

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education

"We are entering a time of hope...of collaboration...and of walking together to provide bright futures for our students. It is very exciting to think of the possibilities." Sandy Axmann, Learning Services Supervisor

Eliminating Achievement Gaps

Grande Yellowhead Public School Division: Success for All... All Kids Are Our Kids

In Grande Yellowhead Public School Division #77, the success with high school completion rates is largely due to the passionate, dedicated, caring and compassionate people who work on developing relationships each day. Teachers take the time to engage students in other ways than just in classrooms. There is a strong sense of team. "Success for All ...All Kids Are Our Kids, One Year's Growth through Quality Learning Environments" is our philosophy.

Renee Fehr is the Indigenous Liaison worker who travels between Grande Cache schools. She is the glue that connects that community closely to the schools at all levels. She supervises the classes so that the 3V Cree Language teacher, Sandra Davenport, is able to immerse students in cultural activities as well as their language. According to Renee, "Lots of times teachers want to do it themselves but they don't necessarily understand how Aboriginal culture is different, how the values and cultural understandings make a huge difference.



So the big thing is then to include me so that those points are made and so parents know, we, educators, don't know everything, but understand that we want to help, and we want to learn, and we want to support."

Renee also reaches out to the Aseniwuche Winewak Nation located just outside of Grande Cache.

Renee includes her neighbouring community because students transfer between school districts. She enables the transition to Division #77 schools to be as seamless as possible by supporting individual students and families that reach out to her.

Renee also creates collaborative activities between each school and community so bonds are created prior to students arriving at a new school. More students graduate from the Grande Cache high school because of the level of support they receive transitioning from school to school throughout their educational journey.

The Eagle Feather Program, initiated division-wide just last year, is growing. The need to educate principals and the community about their cultural importance has been identified. Proper protocols for awarding an Eagle feather will be developed by working with Indigenous Education Council members.

Completion Rates Up

Achievement by self-identified First Nations, Métis and Inuit high school students in Grande Yellowhead is trending upwards. The 2016 Accountability Pillar indicates that:

- High School Completion Rate is at 68.6% and well above the provincial rate of 50.2%
- Diploma Exam Participation Rate is 34.3% while the provincial rate is 20.7%

All Family School Liaison Counselors are trained in Circle of Courage and Ways of Knowing and provide culturally responsive supports in a timely manner. This helps ensure that barriers to completing high school are minimized or removed.



Elders provide wisdom and support to students, teachers and schools.

This level of support is a model for the other four zones of the division.

This is a great working model for successfully providing supports within schools. The issue becomes being able to replicate it in all areas of the school jurisdiction. "Success for All ...All Kids Are Our Kids, One Year's Growth through Quality Learning Environments" is our goal, one student at a time.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education

"We are entering a time of hope...of collaboration...and of walking together to provide bright futures for our students. It is very exciting to think of the possibilities." Sandy Axmann, Learning Services Supervisor

Eliminating Achievement Gaps

Discussion Starters:

1. The Indigenous Liaison Worker from the Grande Yellowhead Public School Division travels between schools in Grande Cache to help the Cree language teacher immerse students in cultural activities as well as Cree language. How does your district connect the community to the classroom?
2. How does your school or district address the challenges of students transitioning from school to school? In what ways does/can your school/district collaborate or initiate collaboration with surrounding First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities to help transitioning students feel a connection prior to arriving at a new school?
3. What are *culturally responsive* supports? Why are culturally responsive supports important? Reflect on the supports your school currently provides to First Nations, Métis and Inuit students. To what degree are the supports culturally responsive? What changes might be needed?

For more information:

- [Supporting Successful Transitions for FNMI Students](#) Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium
- [Cree Language and Culture](#) Edmonton Public Schools
- [Engaging FNMI Students using Culturally Relevant and Responsive Education Practices and Strategies](#) Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium
- [First Nations, Metis and Inuit Educator Resources Padlet](#) Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium
- [Teachings of the Seven Grandfathers](#) Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium
- [Our Way is a Valid Way](#) Western and Northern Canadian Protocol

Grande Yellowhead Public School Division: Success for All... All Kids Are Our Kids

This is a great working model for successfully providing supports within schools. The issue becomes being able to replicate it in all areas of the school jurisdiction. "Success for All ...All Kids Are Our Kids, One Year's Growth through Quality Learning Environments" is our goal, one student at a time.