada's economic leaders."⁹ The Joint Task Force welcomed the key targets for improving graduation rates, and expanding

⁶ Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Interim Report. 2012.

⁷ Nurturing the Learning Spirit of First Nation Students. 2012.

⁸ Report on Priority Actions in View of Improving First Nations Education. 2011.

⁹ Saskatchewan Plan for Growth: Vision 2020 and Beyond. 2012.

Adult Basic Education programs and notes the Province's intent to build on the Joint Task Force's work.

Despite the economic boom, the Joint Task Force is aware that **poverty** remains a reality for many people in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan's economic growth has not benefitted everyone equally as it has brought with it rising costs making it more difficult for families on low incomes to meet their basic necessities. Saskatchewan's poverty rate is higher than Canada's overall poverty rate.

Saskatchewan's **child poverty rate is the third highest provincial rate** in all of Canada. In 2007, 16.7% of all children under the age of 18 were living below the poverty line.¹⁰

Saskatchewan's child poverty rate affects 35,000 children under the age of 18.

- makepovertyhistory.ca

The Joint Task Force also heard that Saskatchewan has the **highest youth incarceration rate** of any Canadian province¹¹. Children and youth who are convicted of crimes often have interruptions in education, increased exposure to illegal activities and desensitization to crime and violence. A criminal record affects their adult years. While Aboriginal youth comprise approximately 5% of the Canadian population, 33% of youth in custody are Aboriginal.

In summary the Joint Task Force recognizes that the items noted in this section do not form an exhaustive list but they do provide a glimpse of some key considerations and factors that influence the complexity of the work undertaken by the Joint Task Force.

¹⁰ Poverty Reduction and Saskatchewan. <http://www.makepovertyhistory.ca>.

¹¹ A One-Day Snapshot of Aboriginal Youth in Custody Across Canada: Phase II. <http://www.justice.gc.ca>.

Consultation

The work of the Joint Task Force began with the assumption that “the current gaps in education and employment outcomes for First Nations and Métis people are unacceptable.” The language of describing the existing situation simply as ‘gaps’ was quickly challenged and the Joint Task Force was invited to be mindful of the systemic issues and challenges that created the situation in the first place. While the Joint Task Force emphasized recommending and prioritization of evidence-based public policy, program and practical approaches in relation to the themes articulated in the project scope, the Joint Task Force recognized that understanding barriers and challenges was equally important for effectively proposing and analyzing potential future directions.

The Joint Task Force wanted to focus its efforts on a positive frame by picking out ‘everyday heroes’, looking for success stories and hearing what is working. There are a thousand possible items that could or need to be done, but what future directions and actions should we focus on to capture their momentum at this point in time?

“It is important to remember “First Nation” is a political term. There is a mosaic of First Nation’s cultures.”

- participant

The Joint Task Force was sensitive to the fact that there have been many studies and reports completed on the issues and barriers facing First Nations and Métis people. From the onset, the Joint Task Force realized that people might be hesitant to participate in yet another review and study process. This sensitivity was honored by an expressed commitment to actionable outcomes from their work.

The Joint Task Force used strategies that ensured the consultation and research processes went ‘deep and wide’, were transparent, guaranteed confidentiality and encouraged the stories and experiences of the beneficiaries and stakeholders alike. A wide range of organizations, communities and individuals were invited or requested to attend various meetings and the open public meeting in each community. Flexibility and adaptability were key components of the consultations.

The community discussion plan was designed to encourage stories and experiences – especially those that show promise and successful outcomes - from people and organizations across the province. Communications consultants worked to identify key groups in each community, advertise the consultations, and use community-based strategies to encourage a wide range of attendees. Local community media were encouraged to use the consultations as a news story.

An Elder offered an opening prayer at the public meetings wherever possible. A presentation (see Appendix A) was then made by Chair Gary Merasty, or in his absence, by another member of the Joint Task Force. The intent of the presentation was to briefly review the mandate, desired outcomes and scope of the Joint Task Force and to set the context for the discussion that followed. The consultations were guided by four questions in each of the four target areas - early childhood, preK to grade 12, post-secondary and labour force attachment:

1. What works or what's working?
2. What do you believe should be changed?
3. What do you believe *in your heart* will work?
4. What supports and environments are needed to create success?

In some communities the questions were discussed orally only and recorders captured the essence of the comments. Sessions were audio recorded with permission from attendees for internal use to verify notes. Joint Task Force members often probed to elicit further discussion and deepen dialogue; efforts were made to ensure that everyone had the opportunity and level of comfort to speak or write their suggestions.

Discussion guides (see Appendix B) were prepared for use in more formal gatherings. Participants were encouraged to provide written responses to the questions and group processes were used to verbally share ideas. If participants wished to share their written material, their notes were gathered at the meeting, submitted through the website or mailed to the Joint Task Force. Some organizations or individuals used the discussion guide in advance of the meeting to prepare responses. A number of groups prepared formal presentations for the Joint Task Force.

The website, email address, facebook page and twitter account went active in April and remain active at this time. Public meeting information and ongoing Joint Task Force news was regularly updated on the website, posted on facebook, or tweeted.

Research

The Joint Task Force determined two aspects for research and analysis. One aspect was to gain an understanding of the depth and breadth of pertinent previous research and commissioned reports; the second aspect was to engage in primary research with a focus on enriching and informing the mandate.

In this regard, the Joint Task Force has:

- Prepared an annotated bibliography of provincial and national Task Forces and similar bodies that have taken place over the last decade or so. This work provided sample frameworks and reference points for the Joint Task Force.
- Prepared an annotated bibliography that outlines the research that has been completed over the past two decades (including seminal documents) that relate to the four target areas – early childhood, preK to grade 12, post-secondary and labour force attachment. This bibliography continues to expand as additional research documents become known or available to the Joint Task Force.
- Undertaken primary research using an appreciative inquiry approach in which positive assumptions were the starting point or building block for imagining the future.

The purpose of the primary research was twofold. The first purpose was to conduct research *with* First Nations and Métis people focusing on their experiences and ideas about education and employment. The second purpose was to identify and describe “lighthouse” programs and practices now in existence and integrate the findings with current perspectives in the literature.

For this research, interviews and focus groups were conducted on at least eight reserves, in several Métis communities, at two correctional facilities, at post-secondary institutions with students of the Teacher Education Programs (TEPs), Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies (SIIT), Adult Basic Education (ABE), and other post-secondary programs identified by the Joint Task Force. Those interviewed were students at the middle, secondary and post-secondary levels of the education system as well as parents/guardians. Leaders of the preK-12 and post-secondary institutions that have partnerships with First Nations and Métis people were interviewed. The researchers also conducted a literature review examining provincial, national and international indigenous contexts.

All research and analysis will be used to support the Joint Task Force final report.

What Was Heard: The Themes

From May through November 30th, 2012, the Joint Task Force travelled to 16 communities throughout the province holding 63 individual and public consultations with over 820 people. (See Appendix C for a list of the sites and consultations). A number of groups made formal submissions; however, the process of receiving submissions continues at this time. Therefore, the final report will include a listing of the submissions.

The Joint Task Force discerned a number of prevalent themes in each of the four target areas - **early childhood, preK to grade 12, post-secondary and labour force attachment**. The following section identifies themes that emerged from the voices of consultation participants and submissions.

Early Childhood

A. Partners in education

The Joint Task Force heard that all programming must recognize the **importance of local knowledge to the development of a child's identity**. The child must know about self, their place and culture before learning about others. Professionals and family should use child-centered partnerships in formal settings, in the home and the community.

The Joint Task Force heard that this programming should include **building parenting capacity** so that parents can be “teachers in their own homes” and should address issues that are barriers for parents such as:

- Locating daycares in or near schools or other educational settings to enable young parents to continue their education while maintaining close proximity to their children in a supportive environment;
- Providing housing appropriate to the circumstances of young moms/parents; and,
- Supplying transportation for young moms/parents and their children to attend not only the educational or early childhood programs, but also meetings, evening workshops or classes.

“It is tough for children to have dreams that you can be anything you want because people have lied to them throughout their childhood. They do not know that the world wants them to have dreams.”

- participant

The Joint Task Force heard that **language and culture are foundational for early years' programs**. There should be better opportunities for language immersion; language development needs to start early.

Participants impressed on the Joint Task Force that Kokums, Moshums and Elders should be incorporated into the program to teach values and traditional skills in traditional ways (land-

The Elders fear for a youth's future for they need skills from both worlds... they want youth to read well and to read the land well.

- participant

based teaching and learning). Care must be taken to define the role of these valuable people within the programming as there are too few available and much demand on their time.

Unfortunately, financial support for this type of programming is usually grant-based, short-term and unstable. These important elements of programming are not adequately recognized in early years' funding structures and cannot be left to current funding models.

B. Funding Equity

The Joint Task Force heard that on-reserve funding must be equitable with funding off-reserve for early childhood programming. Successful programming requires the funds **to attract, hire and retain qualified professionals** paid according to salary scales that demonstrate value for the work they do – working with young children in our communities. This would include funding to adequately provide the therapies (occupational, physical and speech-language) as required.

The Joint Task Force heard that **funding should be less dependent on proposal-driven processes**. Sustainable, long-term funding would reduce complicated, time-consuming application and reporting processes. Measuring the success of a program should be outcomes-based, reflecting common standards of well-being and the cultural base of the community's aspirations and goals, rather than center on negative indicators and narrow definitions of success. Short term funding does not build capacity nor enable long-term planning and the tracking of results over time. In many cases, it leeches away time better spent elsewhere in the agency or organization. This manner of funding is often counter-productive to the applicant and the funder's intentions.

C. Infrastructure

The Joint Task Force heard and witnessed a lack of adequate and appropriate buildings for learning programs supporting the well-being of First Nations and Métis children. In addition, many on-reserve sites have limited or outdated technology, equipment or internet access. There are accessibility issues – roads and lack of public transportation between communities in Saskatchewan – that hamper many families from accessing the programs and services that do exist.

D. Coherent and Enhanced Early Childhood Programs and Services

The Joint Task Force heard that there are **gaps in, or an absence of, supports** that begin with prenatal care, and extend into the period between the birth of a child and that child entering pre-school. Mothers/parents of infants need services in their homes and communities in order to improve prenatal health, increase the early detection of developmental delays or language acquisition issues, and provide access to early interventions.

The Joint Task Force was told that attention is needed in the **transitions** – from home to early years programming, and from these to school programming, or between on- and off-reserve programming. Services should be linked to school in partnership with families and communities to ease transition for the child and to foster a good relationship between the parent/caregivers and the school. Schools, venues and programming must be family friendly to encourage smooth transitions for students.

The Joint Task Force heard that on- and off-reserve services, as well as services among agencies, can be better **integrated and more holistic**. Participants wanted coherence among programs such as ECIP, KidsFirst, Head Start, preK, and Families First and stated that universal access to early childhood programs is essential.

The Joint Task Force heard that **multiple jurisdictional arrangements further exacerbate and limit the sharing of information and data** necessary for informed decision-making.

"The best time to start is when a young woman states to the community that "I am ready to be a mother." It is at that time that the community supports that young woman so the child comes into the world ready to learn."

-participant

PreK to Grade 12 Education

A. Voice, Vision and Leadership

The Joint Task Force heard that a **shared vision for education** is important among the educational leaders, the parents, community members and the school.

Participants told the Joint Task force that on reserve, the Chief and Council must explicitly demonstrate their support for education by committing 100% of the education funding allocation to the education of the children. They must ensure that *all* the funding allocated to education is assigned to education. Funding levels and programs need sustainability beyond election cycles.

*“Set aside the politics and
put the children first.”*

- participant

In the provincial system, the Joint Task Force heard that First Nations and Métis people should have a voice on provincial school boards. There was significant support for ensuring there is appropriate representation and voice for First Nations and Métis people on the board of education in *every* school division where First Nations and Métis children attend school.

The Joint Task Force was informed that additional ways to **include community voice** are through Elders’ councils, First Nations and Métis Advisory boards, or other supportive, meaningful structures. Leaders of education in First Nations systems and in the provincial systems need to answer the questions: Who makes the educational decisions? How well-informed are they?

Students also need to have avenues for their voices to be heard within the school and the community. This could involve a variety of opportunities to develop leadership roles and skills within the school and within the community. Suggestions included using the arts (visual, literary, and performing), sports, recreation and other clubs to develop lifelong skills and values.

B. Equitable Funding and Infrastructure

*“Treaty right to education
should be portable on- and
off-reserve.”*

- participant

The Joint Task Force heard statements regarding the **disparities in the scope of educational funding** between reserve schools and provincial schools, and it also heard that difficulties have been compounded by years of underfunding.

The Joint Task Force heard that too many critical support programs and services are forced to lobby for

finite proposal-based funding pools which are predicated on identifying an existing deficit; in order to qualify, the applicant must demonstrate negative outcomes. This **short-term funding exacerbates numerous issues** including the program stability, staff retention, time allocated to proposal writing and reporting, and the creation of competing programs funded through different channels (e.g. thirty-four federal funding sources each with different criteria).

From a capital and infrastructure perspective, many **existing federal schools need to be replaced or upgraded** and most need to be properly equipped to provide meaningful and relevant educational and learning opportunities to First Nations youth on reserves. Communities want to design, own and control their facilities. Reoccurring themes included: the lack of IT equipment or its outdated nature; the lack of supporting personnel, internet access or connectivity equitable to provincial schools; and, the lack of learning resources.

C. Governance

The Joint Task Force heard about innovative approaches to provide **secondary and tertiary services** offered through tribal councils and regional management organizations to First Nation schools while acknowledging the need for additional sustainable support in these areas. Participants expressed pride in, and support for, these foundational services – and fear that the Federal government’s announced funding cuts do not recognise the essential nature of the services provided and will ‘gut’ the gains that have been made. As a result, the Joint Task Force was asked to consider the question, “*What does ‘First Nations control of First Nations education’ look like in the 21st century?*”

“What does ‘First Nations Control of First Nations education’ look like in the 21st century?”

- participant

D. Parent, Community and Institutional Engagement as Partners

The goal of increasing **parent engagement** in the education of their children has many facets and challenges, but overwhelmingly, the Joint Task Force heard from parents, teachers, students and communities how key this involvement is to students who are and feel successful. Parents and caregivers are important role models, need to be involved in the child’s education, and teach and influence their children at home.

The Joint Task Force heard that sometimes parents and caregivers have to overcome a negative view of education and school. They may require a personal approach to become involved through a School Community Council or other committees that provide them with voice and meaningful involvement. This can be complemented by other strategies such as:

- Providing a parental advocate to support interactions with the school including voicing concerns when conflicts arise;
- Providing transportation for parents or caregivers to be involved in school activities;

- Providing supportive programs and services that show parents how to engage with children and literacy which positively impacts family literacy and parenting skills;
- Providing adult mentors from the community to supplement parental support; and,
- Applying the components of the Community Schools Model which emphasizes strengths.

The Joint Task Force heard that as a foundation for school-based curriculum and programming, **language and culture is a significant area for partnership** among the parents, community and school. It is clear that there are different needs in different communities as some have retained their language and culture and others have not – a fall out of the Residential School experiences and other historical policies directed at First Nations and Métis, all of which sought *to take the Indian out of the child*. It is recognized that community support is vital for language and cultural development. It is also recognized that language and culture is not static but rather is continually evolving.

To support language and culture within the school, various actions recommended by participants include:

- Hiring First Nations and Métis teachers and administrators, cultural advocates, and Elders;
- Hosting events such as Elders' gatherings especially those that connect to land-based learning and community-specific ceremonial and spiritual events;
- Hiring of Treaty/specialist catalyst teachers;
- Establishing catalyst committees to support and provide advice to schools, teachers, and educational leaders;
- Creating a database of cultural resource people; and,
- Creating community-based Language and Cultural Centres or Institutes.

The Joint Task Force heard that First Nations and provincial schools and/or systems need to cooperate between and among themselves with sensitivity especially among those schools and communities where there is significant mobility of students between systems.

The Joint Task Force heard that **students benefit from school partnerships** with the many existing post-secondary institutions (provincial, First Nations and Métis) in the professions and trades, and with industry for trades and skills training, internships and apprenticeships.

The Joint Task Force heard there is a need to provide **professional development** for school-based administration and for those running provincial and First Nations school systems. Support was expressed for collecting and analyzing data that provides input for better decision-making.

E. Curriculum and Teaching

The Joint Task Force heard there are **many strategies that would improve the teaching and learning** in the preK to grade 12 classrooms.

The curriculum and teaching resources need to be responsive, acknowledge First Nations and Métis contributions to the province and provide career laddering opportunities.

Participants suggested the following:

- The teacher resource guide and materials, *Teaching Treaties in the Classroom*, has gained a level of acceptance in the sector, but it requires continued support and emphasis for all students to attain this critical knowledge. In addition, participants suggested the creation of a parallel “*Métis in the Classroom*” to acknowledge the history, culture and contributions of Métis people within the province. There is a need to develop relevant curriculum resources in all subjects that reflect the diversity of Indigenous peoples and cultures.
- Starting early to develop **career laddering and career development action plans** as a way of providing real life applications of classroom learning. This should include creating a portfolio of experiences including: work site expectations, resumes, employment forms, and income tax filing. It might also include ‘life skills’ such as budgeting, meal planning and grocery shopping, and rites of passage such as obtaining a Social Insurance Number, a driver’s license, or a treaty card.

*“A signatory of Treaty 4
said to government
officials, “This is what I
expect. You will teach my
children to be like you and
I will teach my children to
be like me.”*

-participant

Schools need to be innovative and flexible in their structure and design in the delivery of Saskatchewan’s curriculum to meet the needs of First Nations and Métis students. Participants noted the following:

- Develop school improvement plans to encourage renewal and positive changes. Creating goals for improvement, taking actions, measuring progress and re-tooling based on the results creates significant awareness and potential for lasting change.
- Expand Practical and Applied Arts, with opportunities for work placements, to provide much-needed skill development, career exploration and work experience for many students who prefer hands-on learning.
- Create alternative avenues for students who find they require a significant number of credits to graduate. Additionally at the high school level, use a modular credit system and block scheduling for the delivery of the curriculum to provide more flexibility than the present grades and credits system. More flexibility allows students to tailor academic

schedules to build manageable programming, to balance parenthood, work or other responsibilities, and to succeed by utilizing more individualized program structures.

- Encourage the continued education of young parents by providing daycares linked to or in high schools. By providing safe, nurturing environments for babies and toddlers, the

*"Schools give kids hope."
- participant*

parents (particularly the mother) are able to maintain an educational focus, but are also developing parenting skills and supporting networks. This important support is key for academic achievement leading to an improved socio-economic outlook for the family.

Additionally participants suggested the following **teaching strategies and student supports**:

- Ensure that early assessment and interventions in reading occur so that student's reading skill does not impede school success.
- Employ appropriate English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) teaching strategies for students who enter school with Dene, Cree, Michif or other languages as their first language or whose language is influenced by their mother tongue.
- Detect and intervene early for behaviours and learning difficulties that indicate potential issues. Clearly, unaddressed behaviour and learning difficulties create significant barriers to successful school experiences and contribute to school dropout rates.
- Celebrate each module of learning or achievement (i.e. Rainbow Youth's 'Road to Employment' program).
- Increase the number of First Nations and Métis teachers (particularly males) to serve as role models and mentors in middle years and high schools.
- Increase the important student support personnel and programming. This might include student advocates, attendance supports, special programming supports, job placement programming, re-entry programming and support, and outreach workers. These supports assist students to stay in school; however, if the student has disengaged, these supports reach out to invite students back into educational programming.
- Enhance the focus on maths and sciences instruction to maximize learning opportunities and broaden career choices.

Ultimately, the Joint Task Force heard it is the **quality and passion of teachers** - the way in which they welcome First Nations and Métis children and youth, and the way in which they deliver the curriculum to create relevance and meaningful engagement in the lives of their students – that are keys to student success.

F. Systemic Social and Economic Factors

The Joint Task Force heard the critical impact of the factors that interfere with teaching and learning for many students. These included racism (overt and institutionalized - such as a history that omits a sense of place and belonging for First Nations and Métis people) and stereotyping, poverty (housing conditions and crowding, inadequate water supply, poor nutrition), addictions and mental health issues, and family

dysfunction resulting from these systemic social and economic conditions. The Joint Task Force heard that these factors need to be addressed in an integrated and holistic manner in order to affect positive change.

"It takes a strong person to get over their addictions.... it takes an even stronger person to not start using drugs and alcohol."

- A student

Post-Secondary Education

A. Funding

The Joint Task Force heard that the most prominent issue is **inadequate funding for post-secondary education** of students. The present 2% funding cap on the Post Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) is a barrier for many First Nations as it does not recognize the growing population nor the increased costs associated with postsecondary education. The current allocation levels of funding do not reflect the cost of living in cities (accommodations, food, utilities and transportation), travel, childcare and course needs (textbooks, computers and printing).

B. Institutional Change

The Joint Task Force heard there is a need for compulsory and recognizable learning opportunities to create **awareness and responsiveness** to the foundational premise of relationships based on the Constitution, treaties and other constructive agreements with Indigenous peoples, their aspirations and challenges faced across all programs at universities, trade schools and regional colleges. This would

include increasing numbers of Aboriginal teachers, professors and instructors in all areas of the institution's programs. The Universities, regional colleges, technical institutes and private trade schools must include First Nations and Métis ways of knowing and history for every teacher, instructor and student.

"First Nations youth should be professors as well as plumbers."

- participant

The Joint Task Force heard that **transition and system navigation supports** are essential between high school and post-secondary, and within the first year of a program. Participants noted that students were more successful where they had transition supports such as help with housing, banking, application and registration processes, course selection, bussing, transportation to work placements or practicums, dealing with the culture shock of new community, or even contract negotiation. Other supports might include academic coaches or tutors, Elders and cultural advisors, and summer transition programs.

The Joint Task Force heard statements that there is a need for First Nation and Métis managers, owners and entrepreneurs. Institutions are urged to **expand the traditional career pathways**.

Additionally, the Joint Task Force heard that post-secondary **institutions must be accountable** with targets and measures for the success of their program and in meeting the needs of the students.

C. Flexible Course Delivery, Scheduling and Credit Transfer

“Training in an environment that is familiar to northerners is necessary.”

- participant

The Joint Task Force heard many people speak of the need to **offer courses close to the home community** to maintain the student’s family support and obligations, housing and childcare arrangements. Participants asked that these courses be designed to fit the employment opportunities in the geographic area.

Participants asked that **courses be segmented and modular** to allow students multiple opportunities to enter and exit training and academic pursuits. There need to be multiple opportunities for upgrading of

current skill sets and education including opportunities in the maths and sciences to meet requirements for further education. More opportunities to complete high school through Adult Basic Education (ABE) and General Educational Development (GED) programming are needed as the Joint Task Force heard of long waiting lists for these most basic lifelong learning opportunities.

The Joint Task Force heard requests for an **integrated province-wide system for transferring credits among institutions** (regional colleges, SIAST, universities) that does not penalize the learner who may move from one institution to another.

D. Career Pathing and Business Partnerships

The Joint Task Force heard that successful programs build in **career laddering or pathing** opportunities by exposing students to multiple careers, jobs and professions through short-term practicums, work experience placements, trade and career expositions, job shadowing, and mentoring programs. These need to be supported by guidance and career counsellors who help students develop career portfolios, design resumes, analyze career aptitude tests with students, and develop interview skills. It was felt that every student would benefit from participation in work placements.

“There is a myth that First Nation students do not have ability. ...but rather First Nations students do not have the same opportunities.”

- participant

Because most people have multiple careers in their work life, many participants echoed the importance of lifelong learning. Post-secondary institutions, in partnership with business, provide important opportunities for enhanced career flexibility.

Labour Force Attachment

A. Models and Practices

The Joint Task Force heard of **successful practices, models and individuals** and the desire for these to be showcased and celebrated.

The Joint Task Force heard that one of the most promising practices is the recent emphasis on **‘quick skills’ training** which is a unique and industry-guided approach to enable entry into employment. This programming provides a short turnaround for students to train for specific emergent employment opportunities, does not require a lot of capital or infrastructure, and is relatively portable. The Trades and Skills Centres, and Northern Career Quest are examples of this approach.

Similarly, the Joint Task Force heard of the importance of mutually beneficial **partnerships** between high school and post-secondary institutions, and between post-secondary institutions and business. These partnerships ensure that course offerings are directed by job market needs and allow training to be delivered on a job site (i.e. Brandt Industries welding course) negating the need for additional capital investment in infrastructure.

There is a need for **role models in many careers, and particularly in management, ownership and entrepreneurial roles**. SIGA and SaskEnergy were noted as examples of ‘lighthouse’ projects within corporate business for their program opportunities and supports for First Nations and Métis employees to more fully participate in the workplace.

B. Coherent Employment Resources

The Joint Task Force heard there would be benefits to ‘**one stop**’ **employment resource centers** in areas where multiple ‘employment’ programs exist and compete with one another. These include Active Measures, Labour Force Development program, and Stabilization Career Centers.

“The province is going through a boom but First Nations people have not participated in the booms of the past. How do we ensure the First Nations participate in this boom?”

- participant

The Joint Task Force was asked to consider ways to improve the communication between businesses with human resource needs and tribal councils/ employment services/ training institutions to ensure people are being matched with interests, training and real job opportunities. There were suggestions to develop a ‘case management’ process and system to enable willing employees and employers to find suitable work arrangements. The Joint Task Force also heard the value of companies recruiting by reaching out to First Nation and Métis communities.

The Joint Task Force heard that economic and social conditions warrant **community and workplace supports** to overcome barriers to employment and work placements. The barriers include lack of transportation, a valid drivers’ license, Social Insurance Number, child care, appropriate work attire, appropriate nutrition, training certificates, budgeting, and coping skills when workplace racism occurs. Other barriers noted for the Joint Task Force included the presence of addictions issues or criminal records, knowing how to live within pay cycles or even having lunch money. Many of these are considered ‘job ready’ skills. The Joint Task Force heard that successful programs are holistic in the way in which they deliver programming and supports.

C. Receptive Work Environments

The Joint Task Force heard there is a benefit for employees who are able to access **work experience placements** such as job shadowing, practicums, and summer employment to allow potential employees to try a job. Additionally the employer has an extended ‘job interview’ over the term of employment.

Other positive strategies included:

- Employers and training institutions partnering to train people for meaningful, existing jobs;
- Supervisors and managers experiencing learning opportunities to increase their understanding of the advantages of employing First Nation and Métis people;
- Job-site mentors to advocate and mediate issues that impact the work and the workplace environment for Aboriginal workers to increase retention and job satisfaction;

- Workplaces providing ‘health’ services – counselling, addictions workers, and mental health programs;
- Employers providing transportation to the work site;
- Employers ensuring the work site is socially and culturally affirming and accepting, with enough fun and flexibility to accommodate employee needs; and,
- Employers assisting individual employees with advanced education, professional development opportunities and management experience.

D. The Impact of Policy and Agreements

The Joint Task Force heard that government must **ensure policies are in place requiring businesses to involve the available First Nations and Métis labour force** particularly on large projects such as potash or other resource development. It also heard that there is need for enhanced opportunities and incentives to develop management skills within the First Nations and Métis labour force. The Joint Task Force heard that people want to shift from ‘survival’ jobs to attaining careers and meaningful employment.

Consultation participants described the **unintended impact of immigrant support programs** which have caused the displacement of some First Nations and Métis people – not only in the workplace but also in housing and rental accommodations. The Joint Task Force was urged to consider how supports might be extended to First Nations and Métis people such as those accessible for immigrants as there are similar needs for access to information, resources and services.

The Joint Task Force heard that the two special agreements between the Province and northern mines, the Mine Surface Lease Agreement and the Human Resource Development Agreement, provide a model for achieving mutually beneficial northern development. As part of these agreements, the Multi-Party Training Plan (MPTP) is coordinated by a regional workforce planning table of leaders in the mining industry, Aboriginal training administration, training institutions and government ministries.

Interim Reflections

The Joint Task Force is humbled by the continued graciousness with which people have shared their stories and their dreams for improving outcomes in education and employment for themselves, for their children and for First Nations and Métis in general during the consultation process. People have been eager and frank in describing both the issues and the successes. Evidence supports that the success of First Nations and Métis in education and employment improves the quality of life and well-being for every person in the province. The Joint Task Force is also aware of the healthy skepticism in the questions of “What makes you think it will be different this time?” Each one of the Joint Task Force members has asked that question; but nonetheless, each one accepted the responsibility to serve when invited to become a member of the Joint Task Force.

There is an evident pride in the progress, the innovation, and the drive for success that is occurring in pockets across the province. It is particularly evident in the First Nations schools which are relatively young in their educational endeavors. People and organizations are motivated to continue to partner, learn and share to positively influence the outcomes in education and employment for First Nations and Métis people wherever they live and work in the province.

Good people at all levels are motivated to make a positive difference in early childhood development, in the preK to grade 12 system, in post-secondary education, and in labour force attachment. They are the ‘everyday heroes’ whose stories have greatly moved us.

We humbly thank each of you for participating in the work of the Joint Task Force.

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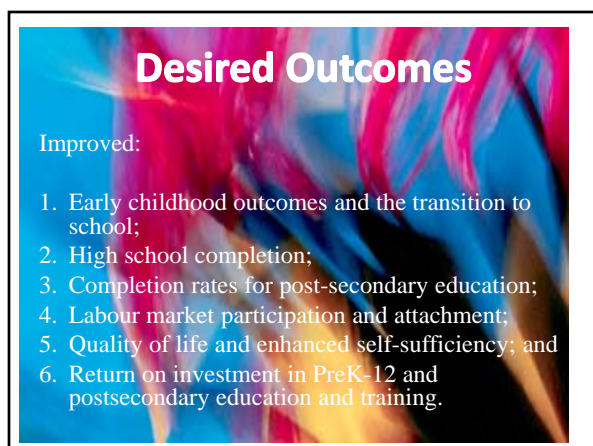
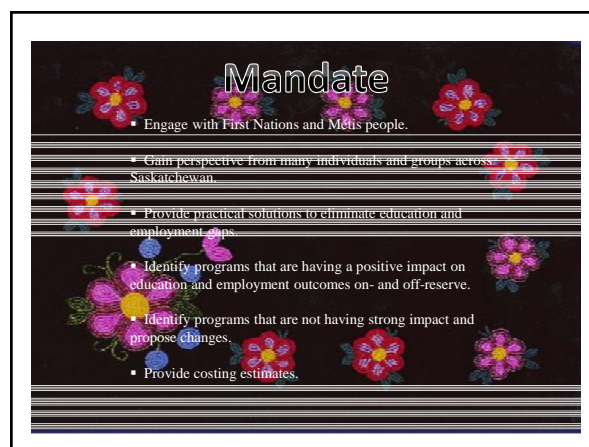
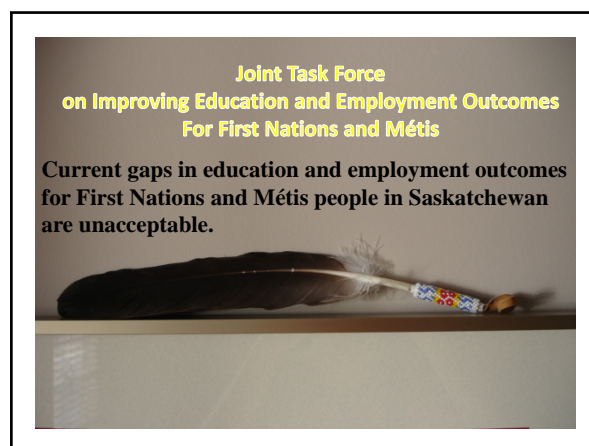
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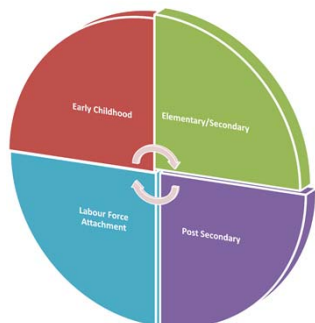
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Powerpoint Presentation



Scope of Mandate & Target Groups



7

Scope of Mandate & Target Groups

Community Based:

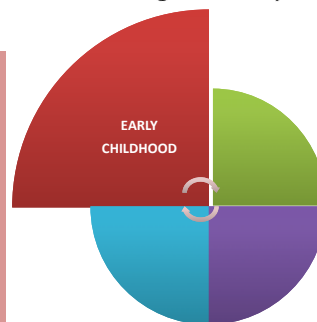
- Parents/Children
- Teachers/Administrators
- On Site and Urban Programs/Initiatives

Supports:

- Alvin Buckwold
- FSIN/Tribal Councils, Bands
- Métis Organizations
- Regional Intersectoral Committees (RICs)

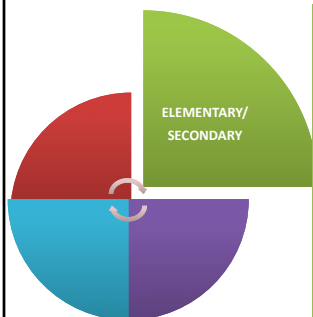
Research:

- Literature Reviews
- Studies and Reports
- Focus groups



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Scope of Mandate & Target Groups



Community:

- Parents /Students/ School Committees
- Administrators/Teachers/ Educational Assistants/Special needs supports – (FASD)

External related programs:

- Corrections and Str8 Up Project
- Children's Protection Services/Adoptions

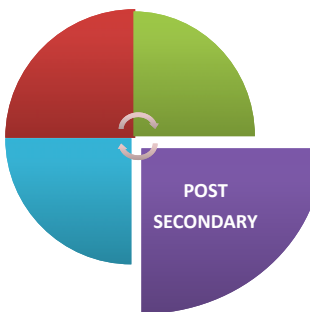
Supports:

- FSIN/Métis Locals/AANDC/FNSSP
- Ministries of Education/ Advanced Education/ First Nations and Metis Relations
- Tribal Councils
- Sask. School Boards Association (SSBA)
- League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents (LEADS)
- Saskatchewan Teacher's Federation – STF
- Human Service Providers/RICs

Research:

- National Education Panel
- The Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Research, Studies, Papers

Scope of Mandate & Target Groups



Community:

- Students, Deans, Directors, Presidents
- First Nation Post Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP)
- Onsite Programs/Initiatives
- Tribal Councils, FSIN
- Gabriel Dumont Institute (GDI), Southern Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP), MNS, Métis Locals
- Indian Teacher Education Program (ITEP)
- Universities, Colleges

Research:

- Research, Papers, Studies

Scope of Mandate & Target Groups

Community:

- On Site Programs/Initiatives

Supports/Institutions:

- Northern Career Quest (NCQ)
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)
- Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration (AEEI) Programs
- Trades Centers/Apprenticeship Agencies
- FSIN, MNS, Métis Locals

Employers:

- Employees
- Small and medium sized business
- Corporations/Corporate Programs
- Chamber of Commerce

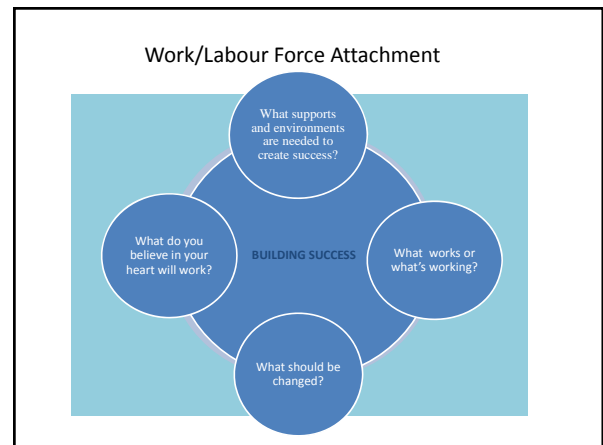
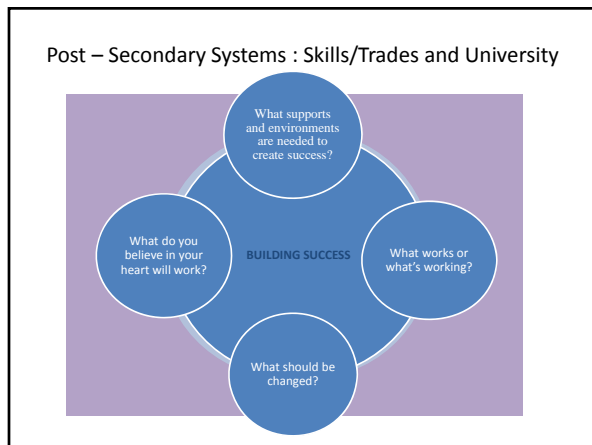
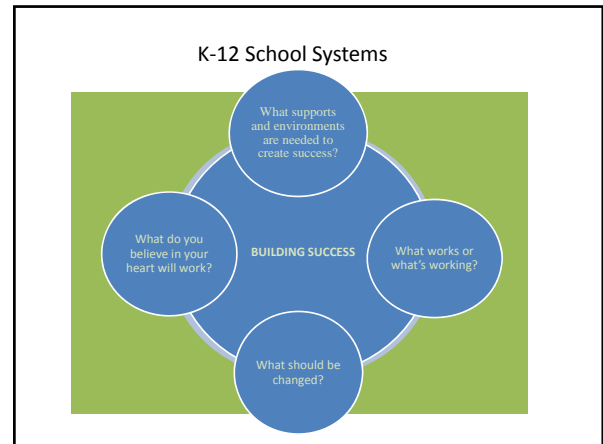
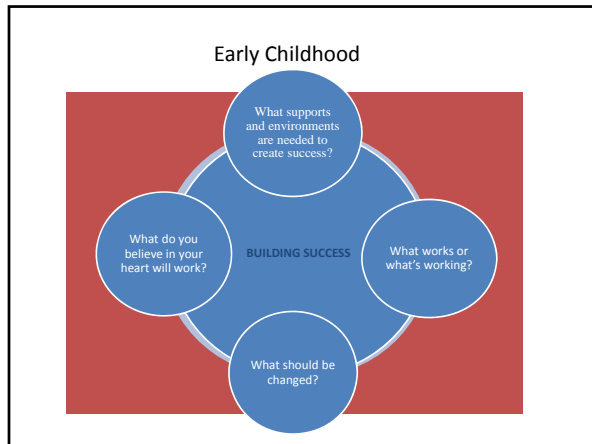
Research:

- Literature Reviews/Studies



It's Your Turn!

From a **visionary** and **practical** level tell us what needs to happen so we... and our children can succeed....



Thank You!

Photo Credits: Gabriel Dumont Institute for the use of Isabelle Impey beadwork from their collection, Vye Bouvier for blueberry photo and Matt Jacoby for eagle feather photo.

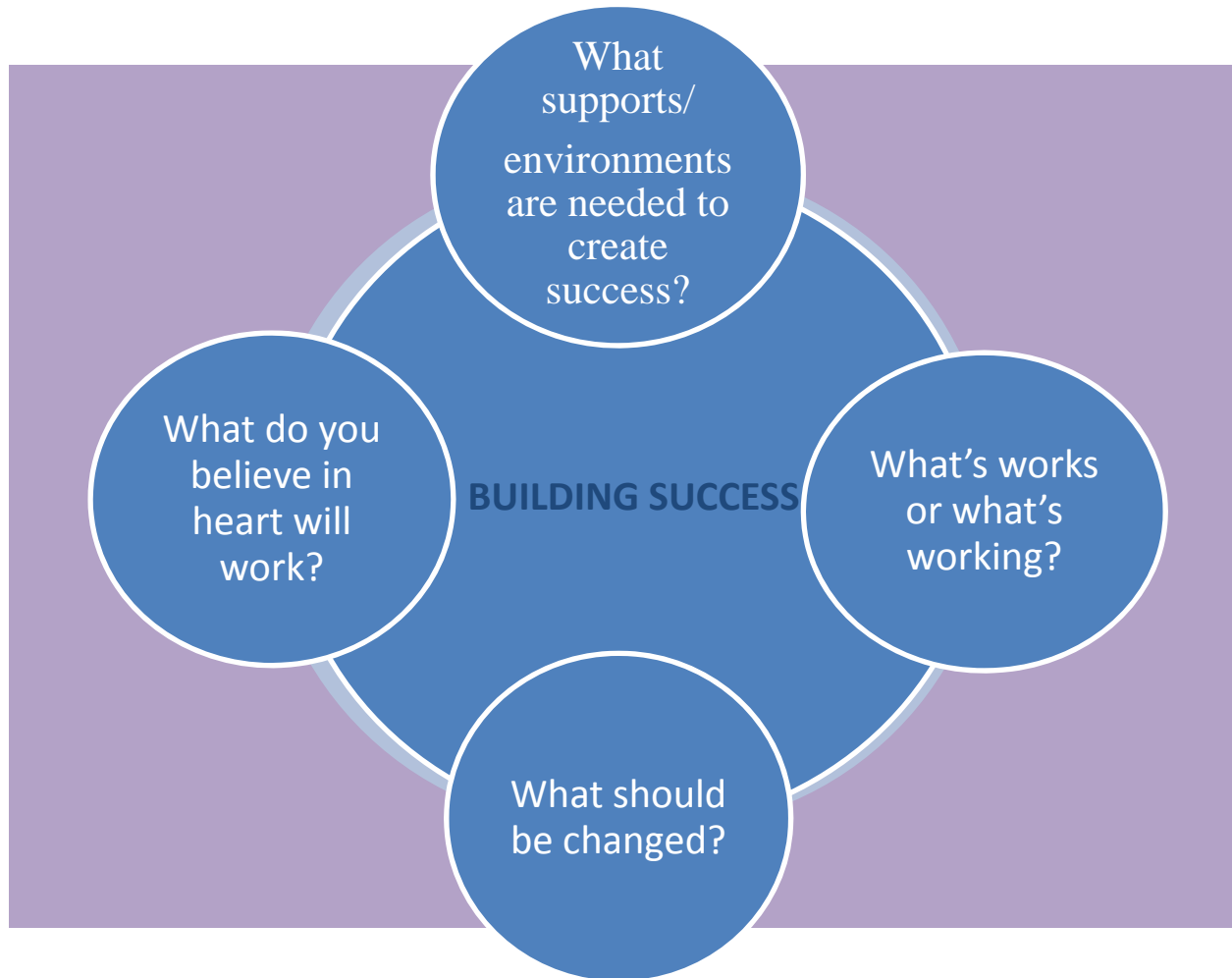
Written submissions can be sent to:
 Email: joint.taskforce@usask.ca
 Address:

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Discussion Guide

**Joint Task Force on Improving
Education & Employment for
First Nations & Metis People**

Gary Merasty – Chair
Rita Bouvier – Member
Don Hoium - Member



DISCUSSION GUIDE

SASKATCHEWAN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP UNIT

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University of Saskatchewan

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Help us Build Success.

This discussion guide has been prepared in consideration of the mandate given to the Joint Task Force. There is no one correct answer. An answer that reflects your opinion would be most helpful to the Joint Task Force.

What do you think about early learning and childcare in your community?

1. What are the good things related to early learning and childcare that you believe are working?
2. What do you believe should be changed?
3. What do you believe in your heart will work?
4. What supports/environments do you believe are needed in order for your children to have the early learning and childcare opportunities they need and deserve?

What do you think about First Nations and Métis elementary/secondary education in Saskatchewan?

1. What are the good things that are happening in education in your school/community?
2. What would you like to see changed?
3. What do you know in your heart will work?
4. What supports/environments do you need to get the education you want for your children/community?

What do you think about First Nations and Métis post-secondary education in Saskatchewan?

1. What are the good things that are happening in post-secondary education in Saskatchewan that are working for you?
2. What would you like to see changed?
3. What do you know in your heart will work?
4. What supports/environments do you need to get the post-secondary education you want for your community?

What do you think about First Nations and Métis employment in Saskatchewan?

1. What are the good things related to employment that are working for you and your community?
2. What would you like to see changed?
3. What do you know in your heart will work?
4. What support/environments do you need to get the employment opportunities you want?

Other comments and suggestions.

Thank you for your time and thoughts in addressing these issues. Your answers are important to the Joint Task Force and your input is appreciated.

List of Meetings and Consultations

Joint Task Force on Improving Education and Employment Outcomes for First Nations and Métis People

Meetings with Organizations May – November 30, 2012

Date	Meeting	Organizations Represented	JTF Attending	Number at Meeting
May 7	Regina Trades and Skills Centre		All	3
May 10	School at Deschambault Lake	Meeting with school staff.	Gary	
May 14	Saskatoon Tribal Council (Pilot)		All	6
May 22	Meadow Lake Tribal Council Education	Meadow Lake Tribal Council: Education; Flying Dust First Nation; Birch Narrows Dene Nation; Clearwater River Dene Nation; Island Lake First Nation; Waterhen Lake First Nation.	All	10
May 22	Northwest School Division		Don and Rita	12
May 22	North West Regional College		Don and Rita	2
May 22	Meadow Lake Public Meeting (Civic Centre)		Don and Rita	18
May 29	Yorkton Tribal Council	Yorkton Tribal Council: Education	All	9
May 29	Parkland Regional College		All	5
May 29	Good Spirit School Division and Christ the Teacher School Division		All	18
May 29	Yorkton Public Meeting (Gallagher Centre)		All	10
May 30	File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council	File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council: Education	All	10
May 30	Prairie Valley School Division		All	7
May 30	Fort Qu'Appelle Public Meeting (File Hills Qu'Appelle Tribal Council)		All	16

Date	Meeting	Organizations Represented	JTF Attending	Number at Meeting
May 31	Regina School Division and Regina Catholic School Division		All	16
May 31	Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce and Regina Chamber of Commerce		All	4
May 31	Treaty Four Success Program Inc.		Don and Rita	15
May 31	Regina Treaty Status Indian Services Inc.		Don and Rita	7
May 31	Regina Public Meeting (Best Western Seven Oaks Hotel)		Don and Rita	9
July 9	Nancy Carswell		Rita	1
July 9	Saskatoon Industry Council		Rita	1
July 30	Northern Career Quest		Gary and Rita	1
Aug 30	Métis Nation of Saskatchewan		Rita	1
Sept 7	First Nations University of Canada		Don and Rita	8
Sept 10	La Loche Public Meeting (La Loche Community School: Dene Building)		Don and Rita	13
Sept 11	Ile-à-la-Crosse School Division	Board of Education, Director of Education, Secretary Treasurer, school principals	Don and Rita	9
Sept 11	Métis Local #21 (Ile-à-la-Crosse)		Don and Rita	1
Sept 11	Ile-à-la-Crosse Public Meeting (Rossignol High School)		Don and Rita	16
Sept 12	English River First Nation and La Plonge Band (Beauval)		Don and Rita	3
Sept 12	Valley View School (Beauval)	Meeting with school staff.	Don and Rita	25
Sept 19	First Nations and Métis Education Policy Advisory Committee		Gary and Rita	15
Sept 19	CUPE		All	3

Date	Meeting	Organizations Represented	JTF Attending	Number at Meeting
Sept 24	Stony Rapids Public Meeting (Stony Rapids School)		Gary and Rita	7
Sept 25	Black Lake Denesuline First Nation	Meeting with six Councillors and the Director of Education	Gary and Rita	7
Sept 26	Hatchel Lake Denesuline First Nation	Meeting with six Councillors and the Band Manager	Gary and Rita	7
Sept 26	Father Megret High School	Meeting with Councillors, Band Manager and school staff	Gary and Rita	11
Sept 28	FSIN Women's Commission		Gary and Rita	7
Sept 28	Gabriel Dumont Institute (SUNTEP and GTI)		Gary and Rita	9
Oct 10	ITEP		Don and Rita	8
Oct 22	Prince Albert Grand Council Annual Assembly	Wahpeton Dakota Nation, Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation, James Smith Cree Nation, Montreal Lake Cree Nation, Lac La Ronge Indian Band, Peter Ballantyne Cree Nation, Cumberland House Cree Nation, Shoal Lake Cree Nation, Red Earth Cree Nation, Lac La Hache Dene Nation, Black Lake Dene Nation and Fond du Lac Dene Nation.	All	200
Oct 22	Prince Albert Chamber of Commerce		All	2
Oct 22	Saskatchewan Rivers School Division		All	2
Oct 22	Michael Gatin		All	3
Oct 22	Prince Albert Métis Women's Association		All	2
Oct 22	Prince Albert Public Meeting (Queen Mary Community School)		All	21
Oct 23	NORTEP/NORPAC (La Ronge)		Don and Rita	8

Date	Meeting	Organizations Represented	JTF Attending	Number at Meeting
Oct 23	Northern Lights School Division	Board of Education Members, Senior Administration and Consultants	Don and Rita	10
Oct 23	La Ronge Public Meeting (Gordon Denney Community School in Air Ronge)		Don and Rita	12
Oct 25	Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation		All	6
Nov 5	Cumberland House Public Meeting (Charlebois Community School)		Rita	26
Nov 6	Town of Nipawin	Town of Nipawin; Northeast School Division; Cumberland Regional College; Labour Market Services, Ministry of the Economy; Gabriel Dumont Institute; East Side Limb Outreach; Indian Child and Family Services; University of Regina, United Nations Regional Centre of Expertise in Regina	All	20
Nov 7	Battleford Agencies Tribal Chiefs and Northwest Nations Education Council		All	16
Nov 7	Living Sky School Division and Light of Christ School Division		Don and Rita	10
Nov 7	Sakewew High School		Don and Rita	5
Nov 7	Public Meeting in North Battleford (Tropical Inn)		Don and Rita	14

Date	Meeting	Organizations Represented	JTF Attending	Number at Meeting
Nov 8	Northern Labour Market Committee (Prince Albert)	Northlands College; Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies; First Nations University of Canada/Northern Campus; NORTEP/PAC; Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology; Service Canada; Ministry of the Economy – Labour; Market Services Branch; Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission; Gabriel Dumont Institute Training and Employment; Dumont Technical Institute – DTI; Meadow Lake Tribal Council; Prince Albert Grand Council; Woodland Cree Enterprises; Ministry of Education, Northern Region; Northern Lights School Division, Ile a la Cross School Division; Creighton School Division; Credenza Virtual High School and College; Athabasca Enterprise Region; Boreal West Enterprise Region; Churchill River Enterprise Region; Visions North Community Futures; Beaver River Community Futures	Don and Rita	31
Nov 15	LEADS – League of Educational Administrators, Directors, Superintendents	LEADS Executive – Zones 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,	All	8
Nov 21	Sask. Aboriginal Literacy Network		Gary, Don	3
Nov 21	Northern Leaders Table		All	8
Nov 21	Saskatoon Public		All	37
Nov 26	SIGA – Sask. Indian Gaming Authority			2
Nov 27	Treaty Table Officers	Director of Treaty Governance Federation of Indian Nations Government of Canada Ochapowace First Nation Office of the Treaty Commissioner Pasqua First Nation and Treaty Four	All	24

Date	Meeting	Organizations Represented	JTF Attending	Number at Meeting
		Executive Council Province of Saskatchewan Starblanket First Nation Wahpeton Dakota Nation		
Nov 30	Shared Standards and Capacity Building Council	Ministry of Education FSIN – Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations BATC – Battleford Agencies Tribal Chiefs FHQTC – Fort Qu’Appelle Tribal Council NWNEC – North West Nations Education Council STC- Saskatoon Tribal Council		13
Total	63 Meetings			821