

Providing Educational Leadership

First Nations Schools Administration Handbook

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Introduction

This handbook was developed by the First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) in an effort to provide support to principals and administrators in First Nations schools.¹ The FNSA recognizes that administrators of First Nations schools work in particularly

¹ The FNSA is a non-profit organization directed by and for First Nations schools in British Columbia. The Association began in 1996, and it works to facilitate communications, undertake research, facilitate professional development activities, and implement programs to assist First Nations schools in providing quality educational opportunities. More information is available at www.fnsa.ca

challenging situations. They not only have a wide range of responsibilities and very demanding workloads; the nature of First Nations schools also means that many people work in significant isolation without the support of nearby colleagues and supervisors. In addition, many principals and administrators of First Nations schools are relatively new to their position and/or to First Nations schools, and they must simultaneously strive to understand their leadership roles within their schools and the unique context of the schools and communities in which they operate.

This handbook was developed in an effort to share information about the various responsibilities of school principals, and the unique aspects that relate to working in a First Nations school. By necessity, the information presented is quite general, as it is intended to apply in a wide range of circumstances, but it should be noted that First Nations schools in BC vary tremendously. Not only are the languages, cultures, values, and perspectives of the school communities different; the school sizes range from only three or four to nearly 300 students, they have anywhere between one and dozens of staff people, and the grades offered range from K4 and K5 only to every grade from K4 – 12. In addition, some of the schools are only a year old, while others have been operating for more than 20 years. Some of the schools are located in or near urban centers, while others are extremely remote, sometimes hundreds of kilometers from the nearest center, many accessible only by plane or boat.

Finally, First Nations schools differ greatly in terms of their governance and overall structures. Many First Nations schools are band operated, either with or without a school board, but other schools have chosen any number of other options, such as registering as an independent school, operating through a contract with a public school district, or belonging to a First Nations controlled school district. First Nations choose any of those options for a variety of reasons, including funding implications, jurisdictional concerns, and access to quality services at reasonable rates.

Update on School Structures

On July 5th, 2006, representatives of First Nations and the federal and provincial governments signed an agreement in recognition of the right of First Nations peoples to make decisions about the education of their learners. That agreement includes a detailed framework that First Nations can use to negotiate agreements regarding jurisdiction for education. Taking advantage of the jurisdiction framework will be entirely voluntary, and interested First Nations will be required to formally “opt in” to the process.

The jurisdiction agreement is based upon the creation of two types of Education Authorities. First, each participating First Nation will designate a Community Education Authority, which will have law making authority with respect to its membership. Under the proposed model of First Nations Education Jurisdiction, First Nations’ Community Education Authorities may take many forms. It is hoped that the framework that has been negotiated will accommodate all of the models First Nations may wish to establish. The CEAs will have responsibility for determining policy directions for their education systems and will oversee the implementation of First Nations education programming on reserve. They will also be responsible for approving agreements with other bodies for the delivery of education programs and services.

Each Community Education Authority will delegate aspects of its jurisdiction to a central First Nations Education Authority (FNEA). The purpose of the FNEA is to provide support to First Nations who wish to exercise jurisdiction over education. The FNEA will also help to ensure that there is adequate support for smaller First Nations and will provide a strategic approach to some components of jurisdiction. First Nations are still providing direction regarding the role of the FNEA; some of the powers that have been considered for delegation to the FNEA include teacher certification, school certification, and curriculum and standards. The FNEA will not have inherent jurisdiction and will only exercise jurisdiction in delegated areas.

Once implemented at a local level, jurisdiction agreements will significantly change the control of First Nations schools, but the exact nature of those changes has not yet been determined. In addition, school staff may not be immediately affected by the shift in jurisdiction, as schools are expected to maintain their established programs in the short term and continue their ongoing efforts toward improvement over time.

Up-to-date information about the jurisdiction negotiations is available on the FNEA web site at www.fnesc.ca.

In spite of their differences, First Nations schools share many similarities. The schools are committed to providing quality instruction as well as a nurturing, caring environment for children. The schools emphasize and promote First Nations cultures and languages, and they strive to reflect the values and traditions of the communities they serve. The schools also share many common constraints. Historically, teacher turnover rates have been quite high, which has caused disturbances for schools, students, and communities. In addition, most First Nations schools have limited resources, relatively new administrators and teachers, and they tend to be quite isolated.

In order to successfully meet those challenges, it is crucial that principals understand and fulfill their key role in improving schools and ensuring that they are excellent places for children to learn. As Sparks and Hirsh (2000) note:

In their search for ways to improve school performance, educators and policy makers have addressed a broad array of challenges confronting schools. These approaches to improvement have included raising standards, strengthening teacher professional development, refocusing schools around the primary goal of student achievement, and holding schools accountable for results. But only one area of policy focus – strengthening school leadership – can exert control over all of these challenges simultaneously.

With that perspective in mind, this handbook was prepared in an effort to assist the dedicated principals of First Nations schools. The development of this handbook involved a review of relevant literature, as well as the collection of sample information from First Nations schools throughout BC. In addition, further information and details were gathered through the author's attendance at a four day Short Course for Principals and Managers that was facilitated by Chief Nathan Matthew at the University of British Columbia (UBC) during July, 2002.

Early drafts of this handbook received significant feedback from Chief Nathan Matthew and Susan Gower, two individuals with significant expertise in First Nations school administration. A draft of the handbook was also shared at three school administrators' workshops in September and October, 2002. Over 40 First Nations

school principals and administrators participated in those workshops, and their valuable feedback and input was incorporated into the final version of this handbook. Finally, this updated version of the handbook reflects requests for additional information and feedback from school principals.

One final note relates to the terms used in this handbook. First Nations schools use a variety of terms to describe the person who has administrative responsibility for the school, including principal and school administrator. For reasons of simplicity and consistency, this handbook uses the term principal, but the concepts described within have relevance for anyone who is responsible for the overall operation, leadership, and direction of First Nations schools.

Section One: The Principal's Role

The job of the principal is both extremely demanding and critical to the success of a school. As Lease (2002) writes, “while the work of teachers and the interest of parents contribute vitally to student success, make no mistake about the fundamental ingredient – the ability of the principal to lead change and establish direction.”

Principals are expected to make daily, often immediate decisions in the midst of constant demands from a variety of constituents. Further, the decisions they make can affect the lives of their students, teachers, other staff members, parents, and community members. The principal is expected to lead the school, maintain discipline, manage the budget, assist staff, respond to parental inquiries, and report to the school governance board. As Sparks and Hirsh (2000) state:

Not only must school leaders perform the tasks of organizing, budgeting, managing, and dealing with disruptions inside and outside the system, today's instructional leaders must be able to coach, teach, and develop the teachers in their schools. They must be steeped in curriculum, instruction, and assessment in order to supervise a continuous improvement process that measures progress in raising student performance. They must build learning communities within their schools and engage the broader school community in creating and achieving a compelling vision for their schools.

While those tasks alone may seem to constitute a full-time job, in many First Nations schools, principals are also asked to sit on a variety of out-of-school committees, help with programs for youth, participate in community planning, and often act as school carpenter and plumber!

In some ways, the various roles of school principals can be divided into management and leadership responsibilities, although there is of course considerable overlap between the two categories. Managers focus on "running a smooth ship," while instructional leaders focus on learning and instruction. Effective principals are both managers and instructional leaders, recognizing that both roles are essential and providing a balance between management and instructional skills (Chell, 2002).

Although the role of the principal as instructional leader is widely advocated, it is seldom practiced; principals still spend most of their time dealing with managerial issues.

Often, management responsibilities can, if allowed, take up all of a principal's time, particularly because management issues are often very pressing and require immediate action. The consensus in the literature is that, although the role of the principal as instructional leader is widely advocated, it is seldom practiced; principals still spend most of their time dealing with managerial issues. Stronge (1988, cited in Chell, 2002) calculated that elementary school principals spent 62.2% of their time on managerial issues and 11% on instructional leadership issues, even after undergoing training or in-service emphasizing their role as instructional leader. Thus, the image of instructional leadership has become entrenched in the professional rhetoric but all too often is lacking in administrative practice.

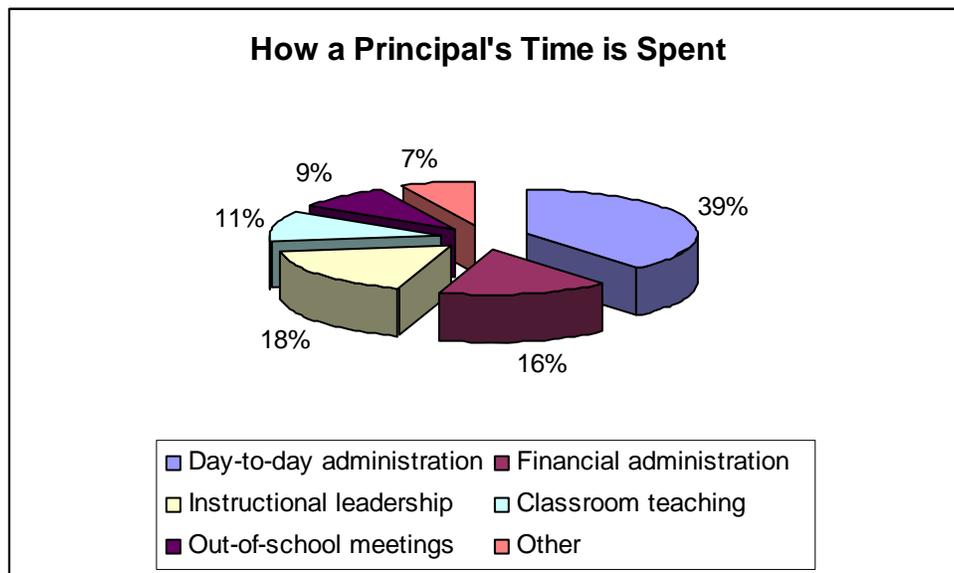
Similarly, the FNSA annually collects data from First Nations schools to explore their staffs, programming, and educational results. The 2005 data collection initiative asked schools to indicate how their administrators' FTE is allocated by estimating the percentage of total work time that is assigned to a list of tasks. The results of that question are shown below (FNSA, 2006).

Allocation of administrator's time	Average % time per task
Day-to-day administration	39%
Financial administration	16%
Instructional leadership	18%
Classroom teaching	11%

Out-of-school meetings	9%
Other	7%
Total	100%

To be truly effective, principals must pay adequate attention to both their management and leadership functions. Some of the management and leadership responsibilities of a principal are outlined below, and more detail about many of the key activities is provided in further sections of this handbook.

The participants at the FNSA sponsored workshops described the balance between management and leadership functions in terms of a pie chart. Principals are continually pushing to enlarge the time allocated to leadership functions – a continual battle given the plethora of other pressures they face. The workshop participants encouraged one another to keep pushing the boundaries to find more time for their leadership roles.



1.1 A Principal's Management Responsibilities

Most people are fairly familiar with the numerous management responsibilities of principals. Principals are concerned with the overall functioning of the school, including ensuring that it is operational for the commencement of each school term and having a full school staff in place. Principals also manage the school budget and ensure that the funding available will allow the school to operate for the duration of the school year. Principals are responsible for having reasonable timetables in place. In addition, principals are generally asked to oversee discipline, ensure school safety, organize regular staff meetings, and maintain the school's record keeping, busing system, and instructional supplies.

Many of those issues will be discussed further in section four: managing day-to-day operations. That section includes a review of topics such as file keeping, school calendar, policy development, staff meetings, school budget and resources, school safety, drug and alcohol awareness, scheduling, and technology.

Appendix Two of this document includes many sample school policies that relate to a range of administrative issues. Principals should feel free to adapt the samples to make them appropriate for their particular situations and needs.

1.2 A Principal's Leadership Responsibilities

As mentioned above, while a principal's management function can often seem to constitute a full-time job, it is imperative that principal's maintain a focus on their role in "educational leadership" – that is supervision, ensuring quality curriculum and instruction, and ensuring that the school is continually working towards its goals for improvement. According to Robbins and Alvy (1995), "leadership practices of principals in high-performing schools include helping to establish clear goals,

providing a vision of the good school, and encouraging teachers by assisting them in finding the necessary resources to carry out their jobs.”

While the leadership practices of principals are certainly central for all schools, they have special relevance for First Nations schools, which are more autonomous and usually not part of a broader educational decision-making structure, such as a school district. That means that the principals of most First Nations schools are often responsible for leadership and decision-making functions that are otherwise undertaken by District personnel. It also means that principals of First Nations schools are more isolated in their decision-making, a fact that brings many unique challenges and opportunities.

While the leadership practices of principals are central for all schools, they have special relevance for First Nations schools, which are particularly autonomous.

Principals are, primarily, the instructional leaders of their school, meaning that they shape the environment in which teachers and students succeed or fail. Although teachers are absolutely critical to the learning that takes place at the classroom level, the principal addresses school-wide issues in instruction and curriculum that relate to classroom decisions, and as such they have a significant impact on all of the teaching that takes place in the school. Principals, therefore, must understand every facet of instruction at a high level (Lease, 2002). As the instructional leader, the principal can affect every factor that encourages student learning in the school, and the principal is also responsible for continually assessing the school’s operations and programs to ensure that they are meeting community and school expectations.

One of the key components of instructional leadership, then, is knowing what the community and school expects for its students, and maintaining a clear focus on the goals or the “vision” for the school. Some schools may not have a clearly stated philosophy or a defined vision of what the school can achieve. In those instances, the principal can help the school and community to identify their educational values and set out a vision.

If a vision has already been developed, the principal can ensure that it is shared, understood, and that people commit to the vision so that it remains a real guide for the school's programs and activities. In this regard, principals act as planners and prioritizers for their schools, sorting through the massive range of possible approaches and programs and maintaining a focus on what matters for their students and community. More information about creating and maintaining a school vision is included in section two of this handbook.

Principals are also the shapers of the school culture, which can become either a positive influence or a significant barrier to learning. The elements that make up a school's culture include all aspects of the school's environment that have the potential to influence the learning, discipline, and morale of all those who work and study there. According to Pasi (2001), the ongoing challenge for principals is to identify steps for enhancing school culture and the conditions under which students can learn more, educators can teach more, and everyone can feel welcome and respected.

Therefore, one of their critical roles of principals is that of "morale builder." Ideally, principals will create a school culture that celebrates growth and high achievement. As Ramsey (1992) notes, "everyone in the school community should know full well that the principal is an unequivocal advocate for excellence and that anything less is unacceptable." Principals also need to create a school culture in which teachers feel supported, and principals must make every effort to ensure that teachers are successful.

Fundamentally, teachers must feel comfortable and safe at the school, regardless of what is taking place elsewhere.

Fundamentally, teachers must feel confident and safe at the school. It is imperative that, regardless of what is taking place in the wider community, the school culture must remain positive and clearly aimed at making the school a better place for students. The issues of creating a positive school culture and working with teachers are discussed more in sections two and three of this handbook.

1.3 Liaison With the Community

For all schools, but particularly for First Nations schools, another primary role of the principal is to maintain strong and positive connections with the community. First Nations schools operate completely within the context of their communities, and effective principals understand and make the most of that context.

As mentioned above, it is the role of the principal to protect, as much as possible, students and staff from anything negative that may be going on outside of the school, and to maximize the benefits of positive and encouraging community developments. At the same time, principals are primarily responsible for ensuring beneficial public relations for the school, sharing the good things that are happening and fostering a respectful, constructive relationship with Chief and Council, the school governing authority, and the community at-large. The important connection of the school and community will be discussed in more detail in many of the following sections of this handbook.

1.4 Other Duties

Anyone familiar with the role of a principal in a First Nations school recognizes that there are numerous other duties associated with that position. Anyone phoning for the principal will often be told that he or she is busy at the moment, fixing the school roof, or helping to clear snow from the school playground, or helping the cooperative education leader drive students to their work placement, or helping to build a community garden.

The demands on a First Nations school principal can seem endless. Because of that reality, it is critical that principals realize the importance of practicing good time management, ensuring ongoing self-development, and making every effort to maintain their own health and well-being. Those issues are discussed more in section five of this handbook.

The Canadian Association of Principals Statement on Education Leadership

The Essential Tasks of School-Based Leadership

The purpose of this statement is to describe the qualities or capacities that school-based administrators need to provide educational leadership in the school setting.

Strategic Leadership

Facilitate the development of a shared vision of learning and the purposes of the school.

Create conditions in the school and community to achieve that vision.

Resolve problems in achieving the school's vision.

Manage a planned change process and action plan to improve the school and learning.

Understand and critically examine educational, social, and economic issues.

Understand the major historical, philosophical, ethical, and economic influences on schooling and learning.

Manifest a personal code of ethics or values.

Assessment and Evaluation

Conduct assessments of the needs and achievements of students and staff.

Use data and surveys to monitor progress.

Engage school staff in the study of best practices.

Analyze and present findings about trends, issues, and applications of educational strategies to school staff, parents, and the community.

Instructional Leadership

Develop the school's learning culture.

Create a school culture supportive of learning and development.

Base decisions on research, applied theory, informed practice, and recommendations from experts.

Adapt curricula and develop programs to meet the needs of students.

Help staff members to align their use of teaching strategies with instructional goals and recognized effective teaching practices.

Supervise the staff of the school based on shared agreements of purposes and criteria for success.

Make use of a variety of staffing patterns and student groupings.

Ensure regular assessments of student progress and communications of results.

Professional Development and Human Resources

Identify the professional development needs of all members of the school staff.

Use adult learning strategies in the professional development including authentic problem solving, mentoring, and opportunities to practice.

Analyze the job requirements and work processes of the school.

Encourage all staff to establish self-development plans and offer incentives such as recruitment, induction, and compensation.

Student Services

Ensure that the school's student services include guidance, counseling, and academic/vocational services.

Facilitate and ensure effective communications with social, health, and training agencies.

Encourage staff, parents, and other organizations to organize extra-curricular activities.

Management and Supervision

Ensure effective management and administrative practices within the school to maximize efficiencies.

Develop and assign staff roles and establish criteria for effectiveness.

Interpersonal Relationships

Communicate well and often with different audiences within the school.

Financial Management

Review financial and other resources to identify savings and potential sources of funding.

Establish a long-term plan for the acquisition and updating of equipment and facilities.

Make financial information accessible to staff and parents.

Information Systems and Technology

Use technology to enrich curriculum and instruction.

Assess the current use of technology in the business operations of the school.

Establish and monitor a long-term technology plan for the school.

Make extensive use of technology to assist adult learners to stay or return to school.

Integrate the introduction of technology with the School's Improvement Plan.

Community and Media Relations

Secure the support of the community and influential leaders for your school goals, plans, and progress.

Describe the school's goals, plans, and programs effectively to parents, community leaders, business groups, colleges, universities, research institutions, and others.

Link the school to local community learning services such as libraries, museums, science centers, agencies, and professionals.

Facilitate parent access through open houses, workshops, newsletters, and information meetings.

**For more information, see
www.cdnprincipals.org**

Section Two: Respecting the School's Meaning

2.1 Understanding and Reflecting the Community's Goals for the School

In order to successfully lead and manage their schools, it is imperative that principals have a clear understanding of why the school exists. Only by examining and respecting the school's meaning can principals lead their staffs and students toward appropriate goals that are supported by parents and the community.

Each First Nations community established its school for a variety of unique and legitimate reasons. Many communities were not satisfied with the education their children were receiving through the public school system, and they accordingly took the initiative to create their own school under their own control as a way to better influence and ensure the success of their children. Some First Nations in remote locations also established their own schools in order to eliminate lengthy, uncomfortable commutes for young children, allowing them to be educated in a setting closer to their families, elders, and communities.

Overall, all First Nations schools were created in an effort to provide educational programs in an environment that is particularly supportive and nurturing for First Nations students. Communities also hope that the operation of their own schools will promote the preservation of their languages and cultures, and as a result those program areas are of primary importance in First Nations schools.

More detailed information about the purpose and intentions of First Nations schools is outlined in the FNSA publication *Reaching for Success: Considering the Achievements and*

Effectiveness of First Nations Schools (available through the FNSA office).

The participants at the 2002 Summer Short Course for Principals and Managers of First Nations Schools also outlined their beliefs about education, which are highlighted in the box below.

Understanding the reasons for the creation of First Nations schools will help principals be more successful in reflecting the goals and expectations of the community. New principals should therefore take the time to speak to community leaders and Elders about why the school was created, and the principal should insist that those values be incorporated into the school's culture, curriculum, and programs. In addition, principals should make every effort to ensure that new school staff members are provided thorough orientations so that they also understand the community's beliefs about the school. It is important to persistently invite teachers and other school staff members to attend community events and celebrations so that they continually enhance their understanding of the First Nations cultures, traditions, and perspectives on education.

First Nations Principals and Managers – Our Beliefs About Education

We believe that ...

- All children and all people have value.
- Every child has the ability to learn.
- All children have the right to learn.
- Everyone is a teacher, and everyone – all community members – can make a difference.
- Having a positive self-image is imperative for effective learning.
- First Nations people have a right to live as unique people, with unique cultures, languages, and territories.
- First Nations people have a right and an obligation to pass on their ways of knowing as First Nations people.
- Parents are essential to the educational well-being of children.
- We can best educate children from a position of shared vision.
- Education is a part of the whole; it is not just about academics – it also involves beliefs, values, and culture.

2.2 Creating and Maintaining a Vision for the School

What does our school stand for? That question is really the key to building an effective, meaningful school, particularly in a First Nations community. In order for everyone to feel comfortable answering that question with clarity and certainty, a school must have a shared vision or mission – a purpose for education that can be seen in the daily activities of the school. A school vision helps students, teachers, administrators, and parents have a sense of what is important in their specific setting. Knowing what is important helps those involved with the school make beneficial choices that everyone will support. As Sparks and Hirsh (2000)

“Schools with a clear idea of what they want tend to be the most successful. If you can keep an image of a high quality school, you have a great chance of achieving it.”
Participants at the First Nations Schools Principals and Managers Short Course, 2002

note, a key factor in the success of a school is the presence of a skilled principal who creates a sense of shared mission around improving teaching and learning, and who delegates authority to educators who have the trust and support they need to get the job done.

A school vision can also help principals, school staff, governing board members, and parents maintain a focus on what is deemed to be most important. Too often, schools can be overwhelmed with the tremendous range of possible activities and programs, resulting in them becoming what Peters (cited in Sherer, 1996) refers to as a Christmas tree schools. Peters comments:

All schools have to be very careful of becoming Christmas tree schools. That’s a little bit of everything and a great deal of nothing. Our schools are offered thousands of non-instructional distractions that use precious learning time. We somehow have to keep talking about a challenging curriculum and focus on improving the learning environment. Sometimes we permit ourselves to get away with using our time for things other than real learning experiences.

Consistently referring to the school vision statement may be one way to avoid becoming distracted by too many competing possibilities.

In establishing a school vision, it is important to remember that “there are as many definitions and descriptions of a vision or mission as there are authors writing about the topic and schools trying to define their purpose” (Robbins and Alvry, 1991). There is really no right or wrong vision statement, just as there is no right or wrong way to arrive at one; the vision statement and process used for its development must fit within the school and community context, and reflect what is reasonable to expect in specific circumstances.

Before embarking on the establishment of a school vision, a principal must ensure that circumstances will allow for positive discussions to take place. Participants in the FNSEA sponsored workshops for principals acknowledged that some schools may periodically experience tension, including poor relationships amongst staff, misunderstandings about the connection of staff to the governing board, community-based political upheavals, or family conflicts that may affect the way in which some people interact with the school. A principal facing significant tensions or conflicts may attempt to resolve those difficulties before beginning a school visioning exercise. In other cases, the principal may need to incorporate conflict resolution efforts into the process of developing a school vision. If the situation is particularly problematic or if the principal is uncertain about how to resolve the conflicts that exist, it may be useful to have an individual from outside the community provide advice or help to resolve the challenges that exist. Contacting other school principals in such circumstances may prove to be useful.

While there are a variety of ways to approach the development of a vision statement, for a vision to be alive and truly worthwhile the building process should be participatory. No vision can guide the work of an organization unless it is shared. If a principal has a lofty vision but it is not compatible with the perspectives of parents and teachers, it will undoubtedly fail.

Many educators believe that the sharing of the vision must begin with its creation. Being involved in the process of its development brings both ownership and commitment to the vision, and involving a wide range of people demonstrates to the community that their input is valued. A collaborative process also helps to insulate schools from changes in community politics; when a community spends considerable time coming to an agreement on what it wants, the community will be loath to change that just because of a vocal new school board member or community member (Richardson, 1997).

Outlined below are a variety of possible ways to develop a school vision, any of which can be altered as required to suit the unique needs of each school and community. Undoubtedly there are also a countless number of other possibilities that could work equally well. It is the role of the principal, ideally in consultation with the school governing agency, parents, and/or elders, to select a relevant process and to make it work in their community.

Creating a School Vision Statement: Example One

One First Nations school in BC developed its mission statement through a community dinner. The people who attended the meeting were each assigned a coloured name tag based upon their role within the school, with a different colour given to school staff, Elders, the school governing board members, parents, students, and other interested community members. People were asked to ensure that each table had at least one person with each different coloured name tag, to ensure that a variety of perspectives were represented at each table.

The meeting participants were asked to spend some time during dinner talking about the community school and its meaning for them. After dinner, each table was provided a large sheet of paper, some old catalogues and magazines, and glue. Each table was asked to collectively create a collage of images that reflected their feelings about the school. Following that exercise, each group presented their collage to the other meeting participants, and a facilitator wrote down the words and phrases that were used, and prepared a draft mission statement based upon the collages and presentations. The meeting participants then discussed and refined the draft statement, resulting in a collectively designed mission statement.

Creating a School Vision Statement: Example Two

You could choose to have a community meeting and begin by describing a mission statement and its purpose. For example, explain that “a mission statement communicates a vision of what our school stands for, what we believe, and what we want to achieve.” Then talk about the rationale for a mission statement and share some examples from other schools.

Invite everyone present to begin by thinking about where they would like to send their own child to school. How would the child be treated? What would the experience be like? How would their child feel? Ask everyone to write their responses on small pieces of paper or post-it notes. Then ask everyone to think for a moment about where they would like to work. What would it be like? How would people interact? Have everyone again write down his or her thoughts. Then ask people to take their thoughts and fuse them into a few sentences written on an index card.

Have everyone get into small groups of 5 or 6 and share what they have written on their index cards. After everyone has read theirs, the group can create a few collective statements with which they all agree. These can be written on a piece of flip chart paper. Pairs of groups can then work together to again combine their statements into one. This process continues until there is only one piece of chart paper with the few statements with which everyone agrees.

Creating a School Vision Statement: Example Three

A committee of school and parent representatives can create a draft vision statement, perhaps using a retreat or some other gathering where they can focus on the school goals only. The vision statement that is developed can then be shared and revised at a community meeting. Although this process may not reflect the ideal level of community involvement, it may work well for schools that do not feel that a more comprehensive process of input is feasible.

2.2.1 Sharing the Mission or Vision Statement

Regardless of how the mission or vision statement is created, it is crucial that the results are shared widely and are reflected in the school’s priorities and goals.

Generally, the vision statement should consistently emphasize a commitment to children – a commitment that should be demonstrated in both talk and actions. It is often helpful to discuss the vision statement and school goals in the first staff meeting of each year. It may also be useful to ask people to come up with a simple slogan to

summarize the vision, perhaps through a contest. That slogan can then be used widely, in newsletters, on banners, on notes home to parents, on t. shirts ... in any number of creative ways so that everyone is constantly reminded of what the school stands for. Several vision statement examples are highlighted below.

Other vision statement samples are included in Appendix One of this document.

School Vision Statement Example One

Our mission is to work in a life-long partnership with our people to assure the continuing use of the Language and the maintenance of the cultural identity of our Nation while giving students their knowledge, skills and attitudes as citizens to enable them to successfully meet the social, economic, and political challenges of life.

School Vision Statement Example Two

Education is an integral part of the process that provides children with opportunities to develop their spiritual, emotional, mental and physical abilities. By providing children with a safe, caring, and challenging educational environment, culturally and academically appropriate programs, opportunities to be successful, and positive educational and social experiences, our children will be better prepared to more fully participate in all aspects of society. Our school will produce self-reliant students who exhibit strong self-esteem, a social consciousness, cultural pride, good work habits and competence, and who value life-long learning.

School Vision Statement Example Three

At our school, it is our goal to provide an education that meets the educational needs of today in a manner that is consistent with our cultural teachings. At our school, children are guided to meet their potential, while gaining knowledge and appreciation of their culture.

2.2.2 Implementing the School Vision

Publicizing a school's newly developed vision statement is an important way to communicate with the school's stakeholders, but it is only the beginning of the effort required to use the vision as a guide and a measure for school improvement.

Working to achieve the vision begins immediately after it has been developed, and it involves the organization identifying its goals and setting out strategies for achieving those goals. The participants at the FNSA workshops for principals called that process "going from the big picture to the details of implementation." Working toward the school vision also includes building in mechanisms to evaluate progress made toward its achievement. School assessment processes are one way to measure progress being made – an issue that is discussed more in section 5.4 of this handbook.

Outlined in the box below are additional suggested steps adapted from Richardson (2000) for implementing the school vision and determining whether progress is being made toward its achievement.

Steps for Implementing the Vision and Measuring Progress Toward Goals

- **Data collection.** Collecting data underlies all of the work to measure progress. As soon as the vision statement has been written, baseline data can be collected to assess the current reality. Typically, the data collected includes standardized test scores, daily student attendance, number of dropouts, parent attendance at parent-teacher conferences, disciplinary information, student course enrolments, and students' post-graduate plans. Teachers can also collect classroom-based data, such as checklists of various types of activities and samples of assignments and student work.
- **Manageable goals.** Develop short-term goals that are actionable by breaking down the big work of achieving the vision into smaller, more manageable chunks of work.
- **Action plans.** Define action plans that are as specific as possible, possibly with one action plan for each short-term goal.
- **Information gathering.** Unless there is a continual flow of information to sustain them, visions will wither. One idea for ensuring a steady flow of information is to create study groups around various components of the vision and facilitate a sharing of the information gathered by the groups.
- **Staff meetings.** As schools put action plans in place, staff meetings are good opportunities to track a school's progress. Reporting and celebrating progress helps an organization build momentum and energy (effective staff meetings are discussed further in section four of this handbook).
- **Document progress.** Create some opportunities throughout the school year for teachers and other school team members to stop and evaluate their achievements.
- **The vision test.** At some point, the vision should become so much a part of "the way we do business" that schools will automatically turn to the vision for guidance on making key decisions.

2.2.3 A Vision for the Role of the Staff

An interesting variation on the development of a school-wide philosophy statement is for the administrative and teaching staff to create a joint mission statement related to their role as professionals. For example, the following code of ethics was developed for people who work in one of the First Nations schools in BC.

Sample Code of Ethics

This code of ethics applies to all school staff, including volunteers and specialists working in our school.

Commitment to the Students

The staff acknowledges the trust and responsibility given to them for the education and care of the community's children. In a child centred environment, the staff will help each student realize his or her potential and ensure that our culture is reflected in everyday practice. In fulfillment of those obligations, the staff shall:

- encourage the students to take independent action in the pursuit of learning;
- take steps to protect students from embarrassment or disparagement;
- be objective in all evaluations of the performance or conduct of students;
- be consistent and fair in the execution of school policies and the enforcement of rules, as these policies and rules affect students;
- maintain confidentiality regarding information obtained about students unless such disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law;
- endeavour to provide conditions conducive to learning, safety and health;
- at all times, maintain a professional relationship with students; and
- keep parents of students appropriately informed about the education of their children.

Commitment to Colleagues and the Profession

The educator shall exert every effort to promote a climate that encourages the exercise of professional judgment and to avoid behaviours that damage other professionals or the profession. In fulfillment of these obligations, the educator shall:

- represent his/her professional qualifications or competency properly and honestly;
- observe reasonable and proper loyalty to the internal school organization;
- conduct themselves at all times so that no dishonour befalls themselves or the profession;
- apply for specific positions only if they are not already held by others;
- respond generously to colleagues seeking professional assistance;
- disclose information about colleagues obtained in the course of professional service only if such disclosure serves a compelling professional purpose or is required by law;
- make valid professional criticisms directly to the person involved and then, if no resolution can be found, to a superior;
- resist and refrain from discussion of others' personal lives where such discussion has no bearing on the delivery of professional service;
- present the efforts and concerns of students, colleagues, and supervisors and all members of the community in the best possible light to each other and to others outside the school; and
- conduct themselves in the classroom, in the school, and in the community in such a manner as to provide a positive role model for students.

Commitment to the Employer and the Community

The staff recognizes the authority of the school society as the governing body of the school and will conduct themselves in an ethical manner in their relationship with the employer. The staff shall:

- recognize that they are in the territory of the First Nation;
- make every effort to become familiar with the traditional practices and the history of the First Nations people and present this in a positive light to students;
- render professional service to the best of their ability;
- adhere to the conditions of the contract until it has been terminated;
- notify the society as soon as possible of their intention to sign a contract with another employer;
- handle matters of grievance in the manner prescribed in this policy manual;
- let the aforementioned prescribed procedures run their course until possibilities for remedy are exhausted; and

- avoid the involvement of others, be they parents, colleagues, or outsiders, in any matter of grievance until possibilities for remedy by established authorities have been exhausted.

The FNSA has also initiated a consultation process to identify standards, competencies, and performance measures for teachers in First Nations schools. Those materials will soon be available through the FNSA office, and they may be useful for principals and teachers who want to consider a “vision” for school staff.

2.3 Creating a Positive School Culture

As described in section one of this handbook, a school's culture is critical to its success, and successful principals will take their school's culture very seriously. Principals are the primary shapers of school culture, in both large and small ways. According to Richardson (2001), principals send large cultural messages to staff and students with every decision regarding budgets, curriculum, instruction, and interactions with the community. Principals also send hundreds of small cultural messages to students and teachers every day, communicating the expectations for the school through almost every interaction with a student or teacher. Effective principals learn to consciously identify culture-enhancing opportunities and use them to influence teachers, students, and parents, always encouraging them to move in a positive direction.

“Everyone will notice where the principal is putting her attention, how she is balancing her efforts.”
Participants at the First Nations Schools Association Principals Workshops, 2002

While principals are enormously influential, however, they alone do not shape the culture of a school. Culture is a consensus about expectations, not just an individual's expectations, and teachers are especially important in maintaining a school's culture. Teachers connect with other teachers, with their students, and with parents. The ultimate goal of a principal in keeping a constructive school culture is positive morale. If the school staff is enthusiastic about and proud of their work, everyone will benefit, including students, the community, and the employees themselves.

Schools that work well usually have a culture that reflects cooperation, mutual respect, and trust. In this regard, principals can help build a positive culture by emphasizing the team aspect of the school's work, and by helping to enhance the leadership ability of each staff member.

In addition, a school will improve only if it has a culture of caring (Richardson, 2001). Teachers and other staff members must feel cared about in order to perform at

optimum levels, and staff who feel cared about will pass that feeling on to students. The participants at the FNSA school principal workshops also noted the need for principals to affirm school staff in front of students and each other. Doing so will help everyone feel supported and recognized as valued professionals.

Ramsey (1992) highlights the following additional aspects of an effective culture.

- Quality is a habit for everyone, and standards of performance and expectations are maintained at a high level.
- Staff and students feel good about themselves and are enthusiastic and motivated.
- There is a feeling of family within the school, and everyone works not as a group of individuals, but as a team.
- People are always conscious of the needs of the students.
- There is a feeling of collegialism throughout the school, and the school staff members determine their own patterns of work.
- The environment is flexible, and people readily accept and enjoy change.
- The school staff and students are proud and confident.
- The school provides an environment in which everyone grows.
- There is participatory planning and a feeling that everyone's contribution is valued.
- The organization has clear and relevant priorities, and values ethical responsibility.
- The school staff has a sense of ownership and people support one another.
- People have fun at work.

The school culture should also emphasize that the school is a community of learners and that everyone can learn from one another. School staff will feel empowered and more committed to the school if there is an atmosphere of shared decision-making. Students will also learn better with structures and opportunities to see their teachers and other staff members as approachable, interested, concerned human beings, rather than just information disseminators or remote supervisors (Pasi, 2001). The

participants at the FNSA principal workshops also suggested that school principals must be “connected to what is going on, and willing to pick up and pitch in at any time.”

Principals can support collegiality and high levels of motivation by really listening to people – students, parents, and staff – always valuing and encouraging a diversity of opinions and perspectives. Principals should also require that kind of positive interaction amongst others in the school. As Pasi (2001) notes:

The most important aspect of a positive school climate is its daily, deliberate emphasis on respect. Young people pay more attention to adults than they let on, and it is essential that they see adults treating one another with respect. If students do not feel respected by their teachers, many will refuse to learn anything other than that their teachers don't respect students.

Principals can also demonstrate the qualities they hope will be evident in their school by being consistent about what matters and always remaining focused on the school's goals and mission. Ensuring that actions match words will create credibility and ensure that the principal acts as a role model for staff. Principals can also build trust by maintaining consistent expectations and behaving in a predictable manner.

Additionally, principals can respect confidentiality and recognize and give credit for the accomplishments of others. They can accept mistakes and encourage everyone to learn from, rather than ignore, things that have gone wrong. This aspect of a school's culture may be enhanced by offering training for the school staff, and possibly governing board members, on how to critique and provide feedback in constructive, positive ways. Other suggested strategies are outlined in the box below.

Strategies for Encouraging a Positive School Culture

- Practice collegiality rather than top-down management by allowing people to produce on their own in their own way.
- Advocate for the staff and protect them from any negative events that are occurring outside of the school environment.
- Encourage healthy relationships and cooperation.
- Recognize good work performance with personalized praise.
- Appreciate difference and integrate individual personalities.
- Ensure that the staff has adequate resources and materials to function effectively.
- Work with teachers individually when possible.
- Foster student participation in and responsibility for school life.
- Help people stretch their individual styles in order to work well within the particular environment of the school.
- Examine the school facilities, and consider how the environment can be made more positive, lively, and uplifting. Decorate the walls with student work and community art.
- Use humour and kindness to make people feel comfortable.
- Clarify school goals for behaviour, doing so with the support of staff and students.
- Hold workshops on topics of interest to the staff, such as stop smoking, self-defense, or healthy eating, and try to arrange opportunities for the staff to have fun together.
- Solicit feedback from students, parents and staff regarding what is working and what is not.
- Encourage innovation and add new and interesting programs to make the school seem exciting.
- Celebrate successes of individuals and the school, such as organizing a school pride week. Make sure that students who contribute positively to the school climate are recognized as much as those who have achieved in academics or athletics.

If the school culture is not positive or if there are dysfunctional relationships within the school, it is the principal's responsibility to address that situation and have people try a different approach.

Similarly, if the staff is being negatively affected by something that is happening outside of the school, the principal must see that the staff is protected from politics and problematic situations that are beyond their control. Reminding everyone of the ultimate goals of the school and maintaining a focus on the success of students may help with that aim.

Principals can also help to ensure a positive culture by encouraging school staff members to remember their own health and well-being, with the principal acting as a role model him or herself (see section four for more details about health and wellness). This issue cannot be underestimated in First Nations schools, which can represent quite challenging work environments.

A survey of teachers in First Nations schools implemented by the FNSA (Kavanagh, 2000) highlighted a range of factors that make First Nations schools enjoyable places to work, including the ability to make a positive contribution to First Nations students, the advantages of small class sizes, flexible work situations, and the opportunity to learn a great deal through a stimulating work environment. However, the teachers who participated in that survey also indicated that limited resources and staff sizes result in staff members "spending far too much time in a day at work or doing work related activities" with "a lack of relief and preparation time for teachers." As one individual noted:

Some village teachers, particularly secondary, are expected to cover so many subject areas they are in distress. They can't take enough care of themselves to relax and live a normal life. First year teachers are especially taxed.

Given that context, principals of First Nations schools must make every effort to ensure that they create supportive, secure, and protected work environments for their

teachers and other staff members so that everyone can maintain their health and wellness and deal effectively with the pressures of their work.

A final note about school culture relates to the need to maintain an emphasis on the importance of good attendance. Ensuring that children are attending their classes is the most critical factor in ensuring school success and improvement. One First Nations school principal spoke to this issue by stating:

You have to get kids to school before any other educational programs have a chance at success. In our school, if a student has a chronic lack of attendance, I phoned the parents every morning. I told them “I’m worried that your child is not here. I miss your child, and he has to be here because he is missing really important stuff.” When the parents started taking the phone off the hook, I went to their house every morning. I believe that if the principal cares enough to do that, so will the teachers. We have to role model the level of attention we believe this area deserves. I even asked the Chief to start making home visits to help deal with the attendance issue. I am convinced that the principal must be especially fierce about attendance. We created a school climate in which not coming to school is simply not a choice.

Attendance Policy Sample One

Attendance Preamble

Regular school attendance is an important issue for our school. Students cannot keep up with their school learning if they are not at school. To promote school attendance, we have created the following policy.

Attendance Policy

Student learning opportunities are maximized if the school and homework together to ensure regular attendance. We acknowledge that less than 80% attendance at school is an unacceptable level in order to maintain a successful education. We recognize the parents’ right and responsibility to make decisions regarding their children’s attendance at school, and we recognize and accept our duty to maintain records of student attendance and share attendance information with parents as necessary.

Regulations

1. Attendance will be tabulated twice daily by the classroom teacher.
-

2. Attendance slips will be sent to the office indicating those students who are absent.
3. The office will make every effort to contact those parents/guardians of students who are absent.
4. When students arrive late, they will be required to check into the office for a late slip.
5. Monthly letters will be sent via the mail to parents/guardians for any student absent over 5 days in a one-month period.
6. Parents/Guardians phone calls to the school or notes written to the school are required for each absence.
7. Intermittent notices will appear in the weekly newsletter requesting parents/guardians to inform the school of student absences.
8. Individual teachers will contact parents of individual attendance concerns.

Section Three: Working Together for Success

One of the critical aspects of principal effectiveness is the ability to establish a collaborative atmosphere in which a range of people works together for the success of children. Principals cannot create a successful school and education program without the combined efforts of a number of stakeholders, key among them staff and parents who volunteer within the school. In addition, the work of the school does not go on in isolation. Students are shaped to a tremendous extent by the environment outside of the school, and school success can be greatly increased when students' homes and communities are healthy and supportive of education. This section of the handbook provides suggestions for developing strong partnerships with teachers, parents, the school governing agency, and the community. Although building strong relationships can be an additional responsibility for professionals who are already very busy, the time spent in creating a collaborative environment will be very worthwhile.

3.1 Working With Teachers

3.1.1 Hiring the Right People

Perhaps more than any other single factor, the Principal's ability to assemble and coordinate an effective, efficient staff will determine the success or failure of the school. Among the most significant decisions school leaders make is selecting the right teacher to fill every classroom, for students will only benefit from competent, dedicated teachers. Of almost equal importance is filling all of the other assignments within the school. Most other errors can be corrected readily, but choosing the wrong person to play a key role on the school staff can directly affect the success of children in the school and possibly jeopardize an otherwise successful program.

A number of potential challenges make it important for First Nations schools to be particularly proactive in attracting high quality teachers. Historically, limited funding provided to the schools made it impossible for them to pay their staff at a rate or offer benefits comparable to neighboring public schools. Although recent funding increases are helping to address that situation, the legacy of the past funding limits will take some time to overcome. If schools are interested in exploring that issue further, they may contact other First Nations schools in BC to request samples of other salary grids.

In addition, some schools are unable to offer their staff contracts of more than one year, resulting in a lack of security that causes some teachers to seek other employment. Although representing a challenge for many First Nations schools throughout the province, those factors can be particularly challenging for schools that are located in very small, remote locations. Given those unique challenges, principals in First Nations schools should be particularly diligent in their efforts to attract and retain talented, high quality teachers and other staff people.

Advertising is clearly a key component of this area of responsibility, and principals of First Nations schools should consider placing advertisements that highlight the unique

strengths of their schools. For example, if the school offers a unique calendar with unusual breaks, that can be included in the advertisement as a special feature that may attract some teachers. Similarly, schools may want to highlight the unique cultural and/or recreational activities available through their schools. A sample advertisement featuring the unique aspects of one First Nations school is included below.

Our school is an accredited K to Grade 7 First Nations school which has been recognized for excellence by the National Reading Styles Institute. Our school enrolls 130 students in our new \$3.7 million facility. The Band is seeking applications for 2 primary classes and one grade 5/6 position. The Band offers a very attractive salary/benefit package.

Applications must contain: a resume, reports on teaching, transcripts, and 3 references. Please direct applications to ...

In addition, staffing decisions generally are too important to be made alone. The best staff is a balanced one that includes people with varying strengths and styles. Therefore, it helps to have people with more than one perspective included in the selection process.

When hiring, it is also imperative to consider each candidate's willingness to promote a challenging, caring school environment, and their interest in students of all levels of ability and motivation. In the end, the classroom is where all students spend most of their day, and what happens there significantly influences how they feel about themselves as learners (Pasi, 2001).

Some First Nations schools have developed very useful partnerships with School Districts for cooperative hiring arrangements. For example, some First Nations schools and School Districts share resumes or jointly interview candidates in order to ensure the best placement decisions for everyone concerned.

"Our number one recommendation for principals undertaking the hiring process is reference check, reference check, reference check." Participants at the First Nations Schools Association Principals Workshops, 2002

Thorough orientations for new employees are also crucial for making them feel comfortable, welcome, and confident about the vision and goals of the school and community. Some First Nations schools address this issue by identifying “a buddy” who will help a new staff person adjust to the community, by hosting lunches or dinners, or by providing “welcome to the school” t. shirts. Additional information related to orientations is included in Appendix Four of this handbook.

More detailed suggestions to help with the hiring process are outlined in the FNSA publication *Employment Handbook for First Nations Schools* (Kavanagh, 2000). That handbook includes sample job descriptions, interview questions, and tips for reference checks. Copies of the employment handbook are available through the FNSA office.

In addition, the FNSA has published *An Information Handbook for Teachers Who Are New to First Nations Schools* (Kavanagh, 2006). The FNSA created the handbook as a resource for teachers who are considering or preparing to work in a First Nations school for the first time. It is intended to help those teachers become familiar with the unique context of First Nations schools and the communities in which they operate. It is important that prospective teachers be realistic about their suitability for work in a First Nation school in order to ensure that the experience is positive for everyone involved.

3.1.2 Supervising and Supporting Teachers

As important as hiring the right people is effective supervision and support for existing school staff to ensure that they continue to be valuable members of the school community. Effective staff supervision is the responsibility of the school principal.

For the reasons outlined above, excessive teacher turnover has been a problem for many First Nations schools, and so it is particularly important that principals strive to make the schools as supportive and accommodating as possible. Achieving that goal includes assisting all teachers in improving their skills and finding alternatives to teachers who do not work well within the school's unique context. That work involves both supervision and evaluation, which are somewhat related but distinct topics. Generally, supervision deals with the continuous personal and professional improvement of all staff. Evaluation involves critical decisions regarding the retention, promotion, compensation, or dismissal of employees.

In order to make the supervision and evaluation processes successful, it is important to make them unthreatening and to emphasize the growth orientation of both. Teachers should know right from the start that supervision and the formal evaluation process are intended to help them. It is the principal's job to monitor and assist teachers in their work. In order to make the supervision and evaluation process as meaningful and rewarding as possible, those ideas can be shared with the entire staff at the beginning of the school year, as well as during ongoing conferences and meetings with teachers.

Also, while the processes of supervision and evaluation clearly overlap, it is important not to think that dealing with only one aspect is adequate. Principals must do more than undertake a yearly formal evaluation of their staff members; it is critical that they monitor, support, and offer suggestions to their teachers on an ongoing basis in order to ensure the success of students.

Principals can and must strive to make their schools as supportive and accommodating as possible, supporting all teachers in improving their skills.

Although supervision and evaluation are related, this section of the handbook will focus on supervision. The topic of evaluation is outlined in more detail in section five. In addition, several tools for teacher evaluation are included in Appendix Three.

3.1.3 Teacher Supervision

Supervision is about providing support for teachers so that they become the best that they can be. Educational leaders are professionally and socially responsible for improving teacher quality by improving teacher performance, increasing teacher retention, and promoting their professional growth. Implicit in that perspective of supervision is the notion of principals assisting teachers in developing and clarifying their knowledge and practice of effective teaching and learning. A critical role of principals is to help teachers expand their professional skills and reflect on what is taking place in their classrooms in relation to the instructional and curricular goals of the school.

Teacher supervision usually involves some combination of:

- pre-conferencing to determine the method, focus, and duration of the observation;
- classroom observation;
- interpretation of the observation;
- post-conferencing with the teacher to discuss the results and any remedial action; and
- critiquing, including self-appraisal accompanied by external feedback.

Supervision can also involve what Robbins and Alvy (1995) refer to as “management by

In too many schools, teachers feel intimidated when principals walk into their classrooms. Principals should assure teachers that they will frequently visit classrooms.

wandering around.” Principals must be evident in the school, and they should regularly be seen visiting classrooms. After all, classroom visits substantially increase a principal’s awareness of each classroom’s current activities. By making frequent informal visits to classrooms, administrators can reinforce and praise good teaching, gather data regarding curriculum implementation, and address possible instructional problems before they become critical.

In too many schools, teachers feel intimidated when principals walk into their classrooms, and they are especially fearful of the observation and conferencing process. If that is the case, the Principal should assure the teachers that he or she will frequently visit classrooms to see, share, and affirm the important work being done. A workshop for teachers new to the school, in which the philosophy behind the school supervision process is reviewed, may help to share the rationale for and reduce teacher anxiety about the process.

Providing adequate support is especially important for new teachers – a fact that has particular relevance for First Nations schools. A survey of teachers in First Nations schools that was implemented by the FNSA in 2000 (Kavanagh, 2000) indicates that, prior to their current teaching position, 46% of the teachers surveyed had less than one year’s teaching experience, and 69% of the teachers had three years’ or less experience. In addition, that study also showed that 13% of the teachers surveyed had been in their current position for less than one year, and 59% had been in their position for three years or less.

In almost every other profession, the workload for novice workers increases gradually over time. Beginning teachers, on the other hand, start out with as much responsibility and are generally expected to perform as well as experienced teachers. It is not surprising, therefore, that new teachers often feel overwhelmed.

Principals at the FNSA workshops for principals, recommended the following resource for principals wanting more information on working with new teachers:
A Better Beginning: Supporting and Mentoring New Teachers edited by Marge Scherer and

published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. See www.ascd.org

In order to make supervision most effective, principals should develop an honest, caring, and trustful relationship with teachers. Establishing a collaborative relationship is also very helpful. When teachers see that the principal wants to learn and gain new ideas, it is much easier to reciprocate and feel positive about the supervisory experience – and principals can learn a great deal themselves from the classroom observation process.

3.1.4 Encouraging Growth and Improvement Through Professional Development Opportunities

Supervision can be viewed as monitoring teacher practice as a means to offer encouragement, support, and suggestions for continued professional growth. As such, supervision is directly tied to professional development. Principals can expose teachers to a variety of useful, relevant instructional ideas. Principals must also provide resources and promote formal and informal conversations with and among teachers in order to positively affect curriculum, teaching, learning, and professional development.

Unless they are encouraged otherwise, even the most talented teaching staff can become complacent and entrenched in particular teaching approaches. In addition, regardless of the adequacy of teachers' pre-service or university preparation, no teacher will remain current for their entire career without meaningful professional development.

Teachers in First Nations schools, who often work in significant isolation, have particularly noted the importance of professional development opportunities, suggesting that it is easy for them to become

“isolated and unaware of the latest educational trends” (Kavanagh, 2000). In those circumstances, providing access to professional development opportunities can actually help to retain teachers who might otherwise become frustrated and leave for other employment.

Other staff members in First Nations schools also require professional development opportunities to remain up-to-date in their knowledge and feel confident about their professional growth. For example, school secretaries, librarians, teaching assistants, and computer technicians would all appreciate training to build their skills.

“I will do anything necessary to help a teacher I have hired. I will talk to them about instructional practice, teach them to teach, model teach, take a week and teach in their classroom, or teach their class while they take three days to visit other classrooms. It is my responsibility to help them succeed.”

Participant at the First Nations School Principal and Managers Short Course, 2002

In order to be effective, professional development activities should be chosen for the professional and personal growth of the school staff, with the goal of resulting in some identifiable change in the staff's knowledge, attitude, and skills that will increase school effectiveness (Howell, 1996). Professional development initiatives should be purposeful, resulting from plans to address specific needs. As such, the initiatives should deal not only with ways to improve teachers' instructional skills; they should also build a staff's capacity to implement and operate new programs and improve the school environment. Results-driven staff development cannot be planned according to individual wants or needs alone. Ideally, the entire staff will be involved in developing a school-wide professional development plan to complement school goals.

As Hirsh (2001b) notes, good staff development planning begins by examining the results the school or organization wants for students and staff, and is driven by the following three basic questions.

- What has the school decided that students must know and be able to do?
- What must the teachers know and be able to do to ensure that students achieve school goals?
- As a result, what content and learning processes are most likely to develop the necessary professional skills and knowledge to produce success?

The professional development opportunities that are relevant for each school, therefore, must be determined according to the unique needs of the school and its staff. Generally, however, there are a number of areas that have been identified for professional development of teachers. Several of those are outlined in the box below.

Suggested Areas for Teacher Professional Development

- Teachers are inundated by changes in curriculum theory and practice. They must be aware of and knowledgeable about developments in content areas as well as recent innovations in instructional strategies – either generic or specific to the disciplines they teach.
- Teachers must be given opportunities to understand the multitude of abilities and special needs that are reflected in the student population.
- Teachers must be up to date with the latest developments in technology (a topic that is discussed further in section three of this handbook).
- Teachers must be exposed to the latest research on teaching.
- Teachers need professional development opportunities focused on skills and strategies to help them deal with stress. A focus on this issue is supported by the survey of teachers in First Nations schools (Kavanagh, 2000), which indicates that teachers are very concerned about the levels of stress and burn out amongst the staffs.

Professional development programs may include credit or non-credit courses, conferences, lectures, workshops, planned programs of travel, discussions with colleagues, in-service, mentoring, and coaching. Some of those topics are discussed further below.

In terms of scheduling professional development and in-service activities, some schools choose to close the school for a day that is dedicated to such purposes. Other schools have staff attend training programs on a rotating basis in order to keep the school open on a continuing basis. Either of those options is reasonable, depending upon the perspectives of the school staff, the governing body, and the community.

As professionals, teachers should be given responsibility for their own professional development, and they should strive to clarify their educational objectives and increase their professional competence. Through self-evaluation, teachers can determine what areas of their work require improvement and what strategies are necessary to create

such improvement. It is the role of the principal to encourage teachers to consider and make plans for their professional development needs, while ensuring that each teacher's goals fit within the overall professional development and improvement goals of the school.

Teacher Professional Development Plans Policy Sample One

In order to streamline processes related to teacher professional development, the following procedures will be followed.

1. Each teacher and the principal will discuss the teacher's professional development plans for the year in terms of their support of professional growth in areas of current/future teaching, special instructional needs, interests, etc.
2. The principal will verify that proposed expenditures reflect the teacher's professional development goals and the school's priorities.
3. The principal will ensure that the leave requested for the professional development activities is reasonable, and will remind the teacher of travel booking procedures.

Coaching

As described above, principals can encourage growth in a variety of ways, including coaching their teachers in the development of new techniques. Coaching is possible when principals are very proficient in a particular technique, and are able to convey their skill and understanding in a supportive environment. Generally, coaching involves:

1. presentation of the theory or concepts that are the foundation for a specific skill;
2. demonstration of the skill;
3. repeated opportunities for others to practice the skill under both simulated and actual classroom conditions; and
4. repeated feedback on their practice efforts.

Research shows that those four elements are necessary in order to promote the incorporation of the skills into the teacher's daily teaching operations. According to Keith and Girling (1991), the initial learning period for understanding a complex idea or theory behind a practice is estimated to be between 15 and 20 hours. To actually

acquire proficiency and use, the skill requires another 15 to 30 hours of directive and supportive feedback.

Constructive feedback is crucial in this process because new learners are often so focused on performing the task that they can't pay attention to their effectiveness. An observer, well versed in the skill being learned, can provide both coaching and encouragement, giving the learner suggestions on his or her progress and recognizing the growth that is occurring.

Mentoring

A mentor, or an experienced professional, can also be very important in offering support to a new professional. Mentoring not only helps new teachers; established teachers who act as mentors can also benefit through professional recognition, expanded responsibility, and a sense of satisfaction from helping a new colleague.

Unfortunately, First Nations schools often have small staffs and may have few very experienced teachers available to act as mentors. Therefore, opportunities for this type of assistance may be quite limited. Many respondents to the FNSA survey of First Nations school teachers (Kavanagh, 2000) highlighted a lack of support from other experienced professionals and the limited number of colleagues who can act as mentors as a significant detriment to their work. Therefore, it may be beneficial for principals of First Nations schools to explore a variety of possibilities for mentoring, such as establishing a beneficial relationship with teachers in a nearby public school or a neighbouring First Nations school, if there are any within a reasonable distance.

Collegial Sharing

Another possible way for principals to assist teachers – particularly new teachers – is by organizing support groups so that teachers have frequent opportunities to share and solve problems. Study groups can also be encouraged, with a focus on special topics such as classroom management, instructional techniques, policies and procedures, special education strategies, teacher stress, communications with parents, student evaluation and assessment, professional growth plans, and understanding the curriculum.

Many principals spend considerable time scheduling and planning to enable teachers to have time to work together, which can be extremely beneficial for both teachers and, as a result, students. As mentioned above, of course, principals of First Nations schools may have to make extraordinary efforts to make collegial sharing possible, if it is feasible at all.

Other Professional Development Approaches

Additional methods of support are also possible. Principals can assist their teachers by recommending professional journals and articles of interest, and assisting teachers with the development of new programs and activities. In addition, several other alternatives to traditional in-service programs are listed in the box on the next page. It is the role of the principal to consider all of the possible approaches to professional development and growth and to encourage the staff to implement a reasonable range of effective opportunities.

Alternatives to Traditional In-Service Programs

- One or more teachers can undertake “action research,” which involves identifying a problem and work on developing a solution, with release time provided for their research. This process facilitates reflection about teaching and allows teachers to develop new understandings that will contribute to their professional growth.
- Collegial coaching leads teachers to reflect together on the general issues of teaching and learning. The success of this approach depends upon a school climate that supports collegiality and continuous growth.
- Teachers can examine videotapes of their teaching and discuss their conclusions with a partner, colleagues, or the principal.
- A group of educators can network and organize around a common theme, then identify a problem and a possible solution.
- Teachers can be encouraged to write articles for professional publications as a way of stimulating critical thinking about their beliefs and practices.
- Teachers can improve their knowledge, skills and performance by implementing innovative practices that have been successfully developed and implemented by other teachers. This requires less effort than developing their own materials and approaches.
- Teachers who have an expertise in a particular area of instruction can be encouraged to present a program on the topic to other interested staff.
- “Good ideas” sharing sessions can be held on a regular basis, during which participants are expected to bring along one “good idea” to share with colleagues.
- Teachers can be encouraged to visit neighboring schools or classes where “good things” are happening.

Adapted from Howell, 1996

The following tips for creating an atmosphere for effective staff development have been adapted from Robbins and Alvy (1995).

- *Recognize the necessity of having adequate time to fully develop and apply a new skill effectively.* New teachers in particular are often eager to demonstrate their competence and should be encouraged to do so. However, it should be recognized that becoming a competent and accomplished teacher requires thousands of hours of practice.
- *Create a sense of purpose for professional development and focus on continuous improvement in quality.* This purpose should reflect the school's vision, growth needs, and student needs as demonstrated by performance outcomes that are valued by staff, parents, and community members.
- *Involve the staff in planning for professional development.* Create an opportunity for your staff to discuss the school's goals and the types of training that would enhance their roles.
- *Encourage and support collaboration and mutual respect amongst the school community.* This can be a critical source of support and will contribute to the implementation of effective staff development practices.
- *Conduct readiness-building activities and follow-up on professional development activities appropriately.* Provide opportunities for staff members to prepare themselves for their training by talking with their colleagues about the applicability and context for the new information that is provided. Also provide opportunities for teachers to discuss what they have learned, and to try the new strategies they have learned in their classrooms. Often collaborative brainstorming about what worked and what didn't will help to reinforce the new skills learned through training.

- *Provide extrinsic and intrinsic rewards for participation in professional development initiatives.* Extrinsic rewards can include such things as funding for conferences and scheduling flexibility. Intrinsic rewards can include recognition, respect, and reinforcement.
- *Let the community know about the school's professional development activities.* Sometimes, parents and community members are uncertain about what staff is doing and why they are leaving the school and community for professional development purposes. It is sometimes helpful to demystify that situation by sharing information about what has taken place. In some circumstances, it may be useful to have a staff person meet with a parents group to tell them about the new ideas and strategies they learned through a training activity. Other possibilities include sharing information in the school newsletter about a teacher's experience and the ways in which the training will benefit students in the school.

Overall, Principals should make every effort to ensure that the school environment provides opportunities for continuous professional growth and the best quality educational practices. Those efforts will work to maintain high staff morale and enthusiasm. Ideally, staff development will become job-embedded, with teachers having time each day to learn (Hirsh, 2001). Staff development cannot be something educators do only on specified days in the school calendar; it must be part of every educator's daily work schedule. In that way, staff development will be a key component of school improvement and growth.

“Be proactive. Schedule time for supervision and mentoring activities. Don't just make opportunities; make sure it happens”
Participants at the FNSA workshops for principals, 2002

Sample School Policy on Professional Development

The Board recognizes that the professional education of a teacher is a continuing process and that certain short courses and seminars are an asset in achieving and maintaining professional competence. This policy applies to all education staff.

1. Budgets for professional development are limited and in no case will the Board be in a position to reimburse teachers for all costs associated with professional development.
2. Requests are to be made to the principal of the school who is empowered to approve or disapprove in accordance with budgets and planned expenditures and usefulness to the school program.
3. Consideration will be given to the value and importance of the professional development request to both the teacher and to the school system.
4. Teachers attending short courses and seminars must be prepared to share the knowledge they have gained with other members of the teaching staff.
5. Three days each year will be set aside for professional development. The activities and location of these professional development activities will be decided by the staff in a cooperative and facilitative manner.

3.1.5 Dealing With Harassment Complaints

Ideally, creating a positive school climate, as well as hiring and nurturing an excellent staff, will mean that principals will never have to deal with challenges such as harassment complaints. Principals can help to ensure that harassment issues do not arise by acting as a role model and treating everyone with respect at all times, as discussed above. In addition, principals must never themselves act in ways that are offensive or undermining. Principals can also be proactive, and hold education sessions on harassment in an effort to prevent any issues arising.

However, even the best attempts to prevent harassment from occurring may not be entirely successful, and it is therefore crucial that school principals are prepared to deal with such challenges. To do so, schools should have proper policies in procedures in place in the event that a harassment charge is made. Everyone who is involved with the school should be aware of those policies, and they should understand their rights and the complaints procedure.

In addition, the following suggestions may be of use to principals attempting to address harassment issues (adapted from Ramsey, 1992 and anti-harassment materials produced by the BC Government).

Suggestions to Assist Principals in Addressing Harassment

- Immediately stop any harassment of which you are aware, such as offensive jokes or remarks. State clearly that it is inappropriate and not acceptable and could be the subject of discipline. Take whatever action is necessary to stop harassment in the workplace.
- Don't trivialize or ignore any complaint or allegation. If possible, try to resolve complaints while they are in the early stages. Some complainants may prefer to deal with the issue as workplace conflict rather than harassment. As much as possible, allow the complainant to decide how the issue should be pursued, while offering them support and compassion.
- Protect the reputation and privacy of all parties involved.
- Always follow through and investigate every reported allegation or violation.
- Report all incidents of suspected or alleged incidents of sexual harassment or abuse to appropriate enforcement or protection agencies.
- Keep a diary of actions taken.
- Ensure that the harassing behaviour has ceased by keeping in touch with the complainant after the complaint has been resolved and confirm that no retaliation has occurred.
- Call on colleagues for help when needed.
- Don't hesitate to seek legal counsel in conducting investigations and acting on the findings.
- Have a predetermined plan for dealing with the media when sensitive issues are under investigation.

3.1.6 Addressing Employee Absenteeism and Tardiness

Principals and teachers must be very consistent in their message that in order to be successful, students must show up to school on a regular basis. In order to act as positive role models, that message must be true for school staff, as well. For that reason, principals must be concerned about consistent absenteeism or tardiness, either by an individual staff member or by a portion of the school staff.

In individual cases, irregular attendance and chronic tardiness may be the result of health issues, family crises, burnout, or other personal circumstances. Whatever the reason for it, however, chronic absenteeism and tardiness is problematic and sends the wrong message to students. Some of the following suggestions may help in addressing difficulties.

1. Careful record keeping can help to identify problematic attendance patterns and are very useful when speaking to the staff member about what is occurring. This record keeping may include noting particular patterns in terms of types of absences (such as immediately before or after holidays or long weekends), length of absences, and causes of absences. The principal can also document efforts made to correct attendance problems.
2. Requiring all employees to contact their immediate supervisor directly in all cases of absence can help to deter problems in this regard.
3. In cases where chronic absenteeism is a problem, the principal should discuss the issue with the employee, clarifying the school's expectations in terms of regular attendance, explaining the effect of the employee's absences, listening to determine the nature of the problem, offering assistance to remedy the problem, and obtaining the employee's commitment to improve.
4. Some form of doctor's verification can be requested for all absences exceeding three days and can also be requested in any situation where there is a reasonable concern that the absences may not be for legitimate medical reasons.

5. Contract provisions and administrative regulations can be reviewed to ensure that they do not encourage too many absences.
6. Promoting personal health and wellness in the school staff may assist in reducing absences.

One of the participants in the FNSA workshops for principals described his effort to address issues of absenteeism. At the end of a school year he calculated the total number of human days missed from school – students and staff. The number was quite high. He shared his calculation with his staff the following September, and they were shocked. He found it to be a very useful exercise.

In the unfortunate event that chronic absenteeism becomes so serious that it becomes a reason for dismissal, the principal must ensure that detailed records are in place, that the employee has been offered assistance to correct the problem, that the employee has been clearly warned that a continuation of the problem may lead to discipline and dismissal.

Discipline and dismissal should always be approached carefully. Further information about those issues is included in the *Employment Handbook for First Nations Schools*, which is available through the FNSA office.

Staff Absences Policy Sample One

If you are absent for any reason, you must inform the principal as soon as possible and fill out an Employee Absentee form as well. If the payroll department does not receive a form signed by the principal, you will not be paid for your absence. Please remember that you have only a specific number of paid absences for your working terms each year:

- 1.5 sick days per month (non-cumulative), or 15 days for any employees working from September to June. This includes absences for medical and dental reasons.
- 7 days compassionate leave for the school year. This includes absences for funerals and other incidences of a personal nature.
- 1 personal day, which is at the discretion of the principal.

Any absences over and above these mentioned will be unpaid.

When you are absent for any reason, you must first contact the Principal. It is then your responsibility to arrange for a substitute for all of your classes. A copy of the sub list will be given to you early in September. Make sure you have a copy of this at home, so you can call someone in if you are unable to come to work. Do not ask anyone else, especially office staff, to do this for you. This is your responsibility.

Lessons/work plans are to be thoroughly prepared for your subs. Subs are not certified teachers and it is not up to them to come up with a lesson for the class. A detailed lesson plan for each day you will be absent is required. For this reason, it is imperative that you have at least one generic lesson plan set aside in the event of an illness or unexpected absence. It is important you leave your sub with all the information/supplies they'll need to run your classroom.

Please sign the white board in the staff room indicating any planned absences and who your sub will be.

3.2 Working With Parents

All schools are aware of their crucial link with parents. Schools are primarily accountable to students and parents for ensuring that quality educational opportunities are provided that allow all students to maximize their potential and achieve their goals.

For First Nations schools, the relationship with and accountability to parents is particularly acute. An emphasis on the crucial role of First Nations families and communities in their children's development and learning is entirely consistent with First Nations education traditions. In traditional Aboriginal life, children were raised within the extended family, with parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters sharing responsibility for protecting and nurturing them. Traditional education systems prepared youth to take up adult responsibilities through parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles helping them to develop necessary skills and knowledge. Youth also saw their roles modeled by adults and Elders.

The fundamental right of First Nations parents to have a strong and meaningful voice in the education and learning of their children continues to be at the core of contemporary First Nations perspectives of education. First Nations people have persistently emphasized the need for education systems that reflect and reinforce their cultures and traditions, noting that a positive sense of identity is a source of strength that allows First Nations students to become much higher achievers in all areas of education and life. To achieve that goal, family and community involvement in the education process is crucial.

In addition to those factors, in most First Nations communities, parents have a choice regarding where their children will attend school; in many cases, a public school is located in close proximity, and parents choose to have their children attend the First Nations school because they believe their children will be offered more valuable learning opportunities in a school controlled by their community. That situation adds even greater importance to the school's need to foster commitment and trust with

parents. This special importance was reflected in the 2002 summer Short Course for First Nations Schools Principals and Managers; when asked to identify the most pressing concerns of their schools, the short course participants highlighted the need for greater parental involvement three times more frequently than any other factor.

The research is also very clear about the positive impact of engaging parents in student achievement. There is overwhelming evidence that **parents can make a difference, and that when they are involved in education, children do better in school and schools improve.** Students whose parents are visible in the school and actively engaged in home learning activities will understand that their parents value learning, which will encourage students to take school seriously and strive for success.

Studies show that the three factors over which parents exercise authority - student absenteeism, the variety of reading materials in the home, and excessive television watching - those controllable home factors account for the greatest differences in average student achievement scores. Numerous studies show

Studies show that the three factors over which parents exercise authority - student absenteeism, the variety of reading materials in the home, and excessive television watching - account for the greatest difference in student achievement scores.

that what the family does is more important to student success than family income or education; this is true whether the family is rich or poor, whether or not the parents finished high school, and whether the child is in preschool or in the upper grades (Ballen and Moles, 1994). **For at-risk students, parent and family involvement in learning has been identified as the single most important determiner of success** (Mills, 1994). Henderson and Berla (2002) claim that in programs designed to involve parents in full partnership, disadvantaged students' achievement not only improves - it can reach levels that are standard for all children.

In addition to their contributions at home, parents can also greatly enhance a school's efforts, providing meaningful input into school decision-making and improving school programs by donating significant time and effort. Parents who are involved are more

aware of what is happening in the school, and when given information about the school's goals and student achievement, they will better understand the school's efforts and challenges, and help the school to progress. Overall, research shows that parental involvement leads to safer school environments, stronger parenting skills, and much higher levels of student academic achievement. As Ballen and Moles (1994) note:

When families are involved in their children's education in positive ways, children achieve higher grades and test scores, have better attendance at school, complete more homework, demonstrate more positive attitudes and behavior, graduate at higher rates, and have greater enrollment in higher education. Parents benefit as well. They develop a greater appreciation of their role in their children's education, an improved sense of self worth, stronger social networks, and even the desire to continue their own education.

Fortunately, almost all parents want their children to have a good experience in school, and they want to play a constructive role in making that happen. Unfortunately, many parents are not involved with their children's education to the extent desired. There are numerous reasons why some parents are reluctant to be more involved with their child's learning and school activities. Many parents do not feel that they have something positive to contribute, and they may be worried that they do not have adequate skills and knowledge to help their children in meaningful ways.

In addition, it is very common for parents to believe that teachers are professionals, and that they should not or do not have to interfere with teachers' practices; they feel that the "teacher knows best," and that "it is the teacher's job to educate my children." Many First Nations parents, in particular, had extremely problematic experiences in their own schooling, which may make them uncomfortable or intimidated in the school environment. Of course, fitting in school and home-learning activities can also be very challenging for parents who are working and very busy with other responsibilities. Studies show that parental involvement is particularly limited as children progress from elementary to secondary school, because parents believe that their children need less help at that age, and secondary teachers generally seek input and share information less often.

To help overcome those barriers, schools can offer family's information and skills to become constructively engaged, and principals can take responsibility for ensuring that parental involvement in the school and home is as meaningful as possible. Educators can influence the actions of parents at home and in turn this influence can impact a student's success at school. Studies regularly identify six effective types of family involvement initiatives (Hirsh, 2001; Ballen and Moles, 1994; Henderson and Raimondo, 2001), as outlined below.

1. Schools can **help families establish home environments that meet children's social, emotional, and physical needs**. Parents can emphasize good work habits, value learning and good character, set high expectations for their children, stay informed about their children's progress, and monitor their children's activities. For older students, parents can monitor homework and encourage participation in healthy extracurricular activities, provide a sense of proportion to television watching and video games, and help children develop plans for careers and further education. Research suggests that values instilled by parents are twice as important for school achievement as family economic or educational background.
2. Schools and principals in particular, can design and **implement effective forms of two-way communication**. That way, parents will be more aware of school programs and students' progress. Parents can also help schools understand family contexts so that children's needs are better understood.
3. Schools and parents can **work in partnership to recruit and organize family volunteers** to help with classroom learning, school functions, and student activities.
4. Schools can **provide information, ideas, and opportunities for families to help their children at home** with homework, course selection, and other curriculum-related activities. Encouraging and assisting parents with home reading is particularly important, as school success is directly linked to

students' reading ability. Parents can take children to the library and help them find books on their interests and hobbies; research shows that the availability of reading resources in the home, whether owned or borrowed, is directly associated with children's achievement in reading. Parents can also be encouraged to establish a daily family routine and schedule daily homework times. Schools can also help parents by organizing curriculum nights, during which parents can visit the school and learn about reading, math, and science learning activities that can be recreated at home.

5. Schools, and particularly principals, can **encourage parents to become active in various aspects of school decision-making** and governance. Parents have a responsibility to encourage a challenging sequence of courses for their children in preparation for further education. They should be supported in fulfilling that responsibility. Their involvement in decision-making will also help parents to understand and support the assignment of meaningful homework in reasonable amounts.
6. Schools and parents can also work together to identify ways to integrate the school with the community to strengthen and support school programs.

It is up to principals to ensure that their schools are places where parents feel welcome and recognized for their strengths and contributions. As Richardson (2000) notes, although parental involvement has become a buzzword, too many principals and teachers still expect to see parents only at superficial back-to-school nights or call on parents only when problems arise or expect parents to do more. Research shows that school principal involvement is more important in determining whether parents will be involved than family characteristics such as parental education, income, or socioeconomic level, or student grade level. Building partnerships to work, however, the principal should encourage an ongoing exchange of information, agreement on rights and responsibilities among school

“We used to talk about parental involvement at our school staff meetings, and I heard comments like “no one will show up,” “I don’t have time to do that,” “we’ve already tried that,” and “we can’t tackle bingo.” Then we had training in this area, and I learned that the teachers were really afraid of the issue of parental involvement.”
Participant at the Short Course for First Nations Principals and Administrators, 2002

Outlined in the box below are additional suggestions that may help school principals to establish a foundation for positive school-parental relationships.

Suggestions to Assist Principals in Encouraging Parental Involvement

- Recognize that parents have a genuine right to be involved in school decision-making and activities. Parental involvement is a legitimate element of education that requires ongoing effort and energy to maintain.
- Don't underestimate parents and families. Set high expectations for their involvement. Educators must confront their own misperceptions about "hard-to-reach" parents. Parents have both the ability and willingness to expand and improve their parenting strategies and techniques as well as their roles in the school.

More Suggestions to Assist Principals in Encouraging Parental Involvement

- Develop strategies with parents, not for parents. Research shows that when parents are treated as partners and given relevant information, they put into practice the involvement strategies that they already know to be effective, but have been hesitant to contribute.
- Recognize that involvement will take many forms. It is important to respect the varying needs and comfort level of different parents and family members, and establish initiatives that will allow people to increase their level of involvement at a pace that is reasonable for them.
- Reduce distrust and distance by arranging contacts with parents for a positive reason. Too often, the first time a parent meets with the school is when a child is in trouble. Instead, make initial contacts friendly and proactive. Also, parents want school staff to ask their opinions about school matters and to listen to what they have to say.
- Have teachers demonstrate that they are interested in the community and learning about its culture and values by attending community events on a regular basis.
- Include parents in staff development for teachers. Let them learn about how to get high standards into the classroom. Research has found that having parents and teachers at the same training sessions is effective and that separate training furthers the distance between them.

- Accommodate family work schedules by trying to schedule meetings and events before and after work hours and on weekends. For example, the parents handbook of a First Nations school in BC states that “one Wednesday evenings, from 7 – 9 p.m., the administration office will be open to accommodate those parents who are working and are unable to schedule meetings or appointments during the day.” Providing childcare will also make participation possible for more parents.

More Suggestions to Assist Principals in Encouraging Parental Involvement

- Make sure that staff development opportunities include information about how to work with families. Recognize that few teacher preparation programs address techniques for communicating with and involving parents, and many teachers simply need guidance in this area. Don't treat the topic of parental involvement separately; rather, incorporate an understanding of how programs and activities will affect families and build ideas for sharing information and engaging parents in discussions about all issues.
- Work with teachers on how to find the time for them to actively engage parents. Some teachers would like to make home visits or talk more with parents, but they may find it difficult to do so given their other obligations and family responsibilities of their own. Also, help teachers to periodically assess their success in working toward the kind of parental involvement that will make a difference to learning.
- Understand and address the fact that increased family involvement can result in parents inquiring about classroom learning activities, assessments, and their children's learning strengths and weaknesses. Parents may seek information that can be interpreted as a challenge to the school or even seen as "lack of support" for the school or individual teachers. Principals must work to avoid and dispel any misunderstandings, and help teachers perceive parents' questions as positively as possible.
- Open the school to families. Try displaying student work, setting up an "observe the classroom" program, offering student-led conferences that exhibit student portfolios, organizing a parent's breakfast or after-school snack program, and inviting families to assemblies and special events.
- Try to provide training and skills development opportunities for families to increase their understanding of how to provide assistance in school and at home. Do not assume that all parents are certain of how they can help.

Criminal Records Checks for Parents

When considering the involvement of parents in school activities, it is important to consider the need for criminal records checks for everyone who will be working closely with children. However, this issue must be dealt with very sensitively, because parents and other school volunteers can become defensive or offended when approached about this issue. Writing clear policies about the need for criminal records checks can make it easier to address this subject with volunteers. Some schools approach this issue by requiring criminal records checks for visitors who will have a formal role in the school which will involve unaccompanied access to children; no checks are required for people who drop into the school in an informal way and who will be accompanied by another adult throughout their visit.

Schools should work with their school governing authorities and, if applicable, their parent committee to establish guidelines that are appropriate and adequate for children's safety. Once written, it is critical that persistent efforts be made to explain the reasons for the criminal records checks policy, with a consistent focus on its importance for protecting children.

More Information About Parental Involvement

The issue of parental involvement is further explored in the FNSA publication *First Nations Schools: Reflecting Communities Through Governance Structures, Parental Involvement Programs, and School Calendars*.

The issue of parental involvement is also reviewed extensively in *The Role of Parental and Community Involvement in the Success of First Nations Learners: A Review of the Literature. A Report to The Minister's National Working Group on First Nations Education*. That report, which includes numerous examples of success parental programs, is

available from the FNSA office.

In addition, all principals of First Nations schools should be aware of the First Nations Parents Club. That initiative, organized by the FNSA, began in 2000 with the intention of encouraging greater involvement of First Nations parents in schools and home learning efforts. The initiative involves the establishment of locally-based Parents Clubs in First Nations communities, which are organized and operated according to the needs of parents. Each Club can register with the FNSA, and in return will receive parenting materials, newsletters with articles on relevant topics, copies of a Parents Club calendar that includes numerous parenting tips, books for parents to read with their children at home, as well as a variety of gifts to recognize the significant contributions being made by First Nations parents throughout the province. All Parents Club materials and activities are offered at no charge, and each community is eligible to enroll a club with the FNSA. It may be beneficial for First Nations school principals to determine whether such a club is operating and, if not, facilitate the organization of a Parents Club in their community.

3.3 Working With the School Governance Agency

Principals of First Nations schools are the primary contact person for the school governing authority. The structure and role of the governing authority may vary in different First Nations communities. In some cases, First Nations schools are under the direct authority of Chief and Council, with no School Board or Committee in existence. In other cases, communities have decided to establish a School Board, with members elected through a community voting procedure. Other schools are guided by some kind of Education or School Committee. Membership on those committees can include elected members or volunteers, and may involve only parents or some mix of parents, community members and Elders.

When they exist, the relationship of the School Board or Committee and the Chief and Council can be relatively separate, with the Board providing regular updates to the Chief and Council but functioning with significant autonomy. The relationship can also be one in which the Board or Committee reports to and is under the authority of the Chief and Council. For example, one First Nations school in BC describes its school governing authority as “a self-appointed, volunteer Education Committee that provides major recommendations regarding school operations and infancies to the Band Council, who has ultimate authority.”

Any of those structures is legitimate and the choice of how to operate the school is entirely dependent upon what works best given the circumstances of each school and community. The structure and membership of a school authority may reflect, among other factors, the political realities of the community, the specific goals and priorities that existed when the school was created, the number and personalities of the people with an interest in education and school operations, the desires of interests of school staff and parents, the level and types of resources available to support the authority, and the stage of development of the school and its governance authority (Kavanagh, 1999). Finally, the governance of First Nations schools may be affected by their community’s decision regarding whether to opt into the new jurisdiction agreement (see pages 5 and 6 for more details).

What is most important is that the school principal understands the governance of the school, and works to ensure that the relationship between the school and the governing agency is productive and contributes to a continual focus on the best possible education for the community's children.

Board Powers and Authority Policy Sample One

1. The school board is responsible to the Tribal Council. Council has delegated authority to the school board for the orderly operation of the school and related programs.
2. The school board has the authority to formulate, develop or amend policies necessary for the orderly operation of the school system and to ensure that such policies are implemented.
3. The rights, powers and duties, responsibilities, and liabilities reside with the school board and not with an individual member of the board or any sub-committee of the board.

The relationship between the school principal and the school governing agency can be quite complex, as the distinct but complementary roles and responsibilities of each can sometimes become confused. Ideally, the school governing agency will work with the school principal and staff as a team. The governing agency should focus on approving plans and policies, and then rely on the principal and staff to get the job done.

Effective school boards will monitor the performance of the principal and the school, but they will not become directly involved in the day-to-day management. However, this relationship can be difficult to attain, primarily because board members have a natural curiosity and a desire to personally become involved in current issues and crises (Thomas, 2002). A principal can help board members to remember their role by assisting them in accessing information and training when appropriate.

For example, an orientation for new board members is helpful. Thorough orientations demonstrate the importance of ensuring that new board members are knowledgeable, prepared and skilled. Ideally, the board chairperson will lead orientation presentations and discussions. However, without any direction from the board, the principal may provide assistance in this regard.

Ultimately, the principal works for and reports to the board. The principal provides advice to the board, makes recommendations for board action, and implements the direction and decisions set by the board. Generally, principals are responsible for the day-to-day management of the school and for the direct leadership of the school staff, curriculum, and student learning. The principal, not the board, provides staff leadership and staff direction, according to policies approved by the board.

School governing authorities, on the other hand, are responsible for overseeing the overall direction of the school, including setting out its visions, values, and goals. The school governing agency approves the school's annual budget and policies, and then allows the principal to operate the school within the parameters of the budget and policies. The school governing agency can also play a key role in building a positive relationship with and helping to promote the school both within the community and with people and organizations outside of the community.

The principal must also ensure that the school staff fully understands the protocols related to the school and governing board relations. Usually, school staff and board members communicate through the principal. Misunderstandings can occur if that protocol is by-passed and staff members take concerns directly to the Board. Of course, in most First Nations communities it is common for school staff to regularly come into contact with people who are involved in school governance, especially if the staff are making an effort to promote parental and community involvement. The principal and Board members should therefore reach a clear agreement about the appropriate way in which grievances will be addressed and everyone should follow those procedures closely.

The roles and relationships of the school governing authority are outlined in significant detail in the FNSA publication *Effective Board Governance: A Handbook For Members of First Nations Non-Profit Boards* prepared by Dr. Larry Thomas. That handbook includes a thorough review of issues such as defining a vision, setting strategic direction, approving the budget, advocating for constituents,

communicating effectively, and organizing an effective meeting. The role of the school principal in terms of board relations is also detailed in that publication.

Tips for Principals Reporting to the School Board and/or Chief and Council

Reporting regularly to the School Board and/or Chief and Council is an excellent way to build positive relationships and ensure that they will support the school when needed. Listed below are some of the issues that can be included in such reports.

- The governing agency should approve the annual budget, and should be provided regular updates on the budget.
- The governing agency should receive classroom updates and information about how school programs are progressing.
- The governing agency should be fully involved in the creation of all school policies, and they should be central in any required policy review and/or changes.
- When they are available, the governing agency should have a chance to review and discuss data regarding student achievement.
- The governing agency should be apprised of any personnel matters requiring attention, including discipline and possible termination actions.
- The governing agency should be centrally involved in any school assessment activities undertaken, including decisions about when to commence on an assessment process.
- The governing agency should be invited to help promote the excellent work being done by the school and should be involved in any reports to the broader community.

3.4 Working With the Community

In addition to working with and involving parents in the school, principals of First Nations schools must also be concerned with establishing a positive relationship with the community. As mentioned above, First Nations schools are intimately related to the communities in which they operate. This relationship is particularly strong for First Nations schools because their communities made a deliberate decision to establish their own school under their own control, and then expended great effort and commitment in making the school a reality. Many communities also demonstrate an ongoing commitment to the school by supplementing the school budget with funding from the band and through ongoing fundraising efforts.

“It is particularly important that we “create a climate of invitation,” so that parents, teachers, students, and community members all feel welcome in our school. We do that by ensuring our school is filled with friendly people, smiling faces, student and community artwork, welcome signs, and the smell of sweetgrass in the morning.”

Participants at the Short Course for First Nations School Principals and Managers

A survey of teachers in First Nations schools specifically highlighted the relationship between the school and community as a critical aspect of their work, and one of the major reasons why they chose to work in a First Nations school (Kavanagh, 2000). The opportunity to learn about and experience a different culture was said to be attractive, fascinating, interesting, stimulating, and very beneficial. Many of the surveyed teachers also noted that interacting with communities in positive ways was a particularly enjoyable aspect of their teaching, and they emphasized the attraction to having a community as the direct basis for decision-making.

Working with the community involves clearly communicating the school’s progress toward its goals, and making sure the community is aware and supportive of the school’s programs and activities. As participants at the FNSA workshops for principals

noted, “what we do is not the only thing that’s important; equally critical is what we’re being seen to do.”

Schools can actively go into their communities by having students visit Elders, by undertaking clean-up activities within the community, or by having students become involved in other community service initiatives. Such activities promote within students a sense of responsibility and service to their community. Sometimes working with the community requires extremely proactive endeavours, such as hand-delivering newsletters to ensure that they arrive in homes.

Working with the community also involves taking advantage of local programs and mentors, seeking community services when needed, and taking advantage of the wealth of resources that can be shared. Community members can attend school events and demonstrate to children that they value education and support the students as they work toward their goals.

Schools can encourage community members to share their experiences and knowledge in numerous ways, such as: inviting the band manager to participate in the reading program so that students can see her modeling reading as a lifelong skill; inviting the custodian to visit a classroom to talk about how he uses math on the job; and inviting community members to share how they have applied learning in their jobs. The involvement of Elders in schools, particularly in language and culture programming, but also in other facets of the school’s programs, is especially important, and will validate the school’s efforts and demonstrate to students that the school respects the community and its culture.

Community employers can also play a proactive role in the education of students. For example, businesses can: adopt policies that allow families to spend more time in their children’s

“Having the Chief visit the school can be especially beneficial. It lends legitimacy to the school, and shows the value of education. Their participation in school activities makes a real difference.”

Participants at the Short Course for First Nations School Principals and Managers

schools; donate money, supplies, or expertise; or sponsor career exploration days for students. Businesses can also become part of a cooperative education or other school-to-work programs, and they can encourage their employees to serve as mentors to help introduce students to various occupations.

In addition, communities and schools can work in partnership to support families in their efforts to strengthen their children's academic achievement. When families have difficulty doing what is needed, schools, organizations in the community, and other social service agencies can help provide assistance and draw families into partnerships around common concerns. More and more parents need support from all sectors of the community if they are to successfully guide the growth of their children.

Finally, as described above, one of the critical roles of First Nations schools is helping to promote and maintain the community's language and culture. That work cannot be done alone. The entire community, including the school, must be involved in complementary efforts if children are to learn and value their languages and cultures. Interested principals can learn much more about planning effective language programs by reviewing the publication *Handbook for Aboriginal Language Program Planning in British Columbia* (Ignace, 1999). That handbook includes a great deal of information about Aboriginal language program curriculum training for language teachers, and strategies for having the school and community work together on this critical issue. Principals should also be aware of the First Nations protocols for using language and cultural materials, songs, and dances appropriately in order to reinforce to students the importance of respecting and recognizing the community's traditions and values.

Protocol Procedures Policy Example One

Policy on Use of Songs and Dances

In recognition of community standards and cultural protocols, the following guidelines will be followed.

- Before any song or dance is used in the school, permission from the owners of those songs or dances must be obtained.
- The cultural studies coordinator will keep a record of what things we are allowed to do, who owns the song or dance, when permission was given, and the circumstances under which we are allowed to use the song or dance.

- In most cases, permission to use a song or dance applies only to school functions and students and staff do not have the authority to use the material in any other setting.
- Children must be educated as to the ownership and lineage of songs and dances and must be taught to give appropriate acknowledgement.
- Our school will reflect community practices but is not competent to make new protocols or procedures. Therefore, if ownership of a song is unclear, the school will not use the song.

Policy on Regalia

As the school acquires additional regalia, it is imperative that these be treated in a respectful way, taking into account expectations and standards.

- All shawls, cloaks, and vests must be treated with appropriate respect. An important part of the song and dance program is to teach students these protocols.
- Before the school acquires any masks, our ability to own such masks must be investigated and documented. Masks must be used and stored in prescribed manners in recognition of community protocols and standards.
- Students must be educated in the responsibilities of being mask dancers and the meaning behind the masks.

3.5 Working with Other Service Agencies

Today, there is an increasing recognition that unmet health and welfare needs often limit children's ability to learn, resulting in an increasing interest in ensuring that service agencies are better integrated and share information and resources more freely. Recent studies also show that the successful coordination of services can result in the provision of convenient and comfortable facilities, an increased focus on prevention, and a sustained commitment from various specialized agencies. That perspective was echoed through a survey of teachers in First Nations schools (Kavanagh, 2001), which found that teachers are very concerned about the need for better communications between parents, doctors, nurses, and the school, and more inter-agency support for parents, such as parent support groups, parenting skills training, and family counseling.

Many First Nations are already striving to better coordinate and integrate community services and agencies, and schools have a particular interest in this area. Principals are responsible for ensuring that parents know about and have access to the appropriate community services for their children and their families. Schools also commonly require assistance from health and social service agencies, particularly for students who have special needs.

A recent study by Art More on behalf of the FNSA (2002), for example, states that most of the vision and hearing screening that takes place in First Nations schools is conducted by non-school staff, and that school staff report that "once a child is identified through the screening process, there is usually no system, other than chance or informal communication, to inform the school of the results." Better communication amongst service agencies and personnel will benefit all students in the school, and it is often beneficial to have other service agency representatives sit on committees for planning programs for the school and for specific students.

Particularly important is the link between the school and early childhood education agencies. The link between early childhood experience and success in the formal

schooling system has been studied intensively. Children's exposure to reading and home learning activities before they begin kindergarten is critical to their ongoing school success. Cooperative, school-wide efforts to assist parents in creating stimulating home environments will have significant students' lifelong learning.

Service agencies can better coordinate their services by working on joint committees, sharing records, cooperatively applying for funding, and implementing programs with a more holistic approach. The school principal can play a key role in this regard. Although their primary responsibility must continue to be leadership of the school, it is very useful for principals to volunteer on other community social services committees, and to participate in discussions about how to better coordinate services and resources.

In making efforts to integrate services, it is important to remember that all First Nations organizations are relatively new and still developing. Sometimes people will immediately respond to offers to work more closely together with territoriality and rigidity, which can be frustrating. It is critical that everyone involved have patience and good will. All professionals are trying to do the best they can within the context of varying constraints and challenges. Good communications are key to building strong relationships and finding ways to move ahead cooperatively. Principals can invite other agency representatives to attend staff meetings on a regular basis, which can help to prevent misperceptions, build commitment to joint efforts, and bring everyone together in order to find positive solutions. The FNSEA school principal workshops also resulted in the following suggestions for empowering principals.

- Be patient. Recognize that everyone is growing.
- Be consistent and persistent. Don't give up.
- Understand that there can be resistance. People fear change. Recognize the concerns of others.
- Ask other people for help. Don't try to do everything alone.
- Always remain focused on the children, and keep other people focused on their welfare, as well.

Schools can also promote integrated services and cooperative efforts by fully exposing students and parents to service agency personnel who may be involved with the school and children. For example, schools can invite people from different agencies to dinners, school gatherings, open houses, and workshops to talk about their work. Giving service agencies visibility in a positive context and providing opportunities for them to explain their roles means that when they are needed, parents will be more familiar with the people involved and they will be better aware of why they do what they do. A consistent emphasis on the fact that everyone is working in the interest of children will also help prevent future misunderstandings and suspicion.

Of particular importance is a strong partnership between the school and child protection agencies. In cases of suspected child abuse, the school is required to report any potential challenges immediately. These situations can severely challenge the school and principal's relationship with parents and other community members. The involvement of the Ministry of Children and Families and the RCMP can create tremendous tensions, and it is imperative that schools have very clear guidelines in place to deal with any problematic situations that arise. The participants at the FNSA principal workshops also suggested a strategy of always having the principal, not teachers, make any necessary reports. Doing so was thought to focus any "blame" and reduce the number of people involved in the incident, which would protect teachers from excessive stress.

Disclosure Policy Example One

In order to ensure the safety and confidentiality of all students and staff members, the school will implement the following regarding the reporting procedures related to disclosures as outlined in the BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect.

Reporting protocol regarding disclosures is clearly outlined in the Ministry handbook. Staff will be provided with this information in the staff handbook to ensure familiarity and access to the procedures involved in accepting and dealing with student disclosure. The School Care Team, comprised of the Principal/Designate, Counselor, Administrative Secretary, and relevant staff members, will carry out the necessary reporting procedures. All information regarding disclosures will remain confidential. Sharing of any information will be on a need to know basis only.

Staff will be expected to abide by the following steps when dealing with disclosure.

i. Receipt of a Disclosure

In the event of staff receiving a disclosure from a student, the following protocol is to be adhered to as closely as practically possible;

- refer to the BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect.
- make notes of all facts. Do not make assumptions. Use quotation marks around direct quotes from students.
- maintain full confidentiality regarding the disclosure.

ii. Communicating

The School Care Team will facilitate communication between staff and outside agencies. Staff is to adhere to the following protocol;

- upon receipt of a disclosure, and after completing the steps listed in the section Receipt of a Disclosure, report to the Principal/Designate immediately.
- if the Principal/Designate is not available, report to the Ministry of Children and Families immediately, and then to the Principal/Designate as soon as practically possible. If this is not practically possible, staff is to report to the Care Team members.
- the staff member who received the disclosure will be responsible for reporting to the Ministry of Children and Families.
- do not disclose any information to staff and/or other individuals. The Care Team will be responsible for sharing information with individuals other than those directly involved.
- do not contact the parent/guardian under any circumstances.
- if contacted by the family, or other individuals, refer all inquiries to the Principal/Designate or Counselor.

iii. Ministry/Police Involvement

Once a disclosure has been made, and the appropriate communication carried out, there may be a Ministry employee and/or police officer dispatched to the school. Staff are to be aware that;

- the staff member who received the disclosure should be available to discuss the disclosure with the Care Team and Ministry/Police personnel.
- all information shared remains confidential while the investigation is underway.
- staff should be briefed by Ministry/Police personnel as to their involvement in the interview process with the child. If staff is unsure as to their role in the interview it is their responsibility to request that Ministry staff/Police clarify the role of the staff member in the interview process.

iv. Interview

In the event that the student is interviewed, the staff member who received the disclosure, or a staff member with whom the child is most comfortable with, may be asked to sit in on the interview. Staff is to ensure that;

- staff are familiar with their role in the interview process
- staff follow the Ministry protocol regarding questioning
- all information received during this meeting remains confidential.

v. Child Protection

Upon receipt of a disclosure, and after referral to the Care Team, the following steps are to be adhered to;

- when the Ministry/Police are involved in an interview or information gathering process, the child and any siblings in the same household are not to be dismissed.
- the children are to be kept in the school.
- the children are to be supervised at all times.
- any further information disclosed by the child is recorded and made available to the Care Team members.

vi. Debriefing

Once the Ministry/Police personnel have completed the interview, and the child(ren) have been removed or sent home, there will be a debriefing of all staff involved. This follow up will include;

- a summary of the information shared.
- a review of the steps that will be taken regarding child protection issues and as related to the child(ren) involved.
- a review of what information is to be made available to the staff and community as per Care Team/ Ministry directives.

Other relevant policies are included in Appendix Two of this document.

The issue of cooperative service delivery and improved partnerships of service agencies is also considered in detail in research related to the Community Schools Movement. More information about that research is highlighted in the paper

Literature Review: Community Schools and Inner-City School Programming. Prepared by the First Nations Education Steering Committee. February, 2003. Copies of that paper can be requested by contacting the FNSA office. Further information is also available at www.communityschools.org

3.6 Dealing With the Media

From time-to-time, principals may be called upon to deal with the media. School policy should be clear about who can speak on behalf of the school, and the principal will ideally discuss this issue with the school governing agency, as well. It is very important that a consistent message be delivered to the media to avoid misunderstandings and conflict.

Participants at the FNSA principal workshops also suggested the importance of First Nations school principals being more proactive in using the media as a way to promote their excellent work. In order to be effective in doing so, principals must be persistent in sharing good news stories and in inviting journalists to positive school events. The workshop participants particularly recommended sending to local newspapers pictures of fun school activities, such as science fairs, sports days, and open houses. Doing so will help to promote the school's activities in the community and will help staff, students, and parents feel more proud of their school.

Principals who have limited experience in media relations may want to consider taking professional development in this regard in order to ensure that they make the most effective use of this important public relations mechanism.

Questions New Principals Should Ask (... and not wait to be told)

- ❑ Who is on Chief and Council?
- ❑ When do elections take place?
- ❑ What are the elections procedures?
- ❑ Is there a council portfolio on education? Who holds that position? What is his or her relationship to the school/school governing agency?
- ❑ Who is the school governing agency? How do I contact them?
- ❑ What is the relationship of the school/school governing agency to Chief and Council?
- ❑ Who is the education coordinator? What is his or her relationship to the school?
- ❑ How does funding flow to the school? Who do I talk to for more information about the school's funding and how it is controlled? Who applies for and receives grants from the FNSA (see section 4.5 for more information)?
- ❑ How is the school budget developed, and by whom? Can I have a copy of the existing school budget?
- ❑ Has a school mission/vision been developed? How was it created? Who was involved?
- ❑ Does a school policy manual exist? How was it developed? Who was involved? What is the role of Chief and Council in developing/approving/monitoring school policy?
- ❑ Does a Parent's Handbook exist? Is it up-to-date?
- ❑ What other community service agencies exist? How do I contact them?

Section Four: Day-to-Day Operations

4.1 Record Keeping

Establishing and maintaining thorough and effective school and student records is a crucial aspect of school leadership. Principals are responsible for ensuring that up-to-date and complete records are maintained in an organized and secure manner. That includes keeping them in locked, fireproof cabinets, and monitoring access to the files to ensure that confidentiality is respected.

Schools generally maintain a Contact Card for each student which details the student's full name, birth date, grade, teacher's name, parent/guardians' name and contact information (home phone, work phone, and address), emergency contact information, medical conditions and allergies, regular medications, and doctor's name and contact information. That card can be kept in a convenient location, such as the secretary's desk, for easy referral in case of student absence or the need for an emergency contact. Copies can also be taken on a field trip in the event of an emergency arising. The information kept on the Student Contact Card, however, is confidential; school should maintain policies regarding who has access to details about students, including their addresses and phone numbers.

In addition, most schools maintain a Permanent Student Record Form for each student, which includes the student's name, birth date, a list of schools previously attended, (including the dates on which the student entered and left the school, and why the student left), as well as a list of the student's achievement and attendance record.

Generally, each student's Permanent Student Record Card is kept in a Student Cumulative File. That file includes a copy of the student's psycho-educational testing

reports, if any, the two most recent years of progress reports or transcripts of grades, student work samples, a copy of the student's current Student Learning Plan, if any, and a copy of student's current Individual Education Plan (IEP), if any. Access to student files will generally be more limited than is access to the Student Contact Cards.

Usually, a copy of the student file is forwarded when a student transfers to a new school so that the receiving school is best able to serve the student and ease the transition to a new learning environment. Schools should keep the original student files in an archive for several years after a student transfers, withdraws, or graduates.

Principals must be aware of confidentiality issues in regard to student records and files. Parents should have access to the files upon request, and it may also be useful for other service providers to be aware of any facts that are pertinent to the services they are providing. However, all student information, including their names and contact information, is private, and should only be used for purposes of education programming. Principals and school governing authorities must establish clear guidelines regarding who has authority to access and/or release student information, for what purposes, and in what circumstances.

For anyone requiring further information about record keeping, the FNSA has published a *Student Records Handbook for First Nations Schools*. That document is available through the FNSA office and in a downloadable format at www.fnesc.ca/publications/index.php

4.2 School Calendar

The school principal is responsible for school establishing the school calendar, which includes scheduling the beginning and end of school, school holidays, as well as professional development days. Reflecting commitments made in their funding agreements with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, most First Nations schools strive to match the requirements of the BC Ministry of Education in terms of the number of days the school will be in operation. According to those requirements, each school year must include 194 days in session, over a minimum of 40 weeks, with at least 187 days of instruction, and a maximum of 6 non-instructional days.

Most First Nations schools in BC reflect the conventional school calendar, which begins school in early September, runs until the middle to end of June, and includes a break in December and in the spring. In addition, for reasons of simplicity and overlap, many First Nations schools have chosen to match their calendars with those of the public schools in their area.

For a variety of reasons, however, several First Nations schools have chosen to alter or are considering changing their school calendars. In fact, throughout North America there is a collection of schools that have been experimenting with various school calendar options. In the United States, for example, approximately 3000 schools have gone to a year-round calendar (McGlynn, 2002), which significantly shortens summer breaks and increases the length of other breaks during the school year. In that way, students are in school for approximately the same length of time; they are just in school for different periods of the year.

The year-round schooling movement has numerous proponents and opponents. Many people suggest that shortening the summer break helps to maintain student learning, and eliminate the amount that students forget and have to relearn after summer holidays. As such, some teachers are particularly attracted to the altered calendar as a way to eliminate the need for lengthy periods of review at the beginning of each year. Some schools that use a year-round calendar indicate that they have seen real progress in terms of student achievement and test scores (McGinnis, 2002). Including longer

breaks at various times of the year has also been said to reduce teacher burn out and reduce the tremendous exhaustion teachers often feel at the end of June.

Some First Nations schools also have a special interest in non-conventional school calendars as a way to more effectively include the study of cultural practices in the school curriculum. Because many schools are committed to including hands-on, experiential opportunities for cultural learning, it may be useful to have the school open during all seasons of the year. In addition, alternate calendars can allow for intensive language instruction in block periods.

One First Nations school in BC shared the following example of an alternate timetable. Each term, the school holds “super courses.” Those courses consist of a five day block of time devoted to one cultural topic. The super courses are organized to match culturally appropriate times of the years to allow for a focus on different seasonal activities. For example, teaching basket making requires an adequate amount of time. Fishing also requires several days in the fall, during which students make nets over several days, set the nets, learn boat skills, catch the fish, and then dry, salt and freeze the fish. The school reports that children love the super courses, and the rest of the school calendar is made to accommodate the super courses.

In addition, some First Nations schools have suggested that an altered school calendar is one way to address the challenges of teacher recruitment and retention. Many First Nations schools employ teachers who are from various parts of Canada and other parts of the world. Those teachers have suggested that longer breaks throughout the year would make it easier for them to visit their families regularly, which would increase their comfort living in remote locations.

Of course, there are significant challenges to altering the school calendar. Change is always difficult to accept, and that fact alone may make parents, teachers, and students suspicious of new calendar options. Another key constraint is the desire of parents to have schedules that match school districts. Parents who have one or more child attending each school system may be particularly opposed to having the First Nations school change its schedule, because it could cause extra challenges in terms of child care and/or vacation scheduling. In addition, some teachers may be concerned about losing the opportunity to pursue professional development opportunities that are available during the summer months.

Because of the many challenges associated with schedule changes, some First Nations schools in BC that want an altered calendar have chosen to make incremental, gradual changes. For example, some have simply started school a week or two early and/or

extended the school year by a similar length of time, increasing the December and spring breaks accordingly or adding an additional short break during the school year. Making small changes is seen as a way of allowing parents, students, and teachers to gradually determine their comfort with an altered calendar. The schools that have made changes report a general satisfaction with their new structures.

What is very evident, however, is that making changes requires tremendous enthusiasm and work. In addition, making any change will only be effective and accepted if the community, and most particularly parents, teachers, and appropriately aged students, are completely involved in all aspects of the decision, including opportunities to learn more about the possible benefits and challenges of different calendar structures, honest discussions about the feasibility of changes for the community, and efforts to assess levels of satisfaction with any changes made.

Further information about the issue of alternative school calendars, including examples from First Nations schools in BC, is included in the FNSA publication *First Nations Schools: Reflecting Communities Through Governance Structures, Parental Involvement Programs, and School Calendars* (Kavanagh, 1998).

4.3 Policy Development

School leaders are responsible for ensuring the existence of meaningful and relevant school policies, including those for school safety, discipline, harassment, suspected abuse, use of school facilities, reporting on student achievement, school visitors, busing, and numerous other matters. Policies provide the school principal with direction when difficulties arise, and guarantee that the direction taken is consistent in all cases and has the support of the school governing authority.

In order to be effective, school policies can be of any length; short or long statements can be equally useful, depending upon the school's needs. Also, the number of policies written will reflect the requirements of each school. What is important is that school policies are established proactively, with decisions made prior to an event occurring so that an appropriate and agreed upon response is collectively determined before anyone is upset and prior to any action being taken.

For schools that do not have written policies, the school principal or administrator can approach their development and approval in a variety of ways. In many cases, the school principal will draft school policies, most often using policies from another school as a model and making adaptations to reflect the unique situation of each school.

In order to offer some suggestions, many examples of school policies are included throughout this handbook, as well as in Appendix Two.

Included in Appendix Two are sample policies for the issues listed below.

- Admission of Students
- Allergies
- Attendance
- Behavioural Expectations
- Bicycles
- Board Powers and Authority
- Cigarette smoking
- Clothing and Footwear
- Community Use of School Facilities

- Complaints and Appeals
- Crisis Intervention Guidelines
- Critical Response Plan
- Disclosure Policy
- Discipline Policy
- Dogs at School
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Emergency Procedures
- Field Trips
- Head Lice
- Handling Fights or Threats of Fights
- Homework
- Illness and Accident
- Inclement Weather
- Instructional Day
- Kindergarten Orientations
- Opening Day Procedures
- Operation of the School
- Overviews
- Physical Restraint of Students
- Reporting Student Progress
- Restraining Students
- School Bus
- School Bus Accidents
- School Bus Pick-Ups and Service
- Staff Absences Policy
- Staff Guidelines
- Staff Meetings
- Student Detentions
- Student Evaluation Procedures
- Student Injury
- Student Promotions (Grade)
- Student Textbooks and Supplies
- Suspected Abuse
- Suspension and Expulsion
- Teachers – on – Call
- Teacher Pro-D/Training
- Violence and Intimidation
- Visitors to the School and Premises
- Weapons
- Workers Compensation

Schools may also choose to directly contact other First Nations schools in BC to facilitate a sharing of successful policy examples.

If the school leadership is not comfortable drafting its own policies, it may choose to hire a consultant for that purpose, which requires ensuring that the consultant is familiar with the unique circumstances of First Nations schools. If a consultant is hired for the purpose of policy development, the school principal must work closely with the individual hired throughout the process to ensure that the policies are relevant and useful.

Regardless of the process used for designing the school policies, the principal should ensure that they have been approved by the appropriate authority. For many schools, that will mean that the school board has had an opportunity to review, discuss, revise as required, and formally approve the policies. In other cases, the Chief and Council may fulfill that role. The role of the school governing authority in the development and approval of school policies is described much more fully in the FNSA publication *Effective Board Governance: A Handbook For Members of First Nations Non-Profit Boards* prepared by Dr. Larry Thomas.

For schools that already have formally accepted policies, it is crucial that the policies be regularly reviewed to ensure that they still reflect the needs of the school. New policies should also be added as necessary, always ensuring that changes and additions are reviewed and formally approved by the appropriate authority. It can be very useful to indicate when policies have been revised so that people are aware of any changes made. For example, one First Nations school in BC includes a section following each policy statement which reads:

Revised: January 1997
Revised: February 1988
Original Policy: August 1977

First Nations School Policy Development Process Sample One

When I arrived at our school four years ago, there were bits and pieces of policy and mission statements floating around. Some were written and some were verbal or norms of dealing with situations. I convinced the Board of the need to consolidate and write down policy for the school. We then embarked on a journey that I thought would take about 3 months but actually took 12. I took it upon myself to create Draft 1 using the bits and pieces aforementioned. The staff then had a chance to review the policy, talk about it, and suggest

possible changes. Draft 2 was then created and addressed by the Board of Education. They recommended changes and Draft 3 was born. This was reviewed by staff and Board members and Draft 4 arrived. This was the final draft but it was several months before the Board got around to ratifying it. Once ratified, copies were given to all staff members and Board members.

Were I to do this again, I would involve parents in the process as well. I realize this would take longer but it would have been worthwhile. I do feel that someone or a small group of people needs to take it upon themselves to create a draft policy from whatever sources they have available to them. If you just bring a large group together and say "now let's make policy," the process will take even longer than ours did. Also I'm not sure that the end product would be as educationally relevant as might be wished for.

4.4 Staff Meetings

Arranging for regular staff meetings is the responsibility of the school principal, and it is very important that principals organize staff meetings so that the time together is used effectively. According to Richardson (1999), almost any teacher or principal would agree that staff meetings can be one of the most dreaded and ineffective parts of the work week, but they are "a chunk of time that is begging to be used in a productive way." Reflecting that perspective, more and more principals are moving away from traditional staff meetings that are more like "45 minute memos," and they are shaping student-free staff time into professional learning opportunities in which the entire staff reads, discusses, analyzes, and plans together (Richardson, 2002).

Successful staff meetings have teaching and learning as the central themes. Teachers should feel that they learned something from the meeting, or they were a waste of people's valuable time. As Richardson (2000) notes, schools that use staff meetings to regularly measure progress towards the school goals begin to shift the school culture towards one that embraces continuous progress, as the staff will understand that teachers come together to learn from each other and to talk about the work that they do, not merely to sit passively and hear information delivered by the principal.

Successful staff meetings have teaching and learning as the central themes, and should focus on what is good for students.

Staff meetings should not, therefore, be used as a way to deal with "administrivia." Rather, the meetings can include informed discussion and debate regarding ways to improve the school climate, student, program and school assessment, plans for school improvement, the implementation of a new program, and any other issues focused on "what is good for students." When that is the case, more people will attend staff meetings enthusiastically and the time will be spent on valuable exchanges that will result in greater levels of success.

Before changing the format of staff meetings, however, principals must be aware of the current working relationships among the staff. If a staff is not used to working together, it may be necessary to introduce the idea of collegial meetings slowly. For schools in which the staff rarely interacts professionally, the principal can encourage "low-risk" staff development activities initially, such as inviting staff members to exchange books, articles, and classroom materials to get them used to sharing things without putting their professional skills and knowledge on the line for scrutiny. Later, teachers can be encouraged to identify problems they are experiencing and receive suggestions from colleagues about how to address the issues, which will demonstrate to teachers that their colleagues have a great deal of expertise to be shared.

To make staff meetings even more meaningful, principals can entrust teachers with responsibility for selecting the content. Then the principal can assume responsibility for planning the meetings, treating them as seriously as any other professional development activity. For example, if teachers decide they want to devote staff meeting time to discipline issues, the principal can identify useful articles and make arrangements to watch videos of simulations and real-life situations of different discipline issues. The teachers can then discuss what they read and saw. Pulling a staff together to focus on a single theme over a long period helps build a sense of community among the staff. Having staff meetings focused on themes related to learning will also demonstrate the principal's commitment to collegiality and quality education, as "what you pay attention to communicates what you value." (Richardson, 1999).

4.4.1 Dealing With "Administrivia"

If staff meetings are not used to address administrative issues, however, there still must be a mechanism for dealing with those issues. As Richardson (2002) notes, one of the first steps in transforming staff meeting time is figuring out how to ensure that teachers continue to receive information that traditionally has been shared during those meetings. Once staff meetings are re-shaped to focus on professional development, principals and administrators can communicate regularly with the staff about administrative issues through things such as:

- a chalkboard or memo board in the staff room;
- memos provided directly to staff, or weekly bulletins to staff;
- in a school where the staff is accustomed to checking e-mail several times a day, the principal may distribute a regular e-mail newsletter to the staff, or can send notices and memos as the need arises; or
- the principal may put a printed newsletter in every teacher's mailbox, or distribute a calendar of upcoming events to ensure that teachers know what is happening in the school and community.

Any number of alternate ideas is also possible. For example, one principal of a First Nations school uses a “hot pink express” – always printing administrative information on hot pink paper that is sent to all school staff. Such mechanisms can ensure that valuable time at staff meetings is not required for discussion of matters such as parking, keys, coffee payments, dirty dishes in the staff room, et cetera.

4.5 School Budget and Resources

The school principal is primarily responsible for the establishment of the school budget, and for ensuring that there will be adequate funds to cover the costs of the year's operation. The principal of a First Nations school, therefore, must forecast student enrolment and have a full understanding of the tuition fees that will be received. The principal must then project and ensure that adequate funds will be available for the salaries of teachers and other staff members, teaching supplies, the costs of the school building and technological maintenance and upkeep, and the costs of any new programs that are to be implemented. Usually, the principal develops a budget based upon those factors, and then the budget is approved by the school governing agency. It is then the principal's responsibility to monitor the revenues and expenditures and ensure that the school will reach the end of the school year with the funding available.

Most First Nations schools are funded through the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) nominal roll process. Each year, workshops are offered by INAC that explain the nominal roll process in more detail.

Effective principals or administrators must help to maximize the availability of sufficient and high quality classroom supplies and instructional resources in order for teachers to focus their attention on instructional and curricular issues. This role can be extremely challenging in First Nations schools, as historically First Nations schools have been critically under funded. Research undertaken in BC in 2002 and 2003 demonstrated that First Nations schools were receiving significantly less funding than that provided to public schools. It is only in the 2005/2006 school year that the federal government began providing comparable core funding to First Nations schools.

In addition, until very recently First Nations schools did not receive funding to provide services for students with special needs – even for those students who had diagnosed needs that fit within the BC Ministry of Education's special education funding guidelines. Even now, the federal government provides a block of funding for special education in First Nations schools in BC. That funding is distributed to First Nations through grants

that are calculated through a set formula. Very limited additional funding is available, regardless of how many students with special needs are enrolled in the school and regardless of the severity of their needs.

Although First Nations schools have seen a significant increase in their funding in the past few years – including the much needed although limited special education funding – many of the schools are still striving to overcome a resource deficit caused by years of under funding. That situation may be reflected in fewer learning resources in the schools, some outdated equipment, as well as teacher salaries and benefits that are not yet comparable to those paid in local school districts. While it is expected that the recent funding increases will result in improvements in all of those areas, it may take some time for all schools to build their resource capacity.

All schools and First Nations schools in particular, are therefore forced to establish priorities, and address the need for quality instructional materials one subject area at a time, ideally gradually building up the school's resources in all areas over time. That process can be very difficult, however, as resources and equipment can become outdated or worn out quite quickly, making it difficult to continually establish a sufficient resource base.

The principal, therefore, must often make difficult decisions regarding what materials to purchase, and how to raise the funds for resources that are required. It is also very important for the school leader to be aware of what new resources are available to assist teachers in their jobs, and to develop a reasonable understanding of the benefits and costs of the many new programs and materials that are available so that valuable funds are not wasted on things that do not really contribute to student learning.

For the past several years, grants have been provided to First Nations schools through the FNSA for accessing new resources. For example, for the past several years, schools have been provided funding through INAC's New Paths for Education Program and Parental and Community Engagement Strategy. The funding available for the BC region has been administered by the FNSA and the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC).

As described above, grants are also now available for special education services in First Nations schools. The FNSA and FNEESC are responsible for allocating the funding to schools using an equitable funding formula. Reporting on the use of that funding must also be a priority for all First Nations schools, as a demonstration of the important services being provided with the funding will be imperative in order to ensure a continuation of the grants.

In addition, schools that offer secondary programming have been eligible to apply for cooperative education program funding from the FNSA and FNEESC. Small grants are also available to organize summer science and technology camps.

All of the funding opportunities facilitated by FNEESC and the FNSA are described in more detail on the FNEESC web site at www.fneesc.ca. First Nations school principals should refer to that site for the most up-to-date information.

Schools can also write proposals to other agencies or undertake additional fundraising efforts, which of course can be very time consuming for school leaders who are already extremely busy. Therefore, it is the role of principal, in consultation with teachers and possibly the school governing authority, to establish priorities for the funding proposals that are prepared, and to determine the level of fundraising that is reasonable within the context of their numerous other critical responsibilities. Given the needs that exist, it would be easy for principals to spend all of their time on fundraising, but it is critical that they maintain an adequate focus on their role as school leader, as well.

4.6 School Safety

Most schools are very safe places for children. Statistics show that less than one percent of all violent deaths of children occur on school grounds. However, no school is immune to concerns about safety. Research offers a wealth of knowledge about preventing violence in schools, and it is the principal's responsibility to ensure that the school is prepared for and able to mitigate any safety problems that arise.

Perhaps the most important aspect of creating a safe environment is the establishment of a positive school culture, as described in section one of this handbook. When students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members all value the school and respect one another, concerns related to school safety will inevitably decrease.

Everyone taking ownership of safety in the school – that is the key. It is about saying “This is your school. We all have a part of creating a safe environment.”

Participants in the FNSA School Principal Workshops

More specific information and suggestions may assist in creating a safe school environment. The Canadian Association of Principals web site, www.cdnprincipals.org, includes an inventory of resources, research and links to dozens of articles on school safety that may prove useful. In addition, the following information regarding school safety is an excerpt from *Early Warning! A Guide to Safe Schools*, a publication produced by Dwyer, Osher and Warger (1998) for the US Department of Education (www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/Products/earlywvrn.html).

According to *Early Warning! A Guide to Safe Schools*, research shows the following characteristics of safe schools.

Safe schools focus on academic achievement, and reflect the attitude that all children can behave appropriately. Expectations should be communicated clearly, with the understanding that meeting such expectations is a responsibility of the student, the school, and the home. Several examples of student rights and responsibility statements are included below.

Safe schools involve families in meaningful ways and develop links to the community. School violence reflects problems that can only be addressed when everyone at school, at home, and in the community works together. Schools that have close ties to families, support services, community police, and the community at large can benefit from many valuable resources, and work cooperatively to address potential risks and create a supportive environment with effective safety nets in case problems arise.

Safe schools encourage positive relationships among students and staff. Research shows that a positive relationship with an adult who is available to provide support when needed is one of the most important factors in preventing student violence. Safe schools make sure that opportunities exist for adults to spend quality, personal time with children, and they also foster positive student interpersonal relations so that students feel comfortable assisting others in getting help when needed.

Characteristics of Safe Schools

- Safe schools focus on academic achievement.
- Safe schools involve families in meaningful ways and develop links to the community.
- Safe schools encourage positive relationships among students and staff.
- Safe schools discuss safety issues openly.
- Safe schools create ways for students to share their concerns.
- Safe schools have a system for referring children.
- Safe schools openly and objectively examine circumstances that are potentially dangerous.
- Safe schools support students in making transitions to adult life.

Safe schools discuss safety issues openly. Children come to school with many different perceptions and misconceptions about violence and the use of weapons. Schools can reduce the risk of violence by teaching children about the dangers of firearms, as well as appropriate strategies for dealing with feelings, expressing anger in appropriate ways, and resolving conflicts.

Safe schools create ways for students to share their concerns. Research shows that peers often are the most likely group to know in advance about potential school violence. Schools must create ways for students to safely report behaviors that may lead to dangerous situations. Children must also feel safe expressing their needs, fears, and anxieties to school staff so they do not feel isolated.

Safe schools have a system for referring children who are suspected of being abused or neglected. This area of responsibility was raised as a particular concern in a survey of teachers in First Nations schools (Kavanagh, 2000). Several of the teachers surveyed indicated that they had not received preparation for disclosures of suspected abuse, and they felt that professional development in crisis counseling and intervention for disclosures would be beneficial. Schools should also ensure that their abuse policies are consistent with provincial and federal policies, as evidenced in the samples outlined below.

Safe schools openly and objectively examine circumstances that are potentially dangerous for students and staff, and situations where people feel threatened or intimidated. They also continually assess progress toward solutions and share that information with students, families, and the community at large.

Finally, **safe schools support students in making the transition to adult life** and the workplace by providing students with community service opportunities and work-study programs that help connect them to caring adults in the community. Positive relationships with adults in the community, when established early, foster in youth a sense of hope and security for the future.

Research has demonstrated repeatedly that schools and communities can do a great deal to prevent violence by having in place a safe foundation that provides effective services to students who need support.

Rights and Responsibilities of Students Statement Sample One

Student Rights

- Every student has the right to an education designed to meet his/her particular needs.
- Every student has the right to be respected as an individual.
- Every student has the right to be listened to.
- Every student has the right to a safe, protected, and challenging learning environment.
- Every student has the right to be given an opportunity to learn their language and culture.

Student Responsibilities

- Students have a responsibility to listen to instruction and perform their learning tasks diligently.
- Students have a responsibility to treat teachers with respect.
- Students have a responsibility to listen to the opinions of others and not interfere with the learning of other students.
- Students have a responsibility to ensure that their conduct does not present any danger to the safety of other students.
- Students have a responsibility to use their school's facilities and resources in a careful and conscientious manner.

Rights and Responsibilities of Students Statement Sample Two

1. I have a right to learn in this classroom. It is my responsibility to listen to instruction, work quietly when asked to, be prepared to work, and raise my hand if I have a question, concern, or need to leave.
2. I have a right to hear and be heard. It is my responsibility to not talk, shout, or make noise when others are speaking.
3. I have a right to be respected in this classroom. It is my responsibility to not tease or bother people and to respect their belonging and feelings.
4. I have a right to be safe in this classroom. It is my responsibility to not threaten or harm another person either physically or mentally.
5. I have a right to privacy and to my own personal space. It is my responsibility to respect the personal space and privacy of others in the classroom and in the school.

Student Code of Conduct Sample One

Our school has three basic expectations of its students.

- Attendance – students are expected to attend school to get an education.
- Achievement – students are expected to pass their courses.
- Attitude – students are expected to be cooperative.

In order to meet those expectations, students should do the following.

- Respect the rights, feelings, safety, and property of others.
- Attend school regularly and be on time.
- Follow the rules of the school and accept individual consequences.
- Make a good effort to complete schoolwork to the best of their ability.
- Contribute to and participate in school activities.
- Follow the school philosophy of respect and tolerance.

4.6.1 Early Warning Signs of School Violence

It is also very important to understand the early warning signs of a child who is troubled, so that effective interventions can be put in place. Highlighted below are principles for identifying the early warning signs of school violence, as described by Dwyer, Osher and Warger (1998).

It is important to keep in mind, however, that **early warning signs can often be misinterpreted and or misused**. Therefore, it is critical to keep in mind the following concerns and suggestions when thinking about early warning signs.

- First and foremost, **the intent of early warning signs should be to get help for a child before a serious problem occurs**. Early warning signs should not be used as rationale to exclude, isolate, or punish a child, nor for formally identifying, mislabeling, or stereotyping children. All referrals to outside agencies based on the early warning signs must be kept confidential and must be done with parental consent (except referrals for suspected child abuse or neglect).
- **Violence and aggression must be understood within a context**. Children who are at risk for aggression and violence can be set off in certain environments or

situations, such as when stress becomes too great, or if students lack positive coping skills.

- **Warning signs should be viewed within a developmental context.** Everyone must keep in mind what is developmentally typical behavior, so that behaviors are not misinterpreted.
- **Everyone must also understand that children who are troubled and at risk for aggression exhibit more than one warning sign, repeatedly, and with increasing intensity over time.** Thus, it is important not to overreact to single signs, words, or actions.

Early Warning Signs

While it is not always possible to predict behavior that will lead to violence, and only trained professionals should make full diagnoses, educators and parents can often recognize warning signs that indicate a need for further investigation. The following early signs are not equally significant and are not presented in order of seriousness.

- In some situations, gradual and eventually complete **social withdrawal** can be an important indicator of a troubled child.
- While research has shown that the majority of **children who are isolated and appear to be friendless** are not violent, research also has shown that in some cases feelings of isolation and not having friends are associated with children who behave aggressively and violently.
- **Children who are victims of violence**, including physical or sexual abuse, are sometimes at risk themselves of becoming violent toward themselves or others.
- **A youth who feels constantly teased, bullied, ridiculed, or humiliated** at home or at school may initially withdraw socially. If not given adequate support in

addressing those feelings, some children may possibly express them through aggression or violence.

- **Poor school achievement** can be the result of many factors, but it is important to be alert if there is a drastic change in performance and/or if poor performance becomes a chronic condition that limits a child's capacity to learn. In such situations, the child can feel frustrated or denigrated, and may act out and behave aggressively as a result.
- Students often express their feelings and intentions in their **drawings and writing**. Many children produce work about violent themes that for the most part is harmless when taken in context. However, a consistent overrepresentation of violence that is directed at specific individuals may signal the potential for violence. Because there is a real danger in misdiagnosing such a sign, it is important to seek the guidance of a qualified mental health specialist to determine its meaning.
- Anger is a natural emotion, but **anger that is expressed frequently and intensely** in response to minor irritants may signal potential violent behaviour.
- **Patterns of impulsive and chronic hitting, intimidating, and bullying** behaviours that occur early in children's lives, if left unattended, might later escalate into more serious behaviors.
- **Chronic behavior and disciplinary problems**, both in school and at home may suggest that underlying emotional needs are not being met, and those unmet needs may be manifested in acting out and aggressive behaviours.
- Unless provided with support and counseling, a youth who has a **history of aggressive or violent behavior** is likely to repeat those behaviours. In the presence of such signs it is important to review the child's history with behavioral experts and seek parents' observations and insights.

- An **intense prejudice** toward others based on racial, ethnic, religious, language, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and physical appearance, when coupled with other factors, may lead to violent assaults against those who are perceived to be different.
- Apart from being unhealthy behaviors, **drug and alcohol use** reduce self-control and expose children and youth to violence, either as perpetrators, as victims, or both.
- **Gangs** that support anti-social values and behaviors cause fear and stress among many students; youth who emulate or become affiliated with gangs may adopt those values and act in violent or aggressive ways in certain situations.
- Children and youth who inappropriately possess or have access to **firearms** can have an increased risk for violence. Research shows that such youngsters also have a higher probability of becoming victims.
- Idle threats of violence are a common response to frustration, but one of the most reliable indicators of a dangerous act is a detailed and **specific threat to use violence**. Steps must be taken to understand the nature of and prevent the acting out of such threats.

Identifying and Responding to Imminent Warning Signs

Unlike early warning signs, imminent warning signs indicate that a student is very close to behaving in a way that is potentially dangerous, and they require an immediate response. No single sign can predict that a dangerous act will occur. Rather, imminent warning signs usually are presented as a sequence of serious behaviors or threats. Usually, imminent warning signs are evident to more than one staff member, as well as to the child's family. Imminent warning signs may include some combination of the following.

- Serious physical fighting with peers or family members.

- Severe destruction of property.
- Severe rage for seemingly minor reasons.
- Detailed threats of lethal violence.
- Possession and/or use of firearms and other weapons.
- Other self-injurious behaviors or threats of suicide.

When warning signs indicate that danger is imminent, safety must always be the first and foremost consideration. Action must be taken immediately, and parents should be informed of the concerns right away. School communities also have the responsibility to seek assistance from appropriate outside agencies.

4.6.2 Using the Early Warning Signs to Shape Intervention Practices

An early warning sign is not a predictor that a child or youth will commit a violent act and schools should recognize the potential in every child to overcome difficult experiences and to control negative emotions. Schools can, however, use their knowledge of early warning signs to address problems before they escalate into violence. Support strategies include having school policies in place that support training and ongoing consultation so that staff and parents know how to identify early warning signs. Easy access to a team of specialists trained in evaluating and addressing serious behavioural and academic concerns will also help to mitigate potential problems. Each school community should also develop a procedure that students and staff can follow when reporting their concerns about a child who exhibits early warning signs, including plans for notifying parents.

It is often difficult to acknowledge that a child is troubled. People may find it hard to admit that a child close to them needs help. When faced with resistance or denial, school communities must persist to ensure that children get the help they need.

Use the Signs Responsibly

Everyone must avoid inappropriately labeling or stigmatizing individual students because they appear to fit a specific profile or set of early warning indicators. It is perfectly acceptable to be worried about a child, but not to overreact and jump to conclusions. No one sign alone is sufficient for predicting aggression and violence.

Approaches to School Safety

Comprehensive approaches to school safety usually involve the following.

- Develop a school-wide disciplinary policy that includes a code of conduct, and specific rules and consequences that can accommodate student differences. (If that document already exists, it is important to review and modify it if necessary.) School anti-harassment policies are also important.
- Ensure that the cultural values and educational goals of the community are reflected in the rules. These values can be expressed in a statement that precedes the school-wide disciplinary policy.
- Include school staff, students, and families in the development, discussion, and implementation of fair rules, and provide support for the implementation of the rules. Class discussions, assemblies, and student government activities can be used as opportunities to promote a climate of nonviolence.
- Combine negative consequences (such as withdrawing privileges) with positive strategies for teaching socially appropriate behaviors and with strategies to address any external factors that might have caused the behavior.
- Include a zero tolerance statement for illegal possession of weapons, alcohol, or drugs. Provide services and support for students who have been suspended and/or expelled because of drug and alcohol use.
- Recognize warning signs and respond with comprehensive interventions to help children replace negative behaviors with positive ones. Thorough information sharing with parents will help in this regard.

4.6.3 Creating a Violence Prevention and Response Plan

Some schools may choose to develop a comprehensive safe school plan.

More detailed information about developing plans can be found in several places, including within the full text of the *Early Warning! A Guide to Safe Schools* (found at www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/Products/earlywrn.html), and the Illinois State Board of Education (www.isbe.net/safeschools). That web site includes a guide to conducting a comprehensive safety audit of your school, including students, parents, and staff in the process. It also includes a guide to safe school planning, which allows for a self-assessment and detailed planning to prevent, mitigate, and respond to violent incidents.

As described above, the existence of clear policies and guidelines can help the entire school community respond consistently and confidently to safety issues. In developing effective policies, it is important to consider whether penalties for infractions are appropriately related to the seriousness of the offense, at what point parents are notified, and what educational efforts will accompany a given punishment. Also, school leaders should regularly review their discipline policies to ensure that they are still relevant for everyone involved. Rules that may appear arbitrary or insensitive should be re-explained or expanded.

For many First Nations schools, it is also useful to work closely with the community in developing policies associated with school safety and discipline. Many First Nations schools are committed to having their traditional values reflected in school safety policies, which may involve less emphasis on discipline as it is practiced conventionally, and a greater role for Elders, community leaders, and possibly healing circles in counseling and addressing students who are at risk of or who have demonstrated behavioural and safety concerns.

4.6.4 Characteristics of a Safe Physical School Environment

School principals are also responsible to ensure that the physical environment of the school is adequate; prevention starts by making sure the school building and grounds are safe and secure places. Experts suggest that school officials can enhance physical safety by:

- adjusting scheduling to minimize time in the hallways;
- arranging supervision during recess, lunch breaks, in hallways between classes, and at bus stops;
- having adults visibly present throughout the school building, including the principal regularly walking through the halls and visiting classrooms, as well as encouraging parents to visit the school; and
- keeping the school building clean and in good repair, which has been shown to positively affect students' attitudes and behaviour.

4.6.5 Suicide Prevention

The following information was borrowed from the following web sites, which also contain much more information and suggestions.

The Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention and the Suicide Information and Education Centre, www.suicideprevention.ca, contains a list of suicide crises lines in Canada and specifically throughout British Columbia.

The BC Crisis Line Association can also be contacted at (604) 584 – 5811.

The Youth Suicide Prevention Website, created specifically for youth, is located at www.youthsuicide.ca/youth/youth.htm

The Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention Program web site includes information for teens and parents. It can be found at www.yellowribbon.org

The BC Council for Families web site, www.bccf.bc.ca/learn/suic_teens.html, also includes information and a reference to the publication *Suicide: what you need to know— a guide for school personnel*, published by the BC Council for Families.

The Kids Help Phone Line maintains a very interesting web site with a place for children to share their thoughts and ask for help. Try kidshelp.sympatico.ca/en/

Talking to teens about suicide doesn't "put ideas in their heads." For too many, it is an option they're already considering. A recent survey of 26,000 BC students in grades 7 to 12, conducted by the McCreary Centre Society found that 14% had thought about suicide, 11% had planned a suicide, 7% had attempted suicide, and 2% were injured in a suicide attempt. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among Canadian youth aged 10-24, second only to motor vehicle accidents. In Canada over 25,000 youth attempt and over 250 complete suicide annually.

In 2000, 35 British Columbian youth between the ages of 10-19 took their own life. Adolescent males complete suicide 3 to 5 times more often than adolescent females, and males typically use more lethal methods such as hanging and firearms. Adolescent females are 4 to 7 times more likely to attempt suicide than adolescent males, typically through the use of drugs, poisons, or gases. Those methods often require more time to take effect and increase the opportunity for the youth to be found. As a result, intervention is more likely. Recently, however, females have been choosing more lethal methods.

Warning Signs and Risk Factors of Suicide

There is no suicidal “type,” but the following factors, especially in combination, may be indicative of a teen having suicidal feelings. Together, warning signs and risk factors give a clearer profile of risk.

Warning signs you might see

- Abrupt changes in personality, such as becoming much more quiet, more aggressive, or more irritable
- A previous suicide attempt
- Increased use of drugs and/or alcohol
- Sudden changes in eating pattern, sleeping pattern, or personal appearance
- Exhibiting sudden changes in school or social behaviour such as change in attendance, decline in academic performance, an inability to concentrate, failure to complete assignments, a lack of interest/withdrawal, or changes in relationships with classmates
- Unwillingness or inability to communicate
- Extreme or extended boredom or restlessness
- Increased carelessness; becoming “accident prone”
- Unusual sadness, discouragement, loneliness, or unexpected displays of emotion
- Family disruptions - divorce, trauma, or losing loved one
- Running away from home, truancy from school, or other rebelliousness and reckless behavior such as driving recklessly or unsafe sex
- Withdrawal from people/activities they love, such as hobbies, sports, school, or job

- Confusion and an inability to concentrate
- Chronic pain, panic, or anxiety
- Lack of interest or energy (or wild variations in energy levels)
- Increase in anxiety or anxiety related illnesses (head aches, stomach aches)
- Preoccupation with death, dying, or suicide (including joking about death or suicide, creative writing, poetry, artwork, and/or talking about death or cult figures who died by suicide)
- A sudden elated mood following a time of depression
- Talking about or making a suicide plan
- Giving away prize possessions, saying good-bye, writing a will, writing farewell letters

Warning signs you might hear

Often youth who are considering suicide will give clues through their comments. If you hear a youth make statements like these, take them seriously.

- "Nothing ever goes right for me."
- "It'll all be over soon."
- "Whatever, nothing matters anyway."
- "I might as well kill myself"
- "I hate life"
- "Everyone would be better off without me"
- "I just can't take it anymore."
- "I wish I was dead."

Risk Factors

- Problems with school or the law
- Breakup of a romance
- Unexpected pregnancy
- A stressful family life. (having parents who are depressed or are substance abusers, or a family history of suicide)
- Loss of security...fear of authority, peers, group or gang members

- Stress due to new situations; college or relocating to a new community
- Failing in school or failing to pass an important test
- A serious illness or injury to oneself
- Seriously injuring another person or causing another person's death (example: automobile accident)
- Major loss...of a loved one, a home, divorce in the family, a trauma, a relationship

How to help

If you believe a teen you know might be suicidal, the following steps may help.

- **Listen.** Adults want to give advice and solve problems for teens. Sometimes they need and want people who will just listen. When you initiate a conversation with a teen, you may need to be persistent. A good way to begin might be to focus on the changes you have observed, such as “I've noticed this particular change in you lately. Can you tell me more about that?” If a teen does open up to you, don't offer solutions or tell them how fortunate they really are. Just listen. That shows you take their problems seriously, and you care enough to want to help.
- **Assess the risk.** The best way to find out whether a teen is contemplating suicide is to ask him or her directly: “Are you thinking of killing yourself?” Doing this frees them to talk about what is really going on and to reach out for help. If the teen answers yes, ask more specific questions. “What method have you thought of using to kill yourself?” “When do you think you'll do this?” “Do you have the means (guns, pills etc)?” The more lethal and available the means, and the more definite the time frame, the greater the risk.
- **Get help.** Do not ever agree to keep someone's suicidal intentions a secret. If the person seems to be in imminent danger of attempting suicide, do not leave them alone.

To get help, try the Crisis Line in your community, emergency wards of hospitals, your family doctor, the Kids Helpline 1-800-668-6868 (in Canada), a mental health office, or the police or ambulance.

4.6.6 A Final Note About School Safety

The National Crime Prevention Council (www.ncpc.org) highlights the following twelve things that principals can do to create a safe school environment.

- Encourage parental involvement in every way possible.
- Work with the community to create safe ways for travel to and from school.
- Reward good behaviour and acknowledge student efforts to avoid confrontation.
- Establish “zero tolerance” policies for weapons and violence, create penalties in advance, and include a way for students to report crime-related information that does not expose them to retaliation.
- Establish a school and community committee to develop a safe school plan, including policies and procedures.
- Work with other community and law enforcement agencies and regularly review concerns.
- Offer anger management, stress relief, and violence prevention training to staff and identify ways to pass along those skills to students.
- Involve everyone – teachers, other staff, parents, and governance members – in setting up solutions to violence.
- Insist that everyone in the school treat each other with respect and thoughtfulness, and be a role model yourself.
- Develop a network of health care and social resources in the community.
- Ensure that violence prevention skills are a part of the entire school curriculum, not a one-time training session.
- Consider such policies as mandatory storage of outerwear and backpacks in lockers (to prevent students carrying things you are unaware of) and limited access to the building (to reduce inappropriate visitors).

Behavioural Expectations Policy Sample One

Policy

In an effort to foster responsibility and accountability in students, as well as to encourage self-control and to provide for a safe and healthy environment, expectations for student behaviour have been established.

Regulations

1. Classroom teachers have the right and responsibility to establish classroom behaviour expectations that are consistent with the overall expectations of the school. Behavioural expectations should be established at the onset of the school year and should be reviewed on a regular basis.
 2. Regarding students' daily conduct, students shall:
 - a) dress appropriately for all school functions – curricular as well as extra-curricular;
 - b) use appropriate language for the classroom, and avoid the usage of derogatory and profane comments
 - c) demonstrate respect at all times for all other people
 - d) be cooperative at all times
 - e) maximize their potential in school
 - f) encourage cooperative behaviour rather than participating in aggressive or dangerous activities which may result in harm or injury to others
 - g) follow school rules and encourage others to do the same
 - h) offer suggestions for the safe and healthy environment of the school
 - i) follow the good example set by other people and set examples of goodness for others to follow
 - j) encourage and demonstrate an environmentally sound attitude towards the preservation and respect of the world in which they live
 - k) respect school and others' property
 3. Regarding a safe and healthy environment, students shall:
 - a) wear appropriate dress and footwear
 - b) remain at home when they have a communicable illness
 - c) abstain from the consumption of alcohol and drugs
 4. Regarding school attendance, students shall:
 - a) attend school on a regular and consistent basis
 - b) respect, honour and value school time
 5. Regarding their fellow students, students shall:
 - a) respect the rights of their fellow students
 - b) respect the personal belongings of others
 - c) respect the feelings of others
 - d) encourage appropriate language usage towards others
-

- e) avoid “put-downs” and name calling and encourage “warm fuzzies”
 - f) encourage fellow students to uphold the rules and regulations
 - g) discourage fellow students from damaging others’ property
 - h) attempt to resolve situations between fellow students
 - i) seek assistance when situations cannot be resolved between students
 - j) encourage others to value and respect the environment (avoid littering and remember to recycle)
 - k) respect the belief systems of others
 - l) assist fellow students to assume more responsibility towards self, others, school property, conduct, and rules
 - m) encourage fellow students to speak highly of the school, their education, the education of others, and the school staff
6. Regarding the use of the library, students and staff shall:
- a) use the library during the times set out by the school staff
 - b) respect all books, computers, disks, and other school fixtures
 - c) not bring food or drinks into the library
 - d) remove outdoor footwear while in the library
 - e) sign out books according to the procedures with the assistance of the teacher
7. Regarding recesses and lunch periods, students shall:
- a) go outside for all scheduled breaks unless other arrangements have been made with their teachers
 - b) remain at their desks while eating unless given permission to do otherwise
 - c) refrain from touching classroom computers while eating or drinking
 - d) not leave the school property unless other arrangements have been made (“other arrangements” being a note or phone call from parent/guardian)
8. Regarding dismissal, students shall:
- a) leave the classroom for home, unless other arrangements have been made (“other arrangements” being a note or phone call from parent/guardian)
9. Regarding bus behaviour, students will:
- a) wait for their scheduled bus at the designated spot of pick up
 - b) sit to per seat
 - c) avoid loud voices
 - d) avoid moving from seat to seat
 - e) clean up after themselves
 - f) adhere to the expectations and instructions of the bus driver
 - g) participate fully in all emergency or other “drill” activities

Discipline Policy Sample One

The Board supports the position that the Principal and staff of the school stand “in loco parentis” when pupils are in their charge. Positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviours is

necessary for students to understand what is expected of them. Modeling of appropriate behaviours by staff is essential to students learning what is acceptable.

1. All teachers will establish a set of classroom rules that are to be posted in a prominent location in the classroom. Teachers should make an attempt to phrase these rules prominently and to explain the reasons for the rules to the students. Only recurring behavioural problems of student actions that effect the entire school should be referred to the Principal.
2. Positive behaviours must be recognized and students should be given positive reinforcement when they model appropriate behaviour.
3. In keeping with the community expectations the underlying focus of all discipline must be the community's culture and values. Students must be taught that their behaviour affects others and themselves and that mistakes happen and are forgivable.
4. Wherever possible students having a difficulty with each other need to be brought together to discuss their feelings and to make plans for remedying the situation.
5. Despite the best efforts of teachers there will be some situations where the normal dispute resolution mechanisms do not work. In those cases, the following steps may be followed. Depending upon the severity or frequency of the behaviour several steps may be skipped.
 - a) The teacher will arrange to talk with the student involved or, if there is more than one student, arrange to get the students together to talk about their behaviours and possible solutions.
 - b) If the behaviour re-occurs then the student must sign a behaviour contract which outlines their expected behaviour and consequences.
 - c) If no resolution is possible or if the behaviour is of such a serious nature that the school climate is affected, then the student or students should be brought to the Principal (steps a and b will be repeated).
 - d) Parents will be called to participate in any further discussions around behaviour.
 - e) Recommendation will be made to the Elder's Advisory Council to deal with ongoing serious behaviour.

** Possible consequences:

 - isolation in the classroom;
 - exclusion from class activities;
 - apologies to person(s) offended;
 - in-school suspension – work under supervision elsewhere in the school (possibly with a parent);
 - in-school suspension – with parent and/or Elder meetings before student is allowed back;

- public meetings with families and apologies in the First Nations traditional manner;
 - home schooling – teachers must prepare materials and activities for students to complete at home. Teacher monitoring is required;
 - out-of-school suspension (as an absolutely last alternative).
Teachers are free to create their own, but the consequence must be related to the offense, and the goal of the consequence must be to teach proper behaviour not to punish. Students must be taught the connection between their behaviours and the consequence.
6. Consistency in implementing any school-wide discipline policy is essential. All school staff have the responsibility to implement the behaviour policy whenever they see student behaviour that is in need of correction.
 7. Communications with parents is essential. Co-operation between home and school is the best way to ensure that behavioural issues are prevented from arising or are dealt with quickly.

4.7 Drug and Alcohol Awareness

Today, no school principal or administrator can successfully manage a school without considering the issues of drugs and alcohol. Leaders of First Nations schools in particular cannot ignore those issues, as First Nations communities across the country are voicing their concerns about alcohol and drug use among their children and setting alcohol and drug abuse prevention as a community-wide priority.

4.7.1 Combating Alcohol, Drugs and Violence.

Schools can undertake a range of initiatives in order to address the problem of drug and alcohol use. Schools can create clear choices and opportunities for success, they can provide role models and mentors, and they can work with parents to develop the social skills youth need to cope in today's society in a nonviolent manner. They also can provide opportunities for recreation and safe activities during after-school hours, and develop programs to reduce the "risk factors" for engaging in dangerous behaviours. Solving the drug and alcohol problem, however, is a tremendously complex enterprise that requires the cooperation of the entire community.

Ramsey (1992) offers the following ten suggestions for principals in dealing with drug and alcohol issues.

- Face reality and know what's going on. Do not ignore or de-emphasize the impact of student drug and alcohol use on the learning environment of the school.
- Take a stand. Be consistent about the school's opposition to drug and alcohol use.
- Organize staff for action. Identify a staff leader to address the issue.
- Teach health and prevention to students, and possibly in parenting workshops, as well.
- Showcase special projects such as peer counseling, drug-free clubs, and drug and alcohol awareness weeks.
- Provide a safety net of support for anyone who is affected by drug and alcohol abuse.

- Nurture the parent connection and ensure that drug and alcohol awareness efforts are coordinated in partnership and with parent reinforcement at home.
- Deal with staff drug and alcohol problems, and ensure that the school staff members act as role models for the students.
- Provide healthy outlets and alternatives, including extra-curricular activities, physical education activities, and high academic expectations.
- Keep at it.

Many First Nations school principals and staff members are also proactive in the community's efforts to address issues of drug and alcohol abuse. Although an added responsibility for already busy administrators, such involvement can be very significant in fostering strong school and community connections, and can emphasize the school's commitment to drug and alcohol awareness. In addition, support for community drug and alcohol programs is critical to the long-term success of the school, as it is a crucial aspect of ensuring that future generations of children are not adversely affected by addictions or problems associated with drug and alcohol use during pregnancy.

An interesting article about school drug prevention programs is Adair, J. March 2000. Tackling teens' no. 1 problem. *Educational Leadership*. Vol. 57, No. 6. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. www.ascd.com.

That article considers the question of what school drug and alcohol prevention programs really work, and it cites some of the findings from *Making the Grade: A Guide to School Drug Prevention Programs* by the US government. That report outlines the results of a comprehensive evaluation of 50 popular prevention programs. Only 16 percent of the reviewed curriculums scored A's in overall quality. The Adair (2000) article also highlights one of the top scorers in the evaluation process – Project ALERT. That project earned straight A's in overall quality, ease of administration, and rehearsal and role play.

Drug and Alcohol Sample Policy

Policy

Our school recognizes the negative effects of drug and alcohol and illegal drug use. Drug and alcohol use can lead to misuse and addiction. We will not tolerate any alcohol or illegal drug use while at school.

Regulations

1. Those students found to be consuming alcohol and/or illegal drugs while at school, or previous to attending school, shall:
 2. be suspended for a minimum of five days, or until a healing circle occurs
 3. participate in a healing circle with parents/guardians in attendance
 4. be required to provide school service
 5. other consequences to be determined
6. Those students found to be distributing/selling alcohol and/or illegal drugs at school may:
 - a) be expelled from school
 - b) be suspended from school
 - c) participate in a healing circle with parents/guardians in attendance
 - d) be required to provide school service
 - e) have other consequences applied
 - f) face legal implications
7. RCMP may be involved in cases of consumption; RCMP shall be involved in cases of distributing/selling.

4.8 Scheduling

School principals are responsible for ensuring that a school schedule is in place that provides for adequate hours of academic work, reasonable breaks, and adequate time for teacher preparation and planning.

Outlined below is a sample Bell Schedule.

Sample Bell Schedule

The Bell Schedule for Grade 1 to 7 is as follows:

8:50 Morning Drums
9:00 Morning Thought of the Day

10:30 Recess
10:45 End of Recess

12:00 Lunch Begins
1:20 End of Eating Dismissal
12:55 End of Lunch Bell

3:00 Dismissal

The Bell Schedule for Kindergarten is as follows:

9:00 Session Begins
11:30 Dismissal

The Bell Schedule for Preschool 4 is as follows:

12:30 Session Begins
3:00 Dismissal

The next page also includes a sample gym and supervision schedule.

Sample Gym Schedule

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:15 – 9:45					
9:45 – 10:15					
10:45 – 12:00	Language Instruction				
1:00 – 1:45	Math Instruction				
1:50 – 2:20					
2:20 – 2:55					

Sample Supervision Schedule

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30 – 9:00	Staff 1: gym Staff 2: school				
10:30 – 10:45	Staff 3 Staff 4				
12:00 – 12:30	Staff 5 Staff 6 Staff 7				
12:30 – 12:55	Staff 1 Staff 8				
3:00 – 3:30	Staff 6: gym Staff 2: bus Staff 5: library Staff 7: library				

4.9 Technology

The increasing use of technologies in schools places new responsibilities on principals. Principals must now find the funding to ensure that teachers and students are provided with access to equipment that is appropriate, relevant, and effective. The range of new technologies and new educational software programs that are available can make decisions about what to purchase and for what purposes extremely challenging. In making these decisions, it is important that principals explore collaboratively how technology can facilitate and enhance learning, and decide as a school staff which tools to purchase and how to use them. Such discussions, however, raise a range of interesting questions, including what computers can let teachers do differently and better, how they can improve the quality of teaching and learning, and how the technology learning curve might impact the curriculum (Ballen and Moles, 1994).

The power of new technologies as learning tools will be wasted unless teachers have the training and in-service they need in order to use computers to raise student achievement.

As Sparks (1999) notes, “it's common sense that teachers must be comfortable with technology to use it at all, and teachers who are fluent with technology are more likely to use it effectively. How can we make common sense more common practice in schools?” Principals must ensure that teachers are provided abundant

The power of new technologies as learning tools will be wasted unless teachers have the training and in-service they need to use them well.

opportunities to become fluent in using technology to enhance instruction and help students develop thinking and problem-solving skills. Teachers should also have time to learn, to plan, and to practice what they have learned about technologies on an ongoing basis, as well as opportunities to share their technology-based practices with colleagues and to help one another solve the problems inherent in such innovations.

In addition, the Internet is now making its way into schools – a fact that creates new issues for principals and educators. Many schools, either through the SchoolNet initiative

or using their own resources, now have Internet access on a school-wide basis, and possibly in every classroom. Many other schools will have that access in upcoming years.

It is important that schools have Internet capacity so that they can teach students about its uses. Industry, government, and the public expect students to be proficient with computers, and now with the Internet. The Conference Board of Canada (1996), for example, has published what it calls "employability skills" that reflect the skills, attitudes, and behaviours that industry would like to see in its employees. Among these is the requirement to "use . . . information systems effectively".

An increasing number of teachers and classes are using the Internet and other digital telecommunications networks for a wide range of purposes such as informal dialogue with "keypals," the study of foreign cultures, discussion and debate on social issues, consulting with professional scientists and authors, finding information on particular topics, collaborating on research, organizing and participating in quizzes and scavenger hunts, creating school web sites and publishing on-line newsletters, showcasing creative writing and art displays, designing and conducting surveys and opinion polls, following expeditions, and participating in role-playing simulations. In many ways, the Internet is an invaluable source of information and an extremely creative communications and publishing mechanism.

Using the Internet and new technologies successfully, however, requires significant commitment and the acquisition of considerable technical knowledge by teachers. Teachers need a sense of the structure of the Internet, of what constitutes acceptable use, and of how other teachers have used it. As Egnatoff (2002) notes, use of the Internet also raises a range of critical questions, including the following. How does it fit with the media of the past and present as a support for teaching and learning in schools? How can its use help students to reach beyond the school walls, to bring in resources, to engage in productive and enriching dialogue, and to publish their finest work? What does it mean for an educator to use the Internet wisely and effectively? Does it mean developing media literacy so that students can read between the lines and understand how new media and new information technology shape reality? Does it mean critically examining whose values control the medium?

Teachers require training to prepare them to guide their students wisely and effectively in using the Internet – a medium that may be new to many teachers. Most teachers have received little preparatory support for using computers as they exist today, and when it has been implemented, much of the training teachers receive has often focused primarily on technical matters. Instead, teacher training for new technologies needs to deal with pedagogical concerns, as well (Egnatoff, 2002). In addition to knowing how to use Internet resources and knowing what technologies are available, teachers need to understand how to organize the classroom depending on the resources available, how to plan, develop, undertake, and assess telecommunications-based activities and projects, how to justify their work to parents and the public, and how to collaborate on all of this with colleagues. Principals can assist their staffs in developing a more thorough understanding of the internet by facilitating meaningful discussions about the types and uses of the technology in the school, and possibly by developing policies about the ways in which new technologies will be used to assist other learning practices.

The FNSA has worked with the First Nations Education Steering Committee to implement the First Nations SchoolNet Program. Funded by Industry Canada, that program has supported First Nations schools in building their technological capacity, including accessing computers, software, and other technologies, as well as maintaining cost-effective internet connections. Through the SchoolNet Program, other initiatives are also underway, such as research into effective educational software programs. The future of the SchoolNet Program is now uncertain. Further information is available from the FNSA office or the FNSA web site at www.fnsa.ca

Section Five:

Evaluation/Assessment

The topic of evaluation is central to the operation of any successful school. Teachers are concerned with the evaluation of students, and principals are concerned with the evaluation of their teaching staff. In addition, in order to ensure that schools are meeting their goals and that the programs being implemented are actually achieving student growth, administrators and teachers should be concerned with the evaluation of special programs and their school's performance as an organization.

5.1 Evaluation of Students

The school principal must ensure that the progress of students in the school is measured in a consistent and meaningful way through the use of a range of assessment tools. Today, there is considerable debate regarding the types of measures that should be used, and it is the responsibility of the school leader to work with the teaching staff, and ideally parents, to select those that are appropriate for the school.

Schools use a variety of student assessment tools, including standardized tests, student portfolios, language and culture testing techniques, and methods to evaluate student's understandings of their oral traditions. Individual test results should never be used as a sole indicator of student progress, but they can be an important part. Students come to school at various levels of learning, and schools should hold themselves accountable for the progress of each individual student during the time that he or she is in the school, which requires measuring, monitoring, and assisting (Nevi, 2002). As Mahoney (2002) notes, "one of the greatest joys of teaching is to watch someone grow from where she was to what she could become. Measurement is part of tracking that journey."

The use of standardized tests as a measure of student achievement is a slightly contentious one. Many people fear that such tests do not account for variations in student experiences and unique characteristics, and that they are culturally inappropriate for First Nations students. For those reasons, it is important that First Nations schools approach the issue of student assessments with sensitivity to community concerns. In addition, it may be useful to communicate with other First Nations schools to determine the types of tests being used elsewhere.

Of course, standardized test results capture only a snapshot of information, but they are seen by many schools as one tool for determining the progress being achieved by their students. As such, they are perceived to be a useful measure that adds to the overall understanding of student academic achievement and school performance. The test results can, within the context of other indicators, help to identify students who may benefit from additional assistance in one or more of the areas tested. Also, while different testing populations make comparisons between schools difficult, if individual schools consistently test similar populations they can compare results over time to track their own improvement. Therefore, the test results can also serve as one “benchmark” from which school and student growth can be measured.

At this time, the FNSA does not promote the use of any particular testing instrument for First Nations schools, and views this issue as a matter of choice. It is hoped that principals will facilitate a discussion about the evaluation of students with relevant stakeholders to ensure that student growth is occurring in all schools. In addition, based upon requests for further information from principals of First Nations schools, the FNSA is committed to promoting information sharing, research, and consultation about measuring student progress.

First Nations school principals should be aware the BC Ministry of Education graduation requirements were revised. More information about the graduation requirements is available at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/graduation/grad2004.htm

5.2 Evaluation of Teachers

Principals must also be concerned with the issue of teacher evaluation. The general purpose of teacher evaluation is to safeguard and improve the quality of instruction received by students. Teachers themselves need feedback on their professional performance in order to assess their professional performance and to assess their developmental needs. The most valuable part of an evaluation process can therefore be helping teachers reflect on their own teaching practices and identify their own goals for improvement. According to the literature (Sawa, 1995), the purposes of teacher evaluation generally include:

- evaluation can improve instruction by fostering self-development and peer assistance;
- personnel decisions such as retention, transfer, tenure, promotion, demotion, and dismissal can be enhanced; and
- teacher evaluation can protect students from incompetent teachers by bringing structured assistance to marginal teachers and identifying teachers that should be dismissed.

Unfortunately, few issues in education generate more debate and tension as the evaluation of teachers, and if it is performed ineffectively, it will neither improve teachers' instructional skills nor permit the dismissal of incompetent teachers, meaning that children will not achieve to their full potentials. In addition, the issue of evaluation can heighten teacher anxiety, reinforce hierarchical thinking, and possibly "poison otherwise productive working relationships among school professionals (Sawa, 1995). Principals must therefore be very careful in implementing an evaluation policy, and they must ensure that everyone involved remains focused on the positive role of evaluation in improving school performance.

Unfortunately, few issues generate more debate than that of teacher evaluation.

Teacher evaluation is a complex process. It usually involves preparation, observation, data collection, reporting, and follow-up. Data collection normally entails a formal observation that is preceded by a pre-conference and followed by a post-conference. Teacher evaluations can include a focus on issues such as the coherence of the curriculum, the depth and breadth of content covered, the range of teaching techniques used, the quality and variety of materials employed, the types and frequency of students' assignments, the quality of instruments used for student assessment, the kinds of feedback students receive on their work, and the appropriateness of any of these things for individual students and for the classroom context as a whole (Sawa, 1995).

Evaluation is crucial for marginal and unsatisfactory staff members. Studies consistently show that most teachers are good or excellent, but it is important to recognize that there is a small percentage of teachers who are not right for their positions. Schools must uphold standards of excellence for their teachers, as teachers are the key factor in student success.

Administrators, then, are obligated to confront poor teacher performance, which is marked by lack of preparation, deficiencies of teaching skills, and problems of student control, poor judgment, and excessive absence from school. There are several different means to identify incompetent teachers, including supervisory observations, complaints from parents or students, complaints from other teachers, and student test results. Given the limitations of each indicator, the reliance on multiple measures is important.

Effective principals will make every reasonable effort to provide assistance to teachers who are struggling, but if no growth occurs, they should take steps to deal with that situation. Doing so involves documenting the lack of progress using a legally defensible approach and ensuring that the teacher does not remain with the school.

The FNSA publication *Employment Handbook for First Nations Schools* (Kavanagh, 2001) provides much more detailed information on formal teacher evaluation, discipline, and termination procedures for school personnel, and that handbook should be reviewed if a principal is faced with a serious staffing situation. **It is also recommended that principals seek legal advice when they are uncertain**

about teacher evaluation, discipline, and termination issues.

5.2.1 Suggestions for Effective Evaluation Practices

Daresh (1992, cited in Sawa, 1995) suggests the following to help an administrator provide colleagues with feedback that will enhance positive, professional self-images and encourage more effective performance.

- Stick with facts - Evaluation should be based on facts not rumour or gossip.
- See for yourself - Information gleaned from students, other teachers, and parents should be checked out before being used as part of an evaluation report.
- Be honest - effective evaluation depends on trust and good communications that should exist in the organization.
- Be confidential - Evaluation comments and feedback should be shared in private by the evaluator and the person being evaluated
- Don't try to be funny - Evaluation is a serious business and the use of sarcasm in tense settings usually backfires.
- Talk about problems not people - The goal of evaluation is to improve performance not to attack individual teachers.

Alkire (1990, cited in Sawa, 1995) also offers suggestions for effective evaluations, including the following.

- Read board policies and abide by them.
- Ask teachers for self-evaluations.
- Plan classroom visits wisely and do observations correctly, using visits at different times of the day.
- Take accurate notes, particularly for marginal teachers.
- Consider video-taping teachers.
- Don't limit yourself to a single source of data. None is sufficiently problem-free that it can form the cornerstone of a defensible program.

- Make sure post-evaluation conferences mean something; discuss possible solutions to problems and complement strengths.
- Offer teachers a chance for a rebuttal, and attach rebuttals to the report; compromise and change can result.
- Show that you take evaluations seriously; arrange for substitute teachers to free teachers for post-evaluation conferences to be held during school hours.
- Get the teacher's signature on the report as proof that the evaluation actually occurred.

Principals can also model their belief in the usefulness of constructive feedback by asking their teachers about the effectiveness of their supervisory practices. In addition, defensible teacher evaluations must be based, in part at least, on the growth that teachers bring about in students. Therefore, an evaluator must be attentive to what students become, not merely what teachers do.

Given the importance of effective teacher evaluation, a sample teacher evaluation policy, sample teacher evaluation tools, and examples of teacher evaluation reports are all included in Appendix Three of this document.

5.2.2 How to evaluate excellent employees

Overall, it is important to be familiar with methods to evaluate and manage staff members who are not functioning appropriately in the school setting, but principals must also remain focused on the teachers who are excelling in their jobs by ensuring that they remain motivated and excited about their growth. Even the best teachers need continual feedback. Too often, principals believe that providing performance appraisals for outstanding teachers is either unnecessary or requires only minimal attention. However, even expert teachers need supervision and feedback, and the best can get better. Ramsey (1992) argues that “most successful principals come to realize that investing time and effort in evaluating, encouraging, empowering, and enabling the top 5 percent of the

teaching staff pays bigger dividends for students and learning than does expending considerable energy on the marginal and the mediocre members.”

Evaluating excellent teachers, however, does require a slightly different approach. For excellent teachers, the Principal’s role becomes primarily a matter of coaching and cheerleading, and self-appraisal should be more central. Top teachers can play a greater role in their own appraisal by developing personal professional development plans and identifying ways to share their expertise. In those cases, the principal also may occasionally try to incorporate reviews by other master teachers and subject area specialists in the appraisal process. In addition, outstanding teachers often are not afraid to be assessed on the basis of student gains in learning, and detailed questions such as how many students benefited from a certain practice, and how quickly is material being mastered.

5.2.3 A Final Note About Teacher Evaluation

Of course, teacher evaluation can only be as successful as the person undertaking the evaluation, and for that reason it is crucial that principals have access to training in this important area if they feel it would be beneficial.

5.3 Evaluation of School Programs

As well as ensuring that effective practices are in place for evaluating teachers and students, principals are responsible for ensuring that school programs are accomplishing the desired results. Just purchasing and using a program is not sufficient to ensure that progress is being achieved. Rather, a thorough evaluation is required to ensure that school programs are meeting educational goals.

Decisions about the effectiveness of school programs can include a range of factors. Teacher input into the usefulness of programs and activities, as well as their perspectives of student growth and development, are key. In addition, the use of data can be a powerful tool to measure progress. Every school should maintain basic data on student demographics and achievement. To measure academic performance, most schools probably collect, at a minimum, test scores, grades, and classroom assessments. Additional data may also be identified and collected to determine the effectiveness of specific programs. In formulating program evaluation plans, principals should remember that it is important to select instruments that will measure what it is that you want to assess, keeping in mind that decisions regarding instructional change should be made using multiple sources of data (Chell, 2002).

As mentioned above, the FNSA does not promote the use of any particular data collection instrument for First Nations schools. However, based upon several requests, the FNSA is consulting its membership about ways in which the Association can support First Nations schools in collecting and analyzing data to effectively measure the progress of their programming and demonstrate their ongoing success.

5.4 Evaluation of the School

The issue of school evaluation is directly related to two critical issues – accountability and growth. As Sparks (2001) notes, “creating schools in which everyone learns and performs at high levels – students and staff alike – requires extended conversation in three major

areas: the results a school intends to achieve, the most powerful strategies for achieving those ends, and the school's assessment of its progress in achieving its intentions.”

In order to effectively reflect a growth orientation, school evaluation must involve multiple forms of assessment, followed by the allocation and re-allocation of resources based upon the needs that are identified through the process. There is much debate about the use of testing, and certainly a reliance on one cumulative test is an unfortunate view of school evaluation and accountability. What a school does is more complex than what test scores might reveal, but data does count, and schools that are truly committed to growth will want to measure what they are doing in order to track their progress and demonstrate the effectiveness of their efforts.

Evaluation can be said to seek understanding and improvement rather than blame and penalties, and while it rarely results in straightforward, simple solutions, in the long term it will lead to significant improvements in the education being provided (Nevi, 2002). That perspective of evaluation, which focuses on improvement, is the one that guided the FNSA in its development of a school assessment process.

5.4.1 The FNSA Process for Assessing First Nations Schools

The original mandate of the FNSA included a request that the association undertake work to assist First Nations schools with their assessment processes, and facilitate an exchange of First Nations school personnel to support that process. The FNSA therefore began working in that area in a significant way in 1996/1997, when the FNSA sponsored five workshops throughout BC. At those workshops, existing assessment models were presented for discussion, and the workshop participants contributed to the creation of an assessment model that reflects the uniqueness of First Nations schools.

Meeting Our Expectations: Considering a Framework for the Assessment of First Nations Schools, which is available through the FNSA office, describes the original process

used to initiate the assessment efforts and provides the foundation for the FNSA process.

The FNSA school assessment project involves the implementation of a comprehensive internal assessment process that examines the school's administrative procedures, the opportunities it provides for student learning, and indicators that student learning is actually taking place. To serve the needs of a range of schools, three school assessment templates are available – one for schools offering K-12 programming, one for pre-school kindergartens, and one for adult programs. Completing the internal review template includes surveys of students, teachers, parents, and possibly other community members to determine levels of satisfaction with the school and its programs, including its core curriculum, its efforts to support parental involvement and community connections, and its library and technological resources, among others.

The FNSA sponsored school assessment process is intended to take a full school year to implement, and it requires the full commitment of the principal, school staff, and the community to complete the internal component.

The FNSA process also includes an external assessment component. That activity is intended to bring in a colleague or colleagues from another First Nations school for the purpose of providing feedback on the assessment process and sharing experiences and ideas. The FNSA facilitates that component by identifying potential external assessors and providing participating schools with a description of the people available.

Participating schools are expected to submit a final report to the FNSA, and each year all of the reports submitted are summarized and presented to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). That summary is an aggregate demonstration that First Nations schools are undertaking meaningful assessment processes and are striving to achieve continual growth and development. As such, the process provides a mechanism for accountability to the funding agency, while still allowing schools to examine their own successes and challenges, celebrate their considerable achievements, plan for further improvement, and

maintain accountability to the schools' parents, community members, and community leadership.

In October, 2002, representatives of INAC met with the First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) Board of Directors and announced that *First Nations schools are required to clearly demonstrate that they have completed a school evaluation once every five years. That requirement includes adult programs that are funded by INAC through the nominal roll.*

INAC and the FNSA agreed that First Nations schools should be supported in their efforts to fulfill the evaluation requirement through an arrangement that is as flexible as possible. It was therefore agreed that *First Nations schools are able to fulfill the evaluation requirement in any one of three ways*, as described below.

1. First Nations schools that *complete the FNSA School Assessment Project* will be deemed as having fulfilled INAC's evaluation requirement.
2. First Nations schools that *complete an evaluation through the provincial Independent Schools Branch* will also be deemed as having fulfilled the INAC evaluation requirements. Those schools will be expected to submit to INAC a copy of their evaluation report.
3. First Nations schools that do not want to participate in either the FNSA or Independent Schools Branch assessment/evaluation processes are asked to *determine an alternative approach as agreed to through direct discussion with INAC.*

The five year timeline for the completion of evaluations began with the 2003/2004 school year. That means that *all First Nations schools must complete an evaluation*

sometime between the beginning of the 2003/2004 school year and the end of the 2007/2008 school year. Following that time period, a second five year cycle will begin.

Schools participating in the FNSA process are supported in completing that process through financial assistance, support workshops, and mentoring efforts. Participating schools are expected to use the FNSA designed assessment project template, to undertake an internal and external component, and to submit to the FNSA their completed internal and external reports. The schools are also required to submit a summary report to INAC including a sub-set of the assessment results.

Further information about the INAC evaluation requirements and the FNSA school assessment process are available through the FNSA office.

At the 2003 First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) Annual General Meeting (AGM), the FNSA membership requested the design of an additional “certification” component for the First Nations Schools Assessment Project. The certification component of the project is optional for participating schools. The FNSA certification of First Nations schools is intended to be a visible and clear illustration of First Nations control of First Nations education. Having the FNSA – an organization that was created by and for First Nations schools – formally certify their school is meaningful to many First Nations communities and school staffs. The addition of a certification component also enhances the already successful assessment project. Some schools had expressed a desire for an official “FNSA stamp of approval” as a component of their assessment projects. That “approval” can be shared with communities as objective verification of the good work being done by the school, thereby helping community members and parents feel more confident about the schools’ programming. The existence of an optional certification component will ideally have additional benefits in terms of recognition from outside agencies, and it will also complement the ongoing jurisdiction negotiations. With all of those goals in mind, the optional certification process has been in place for the past three years.

Section Six: Importance of Self-Care and Development

All principals must take the time to address their own needs, both personal and professional. The job of the principal is both critical and extremely challenging, and it seems that increasing demands continually are being placed on school leaders. Many principals in First Nations schools are faced with particularly daunting situation, as they may operate in remote locations, in significant isolation from colleagues, and the

Many principals in First Nations schools are faced with daunting situations, including remoteness, isolation, and extremely limited resources.

schools have unique needs and difficulties with extremely limited resources. Given that context, principals of First Nations schools must be especially careful in addressing their own health, wellness, and professional growth. As Bamburg and Andrews (1990, cited in Chell, 2002) argue, effective instructional leaders must:

- have a vision for the organization that is clearly focused upon desired outcome (that is "ensuring academic excellence");
- communicate that vision to everyone connected with the organization to obtain support for it;
- provide and/or obtain the resources needed to accomplish the vision (that is materials, information, or opportunity); and
- **manage oneself so the above can occur** (emphasis added).

6.1 Common Challenges for New Principals

Individuals who are new to their position as school leader may find the challenges especially acute, and may perceive their multitude of tasks as quite overwhelming. Some of common challenges for new principals include the following.

- *The limitations of pre-service training.* Most new principals find that their pre-service training could not possibly prepare them for the numerous challenges they face on the job. Unique situations arise in each school, including student needs, staff relations, and building operations. The lack of vice principal positions in First Nations schools means a lack of the internship opportunities that those positions usually present, and as a result many new principals of First Nations schools have not had the opportunity to be mentored and prepared for the position over a significant period of time.
- *It's lonely at the top.* Although principals interact with people constantly, they may find themselves isolated in that they have no other colleagues with whom they relate on a daily basis.
- *Time management and particularly the challenge of finding the time to visit classes.* It is an understatement to say that principals find that there are numerous demands on their time. For many new principals, time management can become the most pressing problem. Unfortunately, often the first task to go is supervision and taking the time to visit classrooms. It is important to carefully consider all responsibilities and set priorities, recognizing the crucial role of principals in encouraging good teaching. Given that reality, the following time management tips are offered.

Time Management Tips (adapted from Ramsey, 1992)

- Work on the big things (prioritize, prioritize, prioritize)
- Match your effort to the importance of the tasks. Practice selective perfectionism.
- Block out time for leadership functions. Schedule meetings with yourself to allow time for those matters.
- Delegate whenever and wherever possible. Share the power and the fun.
- Put organizational and personal goals in writing so they are clear and not forgotten.
- Practice “benign neglect;” ignore small issues that will likely be easily resolved by others or by the passage of time.
- Avoid procrastination and get on with immediate issues.
- Tackle large tasks one piece at a time.
- Don’t take on everyone else’s problems and worries.
- Organize every day. Be sensitive to your own unique time use patterns and organize your activities around your peak periods.
- Modify your open door policy and make it a “door ajar” policy when necessary and appropriate. Maintain some control over who enters your office and how long they stay.
- Make good use of your secretary as a control on your calendar.
- Use tickler files to remind you of recurring activities, deadlines, etc.
- Control the paperwork. Minimize the number of times you look at a piece of paper; act on it, delegate it, file it, or get rid of it. Don’t set papers aside and keep coming back to them repeatedly.

6.2 The Importance of Professional Development for the Principal

Perhaps one of the most important issues to be addressed in regard to principal wellness is the need for ongoing professional support and development for school leaders. School principals need practical training aimed at helping them do their jobs more effectively from the start, additional professional development to keep them fresh and adaptable, and continuous support in order to incorporate new thinking about what constitutes effective leadership (Sparks and Hirsh 2000).

Standards for instructional leadership, developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996, cited in Sparks and Hirsh, 2000) provide one framework for effective practice for principals and other instructional leaders. These standards say school leaders should be able to:

- facilitate the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community;
- advocate, nurture, and sustain a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth;
- ensure management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment;
- collaborate with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources;
- act with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and
- understand, respond to, and influence the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Many more school leaders would be effective if those skills and knowledge were explicitly taught to them.

Principals need to seek out professional development opportunities that meet their needs. The following are some issues for possible training.

- Some principals may benefit from professional development programs focused on some of their core managerial tasks, such as discipline, finance, and legal issues.
- Since quality leadership includes establishing a culture that supports high achievement, principals may find professional development on creating a positive school culture useful.
- Many principals would benefit from more information about tracking student test score results and other indicators of student learning to guide improvements.
- Principals who serve as instructional leaders may desire training on helping teachers improve their classroom performance through effective supervision techniques, including spending time in classrooms, observing teaching, and encouraging higher performance.
- Instructional leaders focus much of their time on staff development, helping teachers assist all students in reaching high standards, challenging staff members to examine traditional assumptions about teaching, and helping to provide opportunities for them to share information and work together to plan curriculum and instruction. For principals to learn how to do those things, they themselves need professional development.
- Even the best principals cannot single-handedly transform a school. Principals must therefore assist teachers in becoming leaders in their schools by providing them opportunities to serve on governance committees, mentor less experienced staff, coach peers, and support colleagues. Some principals would benefit from information on how to foster teachers in becoming leaders.

- Training in public engagement strategies and interpersonal relationships would also help leaders win the support of the public and their staffs, as would media relations training.

Principals may pursue their own professional development through a range of learning models, including making time to read professional journals, organizing study groups if there are appropriate peers in the area, and making regular opportunities to visit other schools to learn from others and to critique one another's improvement efforts and offer support.

Professional development for school principals is key, not only for principals themselves, but also as a way to communicate to teachers and students the importance of continuous learning and to clearly demonstrate that enhancing one's abilities is so vital that principals are willing to allocate time to increase their own knowledge and skills (Sparks, 2001).

6.3 Support from the FNSA

Given the multitude of roles and responsibilities of First Nations school principals, the FNSA is committed to providing ongoing support, including facilitating connections and networking amongst the principals, and helping to organize mentoring programs so that new principals can benefit from the tremendous experience of people who have been involved with First Nations schools for some time. Any other suggestions from principals are more than welcome.

Survival Tips for Principals of First Nations Schools

Identified by Participants in the FNSA
Workshops for Principals of First Nations Schools

- Get to know your community. Understand what they want for their children.
- Be proactive in building a positive relationship with Chief and Council.
- Work with your School Board. Ask for their help.
- Get the word out. Share your successes. Promote your good work.
- Celebrate your successes – with your staff, students, and community.
- Believe in your students!
- Believe in your students' parents.
- Have high expectations for the entire school community.
- Don't enter battles you can't win. Be smart about what issues you take on.
- Measure what you are doing; get real feedback on what is working.
- Make time for a staff retreat. Get together and relax once in awhile.
- Ask for help from other principals whenever possible. Don't reinvent wheels.
- Make yourself a schedule and share it with others so they understand your needs and feel that they can assist you.
- Get enough sleep.
- Don't become consumed with your job. Take time for yourself. Focus on personal care.
- De-escalate emotionally charged issues. Listen. Take time and get back to people. Don't buy into the panic of others.
- Be compassionate. Focus on other people as human beings.
- Focus on physical fitness.
- Delegate delegate delegate.
- Learn to laugh – at yourself most of all.
- Play with the children. Use their goodness as a source of strength.

List of Relevant Associations

American Association of School Administrators (AASA). The AASA, founded in 1865, is the professional organization for over 14,000 educational leaders across America and in many other countries. AASA's mission is to support and develop effective school system leaders who are dedicated to the highest quality public education for all children. The four major focus areas for AASA are improving the condition of children and youth; preparing schools and school systems for the 21st century; connecting schools and communities; and enhancing the quality and effectiveness of school leaders. Its web site is located at www.aasa.org

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASDC). The ASDC is an international, non-profit, non-partisan association of professional educators whose jobs cross all grade levels and subject areas. The informative web site is located at www.ascd.org

Canadian Association of Principals (CAP). CAP is the advocate for principals and vice-principals at the national level. Working with other national educational groups, CAP presents the views and opinions of principals and vice-principals regarding a variety of issues and in many different forums. The CAP web site includes a number of publications as well as links to other relevant sites for principals. www.cdnprincipals.org

The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC). The First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) is committed to supporting First Nations in their efforts to promote quality education for First Nations learners. FNESC is directed by First Nations, and works at the provincial level to provide services in the areas of research, communications, information dissemination, and networking. FNESC works to collect and share up-to-date information about available programs, government policies and initiatives, and local, provincial and national education issues that affect First Nations learners in BC. FNESC operates numerous programs of relevance to First Nations schools, which are highlighted on its web site at www.fnesc.ca

The First Nations Schools Association (FNSA). The FNSA is a non-partisan organization committed to improving and supporting the development of quality and culturally appropriate education for First Nations learners. The FNSA was established in response to the need for an organization dedicated to communicating and addressing the common concerns of First Nations schools. The FNSA is operated and directed by First Nations schools. It is incorporated as a non-profit society with charitable status. The FNSA is an organization that has significant relevance for principals of First Nations schools. Its various activities and programs can be viewed on its web site at www.fnsa.ca. It can also be contacted by phone at (604) 925-6087.

The First Nations Toll-Free Special Education Resource Line. Operated by the FNSA and FNEESC, through this service educators and parents can contact a special education teacher to access information about specific special education issues or for suggestions for professional development, support organizations, and resources. The toll-free telephone number is 1-877-547-1919.

International Reading Association. The International Reading Association is a professional membership organization dedicated to promoting high levels of literacy for all by improving the quality of reading instruction, disseminating research and information about reading, and encouraging the lifetime reading habit. Its members include classroom teachers, reading specialists, consultants, administrators, supervisors, university faculty, researchers, psychologists, librarians, media specialists, and parents. With members and affiliates in 99 countries, its network extends to more than 350,000 people worldwide. Its web site can be found at www.reading.org

National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). The NASSP is a professional organization dedicated to promoting excellence in school leadership through the provision of a wide variety of programs and services to assist in administration, supervision, curriculum planning, and effective staff development. The web site includes a number of articles related to those issues. www.principals.org

National Staff Development Council (NSDC). The NSDC is a leading professional association committed to ensuring success for all students through staff development and school improvement. The web site includes numerous articles related to staff development. www.nsd.org

Special Needs Opportunity Window. The Special Needs Opportunity Windows or SNOW Project is a provider of online resources and professional development opportunities for educators and parents of students with special needs. Its online workshops, curriculum materials, open discussion forums and other resources are available to assist in using new technologies to benefit all learners. Its web site can be found at www.snow.utoronto.ca

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Appendix One: Sample School Vision Statements

School Vision Example One

One community actually developed sixteen foundational statements for its school.

Language

Our language represents us, our way of thinking, and our way of viewing the world. Our language is the invisible glue which holds our Nation together. At our school we are committed to promoting, speaking, and writing our language.

Culture

Every thought and action at our school comes from a place of cultural significance. We acknowledge the various cultural ways of thought, learning, communicating, worshiping, expressing oneself, and living. Our curriculum acknowledges the rich and dynamic culture of our Nation. It is our primary focus to make our culture visible and enriching.

Elders

Our Elders are our most significant teachers. They keep the wisdom of our ancestors. Elders are role models who provide love, understanding, motivation, guidance, encouragement, and wisdom. As a community of learners we acknowledge our Elders with the respect that they have earned.

Community

Education at our school happens within the social, economic, and political context of the Canadian community as well as within the local Nation and First Nations community. We promote involvement rather than segregation. Our doors are open and community members are welcome to join us on our journey.

Healing

We at our school recognize the need for people to heal. Our school is a place where individuals of all Nations can seek the healing they need. Our school is also a place where people of all Nations can heal relationships between each other. We believe that individuals must heal first, then families, then communities. When a community is healthy a Nation is healthy. The medicine wheel is instrumental in our quest for healthy living.

Discipline

Discipline is an important tool in healing and learning. As a community of learners we are committed to self-discipline. We will strive to be the best we can. We recognize that firm discipline takes a personal commitment from all involved, is hard work, requires taking risks, requires forgiveness and providing choices. Discipline is not about control, but about being committed to healing and learning.

Spirituality

Spiritual growth is an intimate and personal quality of human development. We do not deny one's need to express and live spiritually. We accept the diversity with which people believe and worship. We will do our best to support, encourage, and respect the spiritual needs of our learning community.

Respect

First Nations education at our school demands, expects, and teaches the value of true connectedness through relationships of personal respect. Having respect involves viewing and appreciating all forms of life and the interconnectedness of this life.

Self-Determination

At our school we believe in our inherent right to own our land and resources and to manage our land and resources as we see fit. We are an independent Nation within the greater Canadian context. Self-determination releases us from the oppression that other people have subjected us to. Self-determination provides us with jurisdiction and control over every aspect of our lives.

History

At our school we do not deny hard facts of the conquest of our people and our lands by other people. We acknowledge our struggle to overcome this history. We forgive those who imposed their will on us. We will never let that happen again.

Trust

At our school, we acknowledge the need to have solid relationships built upon trust. Teachers must have trusting relationships with all their students and the broader community. The students and the community must have trust in the teachers.

Love

Guiding, supporting, discipline, teaching and interacting all must occur in the arena of love. Love is unconditional.

Expectations

Everyone in our community of learners is expected to do the best they can all the time. We have very high expectations of our students; mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually. We expect parents to fulfill their obligations in providing children with the foundation to be active learners. We expect the community to provide support and encouragement. We expect teachers to provide rich and positive learning experiences for our children.

Diversity

Education at our school recognizes the vast diversity in human nature. We acknowledge different cultures, family make-ups, life choices, learning needs, learning styles, and instructional strategies.

Relevancy

The education offered at our school is relevant to all learners in that we strive to meet the needs of each learner. The education is also relevant in that it acknowledges the social, political, economic, and historical context in which our community of learners live.

Accountability

Education at our school acknowledges the need to be accountable for our performance. We must do what we say we are doing and we must be able to prove it. We hold students accountable for their school performance, parents accountable for their children, and the community accountable for the support and structures that our school need. Teachers are accountable to the students, parents, and broader community: we are all interconnected.

School Vision Example Two

Our school is to deliver an educational program that meets the needs of individual learners in an inclusive way, [and provide] educational programming that is supportive of our language and traditional knowledge practices.

School Vision Example Three

Our First Nation Community believes that the education of our children must be holistic. We recognize that our children have a unique heritage that must continue to grow and develop into the future and for generations to come. Our children must become life long learners with skills and abilities to compete in today's society. Our First Nation heritage will encompass the Provincial Ministry of Education guidelines to ensure that a balance is maintained in the teaching of our children. Therefore, it is our belief that the following 10 components must be woven into the curriculum.

- **Morals and values** – To encourage students to develop a high standard of social behaviour.
- **Language and culture** – To foster a sense of identity and belonging.
- **Spirituality** – To provide the teaching of spirituality and a desire to maintain a clean body both physically and mentally.
- **Music and dance** – To develop creativity and a rhythm tuned to the environment.
- **Arts** – To teach the many skills and professions of Saik’uz First Nation people.
- **Traditions** – To prepare students for the passing on of knowledge to future generations.
- **Nature and the environment** – To ensure that the teachings of Mother Earth are learned and respected.
- **Parents and Elders** – To carry out the traditional forms of education through oral traditions and hands on experiences; recognizing the importance of the teaching partnership and the relationship between home and school.
- **Intellectual** – To provide opportunities to develop the ability to analyze critically, reason and think independently.
- **Social and emotional** – To develop a sense of self-worth, personal initiative, and a sense of social responsibility within a community.

School Vision Example Four

Education shall promote a high quality of academic curriculum with strong family and community unity through awareness, knowledge, and skills which will complement culture and tradition for a positive change for equality, empowerment, and freedom of choice.

School Vision Example Five

At our school, we value a nurturing and respectful environment that promotes cultural awareness, academic achievement, and social responsibility. We encourage a team approach involving students, staff, parents and community to provide opportunities for students to develop into confident citizens capable of making a positive contribution to their community. Our mission is to ensure that our students realize a strong sense of pride and appreciation of their culture, and gain a strong command of their language. It is our hope that the school will help encourage the students to be proud of their culture and identity.

School Vision Example Six

Our vision is to have our community be strong, healthy, proud, and self-reliant, made up of strong, healthy, proud, and self-reliant community members.

We want to have pride in: who we are; where we came from; and where we live.

Our community priorities include: a community that is self-reliant; a community to be proud of; a community that offers healthy choices; a community in which the culture(s) are acknowledged, revived and shared; and a community that offers a variety of services and programs.

Our school's goals and objectives are to support the community vision through: intellectual development (to offer programs that meet or exceed the Ministry of Education standards); and social, emotional, cultural, and physical development (to offer programs that reflect community needs and to liaise with the social, health, and recreation departments).

School Vision Example Seven

To provide an education that fits the child rather than the child being conformed to the programs. The school curriculum should be designed to promote a better sense of self. The school curriculum should prepare the student to live harmoniously in a multi-ethnic society. The curriculum should be based on a combination of individual personality theories and social theories.

School Vision Example Eight

Mission

To develop and deliver an education system which offers our community members the best of both the modern and our traditional world in an inclusionary system, which meets the needs of all learners.

Objectives

1. To provide good basic educational programs for our children which will be equal in standards to the BC public school system.
2. To ensure that all students achieve a level of knowledge and skills consistent with their ability.

3. To develop an educational system which provides the basic skills required to give our children options in choosing a lifestyle which meets their aspirations.
4. To develop an implement cultural programs as a part of the formal educational system in order to provide an education which includes the cultural heritage of the children.
5. To transmit the heritage but also to help revive those cultural values which may have been lost.
6. To provide programs which will meet the needs of the band and community members by:
 - ensuring that the community determines programs and overall objectives;
 - providing a place where people of all ages can take courses and make use of school facilities in accordance with school board policy; and
 - developing a program of financial and moral support for individuals who wish to pursue a post-secondary education.

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Policy Preamble Sample

In every organization, written policies are necessary to ensure consistency, continuity, and understanding within an organization. Written policies inform and assure everyone, and make it possible for supervisors and employees to function smoothly within an organization.

These policies consist of written and unwritten policy which was developed over a number of years. The policies were approved by the Board of Directors of our school at a duly convened meeting. These policies are not complete. As situations change or arise that are not foreseen by existing policies, new policies will be drafted by the Board. Any new or changed policies will be circulated as widely as possible.

Admission of Students

Our School is primarily designed to serve the students of our community. However, the Band maintains an open registration policy. The school is open to students both native and non-native from outside our community.

Admission of non-band members may be subject to a tuition fee determined by the Education Committee. The fee would reflect provincial student educational costs as determined by the Ministry of Education. Payment of the tuition fee may be completed in ten installments.

1. Admission of students at times other than the beginning of the school year.

- All applications are subject to review and approval from the school administration. Applications may be forwarded to the Education Committee for approval for admission.
- Students transferring schools as a result of a change in their place of residency shall be considered anytime during the year.
- Transferring from schools from outside the School District area is discouraged after the thirtieth of September. Students applying for admission will be subject to review.
- Any student suspended from another school must settle their suspension situation prior to transferring to our school. Admission of students under suspension from another school district will be denied. Applications for admission must be submitted to the Principal.
- Application from students sixteen (16) years of age or older who have not been attending school for the previous three or more months of that school year may not be considered.

- All applications from students who at the time of application are not attending school will be reviewed by the Principal.
- The Committee reserves the right to refuse the admittance of any student.

Allergies

Parents, Teachers, Principal and Students will be asked to perform several duties that minimize the risk of exposures of students with allergies. All involved will make appropriate arrangements to safeguard the child by using the following safeguards:

If your child has any allergies it is the responsibility of the parent to:

- Advise the principal and teacher about the child's allergy
- Provide and keep emergency contact info current
- Provide list of snack the student is able to have
- Assist the principal by providing educational info about allergies to other parents and the school community
- Explain to the principal and teacher the reaction the child has when having an allergic reaction.
- Provide written information of what to do if the child has an allergic reaction at school
- Give signed permission to administer medication if an allergic reaction occurs (see section O-5)

The Student with the allergy should learn to:

- Eat only foods authorized by the parent
- Wash their hands before eating
- Learn to recognize symptoms of an allergic reaction

The principal will be responsible for planning the coordination and management of students who have allergies and will:

- Consult with the parents of the student with allergies
- Advise the staff members of students who have allergies as soon as possible
- Request the consent of the parent to post the student's picture and display the emergency care plan.

The teacher of a student with allergies must:

- Discuss with the class, in age appropriate terms child allergies
- Facilitate communication with other parents

- Leave information about students with allergies in an organized, prominent and assessable format for subs.
- Know about school's emergency response protocol
- Encourage students not to share or trade food
- Encourage the student with allergies to eat only what is recommended
- Reinforce hand washing before and after eating.

A list of children with allergies and the allergy will be posted on the refrigerator

Attendance

Attendance Preamble

Regular school attendance is an important issue for our school. Students cannot keep up with their school learning if they are not at school. To promote school attendance, we have created the following policy.

Attendance Policy

Student learning opportunities are maximized if the school and homework together to ensure regular attendance. We acknowledge that less than 80% attendance at school is an unacceptable level in order to maintain a successful education. We recognize the parents' right and responsibility to make decisions regarding their children's attendance at school, and we recognize and accept our duty to maintain records of student attendance and share attendance information with parents as necessary.

Regulations

9. Attendance will be tabulated twice daily by the classroom teacher.
10. Attendance slips will be sent to the office indicating those students who are absent.
11. The office will make every effort to contact those parents/guardians of students who are absent.
12. When students arrive late, they will be required to check into the office for a late slip.
13. Monthly letters will be sent via the mail to parents/guardians for any student absent over 5 days in a one month period.
14. Parents/Guardians phone calls to the school or notes written to the school are required for each absence.
15. Intermittent notices will appear in the weekly newsletter requesting parents/guardians to inform the school of student absences.
16. Individual teachers will contact parents of individual attendance concerns.

Attendance Procedures

1. Attendance slips must be filled out with absent students' numbers and initials. This form must be initialed by the teacher and returned to the office twice daily.
2. If you have been notified and know that a child's absence is legitimate, please mark OK by the student's number and initial. This helps the secretary limit the number of phone calls home.
3. A nil slip must be turned in if no one is absent.
4. Office personnel will call all absent students as soon as attendance slips are received to verify the absence.
5. If teachers notice a pattern in absence, the administrator should be notified immediately.
6. It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that absent students are receiving adequate instruction. **Frequent home contact must be maintained with poor attending students.**

Behavioural Expectations

Policy

In an effort to foster responsibility and accountability in students, as well as to encourage self-control and to provide for a safe and healthy environment, expectations for student behaviour have been established.

Regulations

1. Classroom teachers have the right and responsibility to establish classroom behaviour expectations which are consistent with the overall expectations of the school. Behavioural expectations should be established at the onset of the school year and should be reviewed on a regular basis.
2. Regarding students' daily conduct, students shall:
 - a) dress appropriately for all school functions – curricular as well as extra-curricular;
 - b) use appropriate language for the classroom, and avoid the usage of derogatory and profane comments
 - c) demonstrate respect at all times for all other people
 - d) be cooperative at all times
 - e) maximize their potential in school
 - f) encourage cooperative behaviour rather than participating in aggressive or dangerous activities which may result in harm or injury to others
 - g) follow school rules and encourage others to do the same
 - h) offer suggestions for the safe and healthy environment of the school

- i) follow the good example set by other people and set examples of goodness for others to follow
- j) encourage and demonstrate an environmentally sound attitude towards the preservation and respect of the world in which they live
- k) respect school and others' property
- 3. Regarding a safe and healthy environment, students shall:
 - a) wear appropriate dress and footwear
 - b) remain at home when they have a communicable illness
 - c) abstain from the consumption of alcohol and drugs
- 4. Regarding school attendance, students shall:
 - a) attend school on a regular and consistent basis
 - b) respect, honour and value school time
- 5. Regarding their fellow students, students shall:
 - a) respect the rights of their fellow students
 - b) respect the personal belongings of others
 - c) respect the feelings of others
 - d) encourage appropriate language usage towards others
 - e) avoid "put-downs" and name calling and encourage "warm fuzzies"
 - f) encourage fellow students to uphold the rules and regulations
 - g) discourage fellow students from damaging others' property
 - h) attempt to resolve situations between fellow students
 - i) seek assistance when situations cannot be resolved between students
 - j) encourage others to value and respect the environment (avoid littering and remember to recycle)
 - k) respect the belief systems of others
 - l) assist fellow students to assume more responsibility towards self, others, school property, conduct, and rules
 - m) encourage fellow students to speak highly of the school, their education, the education of others, and the school staff
- 6. Regarding the use of the library, students and staff shall:
 - a) use the library during the times set out by the school staff
 - b) respect all books, computers, disks, and other school fixtures
 - c) not bring food or drinks into the library
 - d) remove outdoor footwear while in the library
 - e) sign out books according to the procedures with the assistance of the teacher
- 7. Regarding recesses and lunch periods, students shall:
 - a) go outside for all scheduled breaks unless other arrangements have been made with their teachers
 - b) remain at their desks while eating unless given permission to do otherwise
 - c) refrain from touching classroom computers while eating or drinking

- d) not leave the school property unless other arrangements have been made (“other arrangements” being a note or phone call from parent/guardian)
- 8. Regarding dismissal, students shall:
 - a) leave the classroom for home, unless other arrangements have been made (“other arrangements” being a note or phone call from parent/guardian)
- 9. Regarding bus behaviour, students will:
 - a) wait for their scheduled bus at the designated spot of pick up
 - b) sit to per seat
 - c) avoid loud voices
 - d) avoid moving from seat to seat
 - e) clean up after themselves
 - f) adhere to the expectations and instructions of the bus driver
 - g) participate fully in all emergency or other “drill” activities

Bicycles

Policy

The school recognizes the benefits of students riding their bikes to school.

Regulations

The school will not be held responsible for any bikes left on the school property. Students will not be permitted to ride their bikes around the school grounds during the school day.

Board Powers and Authority

1. The school board is responsible to the Tribal Council. Council has delegated authority to the school board for the orderly operation of the school and related programs.
2. The school board has the authority to formulate, develop or amend policies necessary for the orderly operation of the school system and to ensure that such policies are implemented.
3. The rights, powers and duties, responsibilities, and liabilities reside with the school board and not with an individual member of the board or any sub-committee of the board.

Cigarette Smoking

Example One

Policy

The school recognizes the rights of students to choose to or choose not to smoke. We strongly discourage students from smoking; smoking causes serious health issues.

Regulations

Students choosing to smoke will do so in designated smoking areas only.

Example Two

School, and school sanctioned events, are designated to be non smoking environments. This policy includes the school grounds and surrounding areas designated for school use during regular school operating hours. Individuals who are in violation of this policy may be subject to consequences as set out in the Student Management Policy and the policy manual.

Clothing and Footwear

Example One

1. Students are expected to dress appropriately for school at all times of the year.
2. Students will remove all outdoor clothing, hats, and footwear before entering the classrooms.
3. Students must have a pair of non-black soled indoor footwear.
4. Indoor footwear must be clean.

Example Two

Policy

All students and staff should have footwear specific to indoor use.

Regulations

1. The purpose of maintaining the floors, and for safety in evacuation situations, students and staff are requested to keep a pair of shoes at the school, to be worn at the school, and designated as indoor footwear.

- 1a. On uncarpeted classroom floors, students may wear indoor/outdoor footwear. Students must remove excessive mud, dirt, and snow from their footwear before entering the school.
2. In the event that a student does not have an extra pair of shoes for indoor designation, the Principal will have discretion to allow socks.

Community Use of School Facilities

Example One

Policy

The school encourages community use of the school facilities, providing such use does not conflict with school programs or exclude any individual from participation.

Regulations

These regulations are based on the concept of executive responsibility. The Principal expects the Executive of the user group to be responsible for the behaviour of all members.

Responsibilities

The Executive must:

1. Appoint one member as the person most responsible and she/he must complete the user application and be present at the activity.
2. Ensure that the group members are aware of the regulations governing the facility and activity.
3. Arrange for the keys to be picked up by 4 pm on the day of the activity.
4. Arrange for the key to be returned by 12 noon the next day.
5. Unlock and lock doors at the beginning and end of the function.

Priorities

The following order of priority will be adhered to in the use of the school facilities.

1. School extra-curricular programming
2. Continuing education programs
3. Non-profit community groups and agencies
4. Profit oriented groups
5. Other

Damage, Loss or Theft

Groups using the school shall accept responsibility for the cost of repairing any damage occurring community use, and/or replacing any equipment lost, stolen, or damaged, and shall pay any resulting costs. Any group failing to pay charges associated with the use of

the school will forfeit future privileges. In addition, the School Board reserves the right to take any action appropriate to recover such costs and charges.

Example Two

The use of the school by community groups is restricted by the lease agreement in place between the school and the First Nation. Access is limited to the gym and the kitchen facilities during the course of the school year. Wider access to the school may be given during the holiday period. Special arrangements may be made with the CEO of the First Nation and the Principal may be made during the course of the year. Community groups wishing to use the school facilities must make arrangements through the band office.

Complaints and Appeals

Policy

The school recognizes the benefits of parents/guardians involvement in the education of their children. All complaints and appeals will be heard with the utmost of respect.

Regulations

1. Complaints and appeals shall be directed to the school Principal.
2. In unresolved, complaints should be directed to the President of the School Board.

Crisis Intervention Guidelines

In the event of a crisis situation, as determined by the school Principal or Designate, involving a member of the School, the following protocol will be followed.

- Crisis Alert - Low Risk at this Time
 - a. Staff member will inform the Principal or designate.
 - b. Contact parent/guardian and, if appropriate, offer support from school.
 - c. Refer to applicable outside agency if required.
 - d. Monitor student behavior, record any discrepancies.
 - e. Document the incident. Copies to applicable agency and file.
- Crisis Risk - Medium Degree of Risk
 - a. Staff member will inform the Principal or designate.
 - b. Contact parent/guardian. Provide support plan from school if applicable. Inform parent/guardian of referral to appropriate agency to for guidance.
 - c. Refer to appropriate outside agency if applicable.
 - d. Monitor student behavior.
 - e. Document the incident.

- Crisis - High Risk - Individual Should Not Be Unattended
 - a. Staff member will inform the Principal or designate.
 - b. Contact parent/guardian. Inform them of the seriousness of the situation and that intervention is required immediately.
 - c. Contact appropriate outside agency for consultation and/assessment
 - d. Contact 911 for police and/ambulance assistance and for emergency transport to nearest health care facility.
 - e. Monitor student continuously.
 - f. Document the incident.

The following should be included when dealing with a crisis intervention situation:

- consultation with other counselors and or therapists may take place at any time during the intervention at the discretion of the Principal or designate.
- if there has been an attempt of suicide, or serious personal harm resulting in a medical emergency, arrange for immediate transportation via school personnel or ambulance (911) directly to the nearest health care facility. Parent/guardian permission is not required prior to transportation if it is deemed necessary by the Principal or designate.
- if the parent/guardian can not be reached, the student can be referred to an outside agency without permission provided they are informed at the earliest possible opportunity.
- if the parent/guardian refuses permission for treatment, and there is concern regarding the safety of the student, a referral to the Ministry of Children and Family may be made by the school on behalf of the individual, and treatment made be carried out without permission.

Critical Response Plan

Out of School Emergencies

1. If there has been an emergency/tragedy affecting students or staff outside of school hours, staff members will be contacted through a “telephone tree” system. The staff will be notified of a staff meeting prior to classes on the morning of the next day.
2. At the staff meeting, the following items will be discussed:
 - Staff will be informed of the facts of the emergency situation.
 - Expectations for the day will be outlined.
 - A grief room may be established, and the designated location will be closed to regular activities for the day.
 - Teachers will notify their classes as to what has occurred. Teachers requiring support to complete this task are to contact the principal.

- Teachers will compile a list of “high-risk” students attending school that say and send this list to the office shortly after classes begin.
- During the last period of the day, teachers will check on the emotional state of their students and note any students who may still need emotional support. The teacher will contact the students’ parents to notify them of any concerns.

In School Emergencies

If a staff person comes upon an emergency situation in the course of a school day:

1. At the emergency site
 - Do not leave the area. Take charge of the situation. Give specific orders to specific individuals.
 - Deal with any first aid immediately. If you are unsure what to do, ask for assistance.
 - Contact the principal. Send a responsible student if necessary.
 - Isolate the emergency from the student population.
2. Office responsibilities
 - If necessary, the secretary will contact emergency personnel.
 - The principal will designate someone to contact the parents/guardians of student(s) involved and request them to attend.
 - If there is danger to the school population, the principal will implement a school evacuation.
3. Follow-Up
 - If appropriate, a Staff Threat/Violence Report will be completed and filed in the office.
 - At the earliest convenience, all staff will be briefed about the emergency.
 - At a staff meeting, it will be decided if circumstances warrant implementing a plan of action.

Disclosure Policy

In order to ensure the safety and confidentiality of all students and staff members, the school will implement the following regarding the reporting procedures related to disclosures as outlined in the BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect.

Reporting protocol regarding disclosures is clearly outlined in the Ministry handbook. Staff will be provided with this information in the staff handbook to ensure familiarity and access to the procedures involved in accepting and dealing with student disclosure. The School Care Team, comprised of the Principal/Designate, Counselor, Administrative

Secretary, and relevant staff members, will carry out the necessary reporting procedures. All information regarding disclosures will remain confidential. Sharing of any information will be on a need to know basis only.

Staff will be expected to abide by the following steps when dealing with disclosure;

i. Receipt of a Disclosure

In the event of staff receiving a disclosure from a student, the following protocol is to be adhered to as closely as practically possible;

- * refer to the BC Handbook for Action on Child Abuse and Neglect.
- * make notes of all facts. Do not make assumptions. Use quotation marks around direct quotes from students.
- * maintain full confidentiality regarding the disclosure.

ii. Communicating

The School Care Team will facilitate communication between staff and outside agencies. Staff is to adhere to the following protocol;

- * upon receipt of a disclosure, and after completing the steps listed in the section Receipt of a Disclosure, report to the Principal/Designate immediately.
- * if the Principal/Designate is not available, report to the Ministry of Children and Families immediately, and then to the Principal/Designate as soon as practically possible. If this is not practically possible, staff are to report to the Care Team members.
- * the staff member who received the disclosure will be responsible for reporting to the Ministry of Children and Families.
- * do not disclose any information to staff and/or other individuals. The Care Team will be responsible for sharing information with individuals other than those directly involved.
- * do not contact the parent/guardian under any circumstances.
- * if contacted by the family, or other individuals, refer all inquiries to the Principal/Designate or Counselor.

iii. Ministry/Police Involvement

Once a disclosure has been made, and the appropriate communication carried out, there may be a Ministry employee and/or police officer dispatched to the school. Staff are to be aware that;

- * the staff member who received the disclosure should be available to discuss the disclosure with the Care Team and Ministry/Police personnel.
- * all information shared remains confidential while the investigation is underway.
- * staff should be briefed by Ministry/Police personnel as to their involvement in the interview process with the child. If staff are unsure as to their role in the interview it is their responsibility to request that Ministry staff/Police clarify the role of the staff member in the interview process.

iv. Interview

In the event that the student is interviewed, the staff member who received the disclosure, or a staff member with whom the child is most comfortable with, may be asked to sit in on the interview. Staff are to ensure that;

- * staff are familiar with their role in the interview process
- * staff follow the Ministry protocol regarding questioning
- * all information received during this meeting remains confidential.

v. Child Protection

Upon receipt of a disclosure, and after referral to the Care Team, the following steps are to be adhered to;

- * when the Ministry/Police are involved in an interview or information gathering process, the child and any siblings in the same household are not to be dismissed.
- * the children are to be kept in the school.
- * the children are to be supervised at all times.
- * any further information disclosed by the child is recorded and made available to the Care Team members.

vi. Debriefing

Once the Ministry/Police personnel have completed the interview, and the child(ren) have been removed or sent home, there will be a debriefing of all staff involved. This follow up will include;

- * a summary of the information shared.
- * a review of the steps that will be taken regarding child protection issues and as related to the child(ren) involved.
- * a review of what information is to be made available to the staff and community as per Care Team/ Ministry directives.

Discipline Policy

The Board supports the position that the Principal and staff of the school stand “in loco parentis” when pupils are in their charge. Positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviours is necessary for students to understand what is expected of them. Modeling of appropriate behaviours by staff is essential to students learning what is acceptable.

1. All teachers will establish a set of classroom rules which are to be posted in a prominent location in the classroom. Teachers should make an attempt to phrase these rules prominently and to explain the reasons for the rules to the students.

Only recurring behavioural problems of student actions that effect the entire school should be referred to the Principal.

2. Positive behaviours must be recognized and students should be given positive reinforcement when they model appropriate behaviour.
3. In keeping with the community expectations the underlying focus of all discipline must be the community's culture and values. Students must be taught that their behaviour affects others and themselves and that mistakes happen and are forgivable.
4. Wherever possible students having a difficulty with each other need to be brought together to discuss their feelings and to make plans for remedying the situation.
5. Despite the best efforts of teachers there will be some situations where the normal dispute resolution mechanisms do not work. In those cases, the following steps may be followed. Depending upon the severity or frequency of the behaviour several steps may be skipped.
 - a) The teacher will arrange to talk with the student involved or, if there is more than one student, arrange to get the students together to talk about their behaviours and possible solutions.
 - b) If the behaviour re-occurs then the student must sign a behaviour contract which outlines their expected behaviour and consequences.
 - c) If no resolution is possible or if the behaviour is of such a serious nature that the school climate is affected, then the student or students should be brought to the Principal (steps a and b will be repeated).
 - d) Parents will be called to participate in any further discussions around behaviour.
 - e) Recommendation will be made to the Elder's Advisory Council to deal with ongoing serious behaviour.

** Possible consequences:

 - isolation in the classroom;
 - exclusion from class activities;
 - apologies to person(s) offended;
 - in-school suspension – work under supervision elsewhere in the school (possibly with a parent);
 - in-school suspension – with parent and/or Elder meetings before student is allowed back;
 - public meetings with families and apologies in the First Nations traditional manner;
 - home schooling – teachers must prepare materials and activities for students to complete at home. Teacher monitoring is required;
 - out-of-school suspension (as an absolutely last alternative).

Teachers are free to create their own, but the consequence must be related to the offense, and the goal of the consequence must be to teach proper behaviour not to punish. Students must be taught the connection between their behaviours and the consequence.

6. Consistency in implementing any school-wide discipline policy is essential. All school staff have the responsibility to implement the behaviour policy whenever they see student behaviour that is in need of correction.
7. Communications with parents is essential. Co-operation between home and school is the best way to ensure that behavioural issues are prevented from arising or are dealt with quickly.

Dogs at School

Policy

Dogs are not permitted upon the grounds of the school.

Regulations

1. The Principal will determine who are the owners of all dogs who appear at the school, and he/she will instruct the owners to remove their dog from the school grounds.
2. For dogs which reappear, the Principal will contact the owners and indicate the following:
 - a) dogs constitute a serious threat to the safety of the school environment
 - b) precautions should be taken to ensure that dog do not come to the school
 - c) if the dogs continue to come to the school, a report to the Band and the RCMP for humane removal purposes will occur

Drugs and Alcohol

Policy

Our school recognizes the negative effects of drug and alcohol and illegal drug use. Drug and alcohol use can lead to misuse and addiction. We will not tolerate any alcohol or illegal drug use while at school.

Regulations

1. Those students found to be consuming alcohol and/or illegal drugs while at school, or previous to attending school, shall:
 - a) be suspended for a minimum of five days, or until a healing circle occurs
 - b) participate in a healing circle with parents/guardians in attendance

- c) provide school service
 - d) other consequences to be determined
2. Those students found to be distributing/selling alcohol and/or illegal drugs at school may:
 - g) be expelled from school
 - h) be suspended from school
 - i) participate in a healing circle with parents/guardians in attendance
 - j) be required to provide school service
 - k) have other consequences applied
 - l) face legal implications
3. RCMP may be involved in cases of consumption; RCMP shall be involved in cases of distributing/selling.

Emergency Procedures

The communication for dealing with an emergency is (SIGNAL - “ I have/There is an emergency situation, and I/We are initiating a (indicate procedure).”

All staff are responsible for being aware of the protocol when dealing with emergency situations both perceived and real.

In the event of an emergency situation, or potential threatening situation, in the school, or in areas outside the school and grounds that directly affect the school, the following procedures will be enacted;

A. School Security Procedures

i. Security Move

- *WHAT?* - to move students and staff to a specific predetermined location inside the building.
- *WHEN?* - this is done when there is a known or potential threat that is confined to a specific area far enough from the designated gathering area to ensure safety.
- *HOW?* - staff will take students to the area designated by the Principal/Designate following the route indicated and staying with the group at all times. Staff will account for all students in their care and await further instructions.
- *TAKE* the attendance books, or teacher daybook, and your copy of the emergency procedures plan provided in the staff handbook.
- *LOCATIONS*- the following are to be utilized for class gathering points within the school - library, either end of the school dependent on the location of the threat.

ii. Room Clear

- *WHAT?* - to be used to remove students from a potential threat in the classroom or teaching area.
- *WHEN?* - a room clear may be implemented when there are threatening acts which may include violent confrontations between students in the classroom or a threatening incident outside the classroom but near enough to pose a danger to student/staff safety.
- *HOW?* - the staff member will remain in the room.
- the staff member will notify the office via the phone system or intercom. Do not send a student to the office if the threat is near the door or outside the classroom.
- the staff member will initiate a room clear that will allow for students to leave the teaching area and move to the designated safe area. Students must understand and be aware of the designated area.
- the staff member will remain in the room, working to defuse the situation by remaining calm, focusing on the individuals involved in the altercation.
- *WHERE?* - the library will be utilized as the gathering area within the school building. If the altercation is taking place in an area other than the classroom, send the student to the classroom.

iii. Secured Room

- *WHAT?* - securing the room may be the result of a dangerous situation within the school, such as an intruder, in which it is in the best interests of staff and students to remain in the classroom or teaching area.
- *WHEN?* - securing the room is done when there is no threat of danger within the secured area.
- *HOW?* - lock the classroom doors and windows. Maintain a calm environment by being calm and reassuring the students that everything is under control. Do not allow students near the doors or windows. If there is an explosion or shot instruct all students to get down on the floor beneath their desks.
- remain in a secured state until the office notifies you otherwise.

iv. School Evacuation

- *WHAT?* - an evacuation is used to get students and staff out of and away from the school building using a route designated to protect staff and students from a potential/real threat.
- *WHEN?* - it is used when there is a threat, or potential threat, and the need to move students and staff away from the situation is real. This allows for an evacuation route away from the threat to a gathering point a safe distant from the building.
- *HOW?* - leave the building in an orderly manner as directed by the supervising staff member. Go to and remain in the designated gathering area, keeping the students in a

group and remaining accountable as to their whereabouts. Do not return to the school or leave the designated area until instructed by the office.

- *TAKE* - teacher day plan and attendance book, staff handbook.
- *LOCATIONS* - staff will be instructed as to where to take their classes. The following are the general mustering areas for the school: lacrosse box; covered area behind elementary end; grass playground; vehicle compound; an extended evacuation period may involve moving the students to a protected area such as the community hall or fire hall.

B Threat of Injury and/or Death

i. Suspicious or Dangerous Person on School Grounds

- *BACKGROUND* - direct all visitors to the office if you are unsure as to who they are or the reason they are at the school.
- a suspicious person could be an individual on school property who does not appear to have a direct purpose.
- inform the office of any suspicious persons on school property
- *PROCEDURE* - for this situation includes notifying the office
- report immediately to your secured room or designated safe area
- if the dangerous person is not in your room, or in the vicinity, report to your room and initiate the Secure Room procedure.
- stay with and account for all your students
- notify the office, if required, and follow all instructions.
- if notification of the office is unavailable, and the threat is real, contact 911.
- *VERBAL ORDER* - carried out by the Principal/Designate, in accordance with Section 191 of the School Act, to any individual who is disrupting school affairs. This states; “Pursuant to Section 191 of the School Act, you (name of individual) are hereby directed to immediately leave the lands and premises of this school. Failure to comply with this order constitutes an offense under the School Act.

ii. Suicide Attempt

- *BACKGROUND* - staff should make every attempt to protect students from witnessing a traumatic event such as an attempted suicide or attempt to injure
- *PROCEDURE* - notify the office immediately, providing the person’s name and location of the class.
- issue Room Clear instructions to the class, remaining calm and reassuring to the class.
- once the Principal/police/medical personnel arrive, join your class in the Room Clear area.
- ensure that there is a responsible adult in the Room Clear area.

iii. Abduction

- *BACKGROUND* - the school does not release a child into the care of anyone other than family members or those designated by family.
- confirm release of the child with the office or the home
- be aware and refer to Suspicious Persons on School Grounds if necessary.
- *PROCEDURES* - report abduction, or attempted abductions, to the office immediately.
- gather as much information about the abductor as possible through observing height, voice, clothing, distinguishable features, vehicle, license number
- be available to meet with police, Ministry of Children and Family personnel.

iv. Missing Child

- *BACKGROUND* - a child may be missing for a variety of reasons, including illness, abduction, playing hooky, being lost, or simply wandering off on their own
- *PROCEDURE* - notify the office if a student has gone missing. The office keeps a record of students not attending without parental consent.
- check immediate area - classroom, playground, school building
- the office will issue an all call on the intercom
- staff and students will be interviewed to determine when the child was last seen and anyone who may have had verbal contact with the child.
- parent/guardian will be contacted, and information on the child regarding any custody orders will be pulled and made available to staff and RCMP.
- provide a detailed description to the RCMP and/or child services.
- when found, advise all searchers and agencies who were involved

v. Death, Serious Injury or Medical Condition

- *BACKGROUND*- although families are asked to advise the school regarding any medical conditions, there is a risk of a traumatic event taking place during school time.
- injury or death caused by a student or intruder requires the immediate protection of students and staff.
- *PROCEDURES* - notify the office immediately. If this is not possible, call 911 and inform the operator of the situation, providing as much information as possible.
- initiate the appropriate action to ensure the safety of the students and staff i.e. Room Clear, Room Secure.
- remain in control, assuring students that everything is being done to look after the persons involved.
- rejoin your class as soon as possible and account for all students.
- *OFFICE* - ensure first aid personnel attend to the incident, and that the family of the injured person is contacted.

C. Possible Threat of Injury or Death

i. Fire or Explosion

- *BACKGROUND* - in dealing with a fire or explosion in the building, be sure to remain calm in order to handle the situation effectively and safely.
- *PROCEDURE* - follow Fire Drill Procedures for dealing with fire in a specific area of the school.
- note; if a students' clothes are on fire, do not allow them to run.
- smother the fire by wrapping the person in heavy fabric and/or rolling the person on the ground.
- be at least 100 meters from the fire/explosion
- account for all students and remain in the designated area until further instruction or an 'all clear' signal from the office.
- have the daybook for attendance and staff handbook

ii. Hazardous Material Spill

- *BACKGROUND* - the location, quantity, concentration, and effect of a chemical are all factors to be considered when dealing with a spill of any sort.
- do not attempt to clean a spill unless you are familiar with the chemical and its effects
- if there is a spill at a site near the school it may require an the implementation of specific school plans for evacuation.
- *PROCEDURE* - notify the office immediately and clear students away from the spill area
- issue a Room Clear, if a School Evacuation has not been issued, and check for any medical conditions due to chemical contact or inhalation
- attempt to contain material if possible without contacting it by closing doors, shutting windows.
- take day book and handbook, be accountable for all students
- *OFFICE* - notify 911 and proper authorities
- notify all staff/students of threat

iii. Bomb or Suspicious Device

- *BACKGROUND* - a threat may be written, called in, or communicated orally, with the purpose of wanting to limit damage and injury while disrupting normal activities by creating panic
- *PROCEDURE* - do not touch or approach a bomb or suspicious device under any circumstances
- notify the office immediately, avoiding use of any electronic device (i.e. cell phone) that may affect a timed device

- avoid causing vibrations from running, fire alarms, due to the threat of vibrations setting off the alarm.
- move students out of the immediate area and wait for instructions
- follow Principal/Designate instructions for appropriate emergency evacuation
- account for students and remain in designated area
- have the daybook and staff handbook containing emergency procedures.
- *OFFICE* - contact 911 and notify all staff and students of the emergency situation and procedures

iv. Earthquake

- *BACKGROUND* - earthquakes strike without warning, and staff must be prepared to react and act with little lead time.
- be prepared to evacuate the building after an earthquake without direction from the office due to the communications equipment being damaged, thus affecting the school communication system. *PROCEDURE* - if you feel the symptoms of an earthquake, or a warning announcement is made, take cover under heavy desks, tables, or similar furniture, or stand in the interior doorway, narrow hall, or against weight bearing walls.
- avoid light fixtures, windows, and suspended objects.
- remain calm, assuring students and giving instructions in a calm and clear voice
- when quake is finished, initiate Evacuation procedure, and remain outside the building until further instruction by authorized personnel
- if outdoors - move away from the building and go to a clear open space if possible, avoiding utility poles, trees, and overhead wires
- have daybook and staff handbook, and be accountable for all students.
- *OFFICE* - issue appropriate evacuation procedures
- call 911 and do not allow anyone to re-enter the building until it has been inspected by the appropriate personnel
- as 911 may be delayed, the Band will call a state of emergency.

v. Community Disturbance

- *BACKGROUND* - demonstrations can cause disruptions in the school's routine, and may even pose a risk of injury to staff and students and destruction of school property.
- *PROCEDURE* - initiate a Secure Room directive unless otherwise directed by the Principal/Designate
- account for all children and remain in the teaching area until contacted
- *OFFICE* - call 911 if violent or uncontrolled behavior is probable or occurring and an emergency state is imminent.

D. Limited Threat

i. Electrical Outage

- *PROCEDURE* - remain where you were when the power went out or return to your assigned classroom
- account for all students
- office staff will determine the source of the outage and the approximate length in order to determine whether the plant will be closed for the day.

ii. Field or Bus Trip Emergency

- *BACKGROUND* - preparing effectively for your trip will assist the proper reaction to unplanned circumstances by assuring;
- there is an accurate and detailed itinerary for the trip listing the students attending, supervisors, driver, route, and emergency contact;
- rules of conduct are established and understood by the students
- there is a list of participating students (with permissions slips on file) and supervisors
- there is information regarding medical conditions of students
- there is sufficient relevant supervision at the field trip site
- there is an understood drop off arrangement for students.
- *PROCEDURE* - in the event of an accident or emergency; the teacher/supervisor and bus driver will;
- remain with the school vehicle if possible
- secure the vehicle in a safe location and put on 4 way hazards
- account for all students and do not split up the group
- evaluate any first aid needs or evacuation plans
- contact the school office and provide as much detailed information as possible regarding the location and condition of the vehicle and group.
- do not discuss the accident with anyone at the scene, nor accept or take the blame for the accident.

iii. Bleeding/Body Fluids

- *BACKGROUND* - all body fluids should be handled with extreme caution to avoid contact with potential diseases.
- *PROCEDURE* - notify the office immediately
- wear disposable latex gloves, and avoid getting fluids in your eyes, mouth, or on scratches and cuts
- exposure to body fluids requires rinsing the affected area immediately with soap and water

- if cleaning up body fluids, use an approved cleaner as provided by maintenance or a solution of one part bleach to nine parts water
- First Aid supplies are kept in the staff room.

Field Trips

Example One

Preamble

Field trips away from the school are an integral part of a child's education. We strive to provide all of our students with relevant educational, cultural, and recreational trips outside of our community.

Many field trips are financed by fundraising efforts of each classroom. This is another reason why parental and community involvement in our programming is so important.

We also believe that field trips are privileges for students.

The following policy has been set to guide our practice of providing field trips.

Field Trips Policy

Our school recognizes the benefits of taking students outside of the school environment for educational purposes. We also recognize that field trips are privileges for our students.

Field Trips Regulations

1. Eighty per cent (80%) attendance is required to participate in field trips.
2. Students not completing the required course of studies at school will not be permitted to participate in field trips.
3. All day trips within our catchment area require notification being given to parents/guardians.
4. Day trips beyond our catchment area will require permission forms to be signed by parents/guardians and returned to the school.
5. All overnight field trips will require a permission form signed and returned by parents/guardians.
6. All over night field trips will have at least one male and one female chaperone.

Example Two

The Board recognizes the value of field trips to reinforce or enhance certain concepts taught during the course of the year. Field trips should be an integral part of a school program and, as such, can occur at any time during the year.

1. Teachers wishing to take their class on field trips must submit a written explanation of where they are going and how the field trip fits into their curriculum. Requests are to be submitted to the Principal, preferably two weeks in advance.
2. In all cases, teachers are responsible to ensure that parental consent for each student participating is obtained. Year-long, blanket approvals are no longer acceptable.
3. Whenever possible, teachers should try to obtain some parents or Board members to act as chaperones.
4. Arrangements for bus transportation should be made with the bus driver. The driver must be given sufficient notice that he/she can ensure that the bus is available. Teachers should notify him/her of their needs at least two weeks in advance of the planned trip.
5. If students are late returning from a field trip, a message indicating the reason for the late arrival will be recorded on the school's answering machine. Parents who are concerned may phone the school to receive the message.
6. For grades K, 1, 2 and 3 students the ratio between students and chaperones should not be greater than 1 to 6. For older students the teacher should use discretion in deciding how many chaperones are necessary.

Example Three

The school Board encourages the use of field trips as a way of enriching the athletic, cultural or educational experience of students. The board would like there to be a balance between trips that are organized primarily for athletic purposes and those that have more educational objectives. Procedures for field trips and approvals are as follows.

Student Eligibility and Responsibility

- Field trips are a privilege and not a right.
- Eligibility may be based on consideration of grades, attendance, behaviour, and attitudes.
- Students assigned work during a field trip must complete said assignments as a prerequisite for participation in future field trips.
- Students will be expected to behave in an appropriate manner and to ensure that they bring credit to their school and their community.

- School rules regarding behaviour will apply on all field trips.
- Violations of any field trip rule or inappropriate behaviour may result in being sent home immediately at the parents' expense and/or being barred from participation in future field trips for the remainder of the school year, depending on the severity of the violation.

Chaperones

- Persons interested in being a chaperone must submit a letter of request outlining their interest and commitment.
- Chaperones must familiarize themselves with the field trip policies and commit to meeting all requirements and standards.
- Chaperones must pass a criminal records check.
- The chaperone assumes the role of a kind, firm, judicious parent.
- The chaperone represents the school and will model school values.
- At least one chaperone will have a first aid certificate.
- No alcohol or drugs may be consumed for 24 hours prior to and during the duration of the field trip.
- The chaperone must ensure that he/she has billet phone number, student home phone numbers, and student medical numbers.
- The chaperone must be in attendance at all field trip functions, save when the student is with his/her billet.
- The chaperone must ensure that students' luggage and personal belongings are with the student prior to travel occurring.
- The chaperone must not transfer his/her responsibility to another chaperone or individual under any circumstances.
- The chaperone may recommend to the administrator that a student not participate in future field trips although the initial decision shall be at the discretion of the administrators.
- If a chaperone does not fulfill all of his/her responsibilities, they may not participate as a chaperone for up to one full year.

Field Trips Up to 2 Days in Duration

- The administrator must receive the request in writing 5 days prior to the field trip.
- A written rationale detailing the educational reasons for the trip must be submitted to the administrator along with the field trip request.
- The field trip must be approved in writing by the administrator and the students' parents/guardians.
- Consent to travel forms must be in the office 3 days prior to the trip.
- Permission in writing from all of a student's teachers must be obtained prior to the trip.

- There must be a chaperone ratio of at least 1 chaperone to 5 students.
- The field trip must be organized, directed, and guided by the teacher responsible for the trip.
- The teacher responsible for the trip will meet with the chaperones, parents, and students prior to the trip and review all responsibilities with them as a group.

Field Trips Longer than 2 days in Duration

- The administrator and the Board must receive the request in writing not less than 20 working days prior to the trip.
- A written rationale detailing the educational reasons for the trip must be submitted to the administrator along with the field trip request.
- The field trip must be approved by a Board motion.
- The trip must be approved in writing by the Board, the administrator and the students parent/guardian.
- The sponsoring teacher will convene a meeting of the parents to explain the purpose of the trip at least 15 working days before the field trip.
- Parents or guardians of all participating students must attend the meeting or otherwise make direct contact with the teacher before the student's participation will be allowed.
- Consent to travel forms must be in the office 3 days prior to the field trip date.
- There must be a chaperone ratio of at least 1 chaperone to 5 students.
- The field trip must be organized, directed, and guided by the teacher responsible for the trip.
- The teacher responsible for the trip will meet with the chaperones, parents, and students prior to the trip and review all responsibilities with them as a group.

Example Four

Non-Staff Adults Involved With Students During Extended or Overnight Activities

Our school recognizes and welcomes the participation of community volunteers in student extracurricular activities. For the protection of students the following procedures are to be followed:

1. Principal completes a community volunteer form during a meeting with the volunteer.
2. The volunteer receives information regarding school expectations (see below), and completes an authorization for a criminal record check.
3. The Principal will contact two local character references.

4. The Principal will review the pertinent information and make a decision regarding approval, and notify the applicant of this decision.

Expectations of Chaperones on Trips

- As a teacher or parent chaperone on a school-sponsored field trip, students will look to you for leadership, and will of course expect high standards of behaviour from you. Students will need to feel “safe” with you, as you are acting ‘in loco parentis.’
- Actually, in undertaking the trip, you have volunteered to be ‘on duty’ for practically 24 hours per day.
- As a chaperone responsible for students, you will not be able to have your non-participating children accompany you.
- At all times during the trip, you will refrain from consumption of alcoholic beverages, even during free time.
- As students have been asked to remain part of a “buddy” system or small group at all times, each grouping will report to a chaperone. Chaperones are expected to use the same degree of caution that careful or prudent parents would in the care of their own children. Chaperones should have their assigned students report to them approximately every two hours.
- For a positive tone of the trip, it is essential that discipline is maintained in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Chaperones are expected to deal with “routine” student behavioural situations, but should refer more serious infractions/issues to the teacher or other person in charge.
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Head Lice

Example One

Policy

Our school’s students and staff, because of their close proximity to one another, may become exposed to head lice, and accordingly, we are committed to working with parents and health agencies to reduce the likelihood, and dealing with treatment in an effective manner.

Regulations

1. The school Principal will request the Community Health Representative, or parent volunteers, to do head checks for lice once per month.
2. Staff will report suspected cases of head lice to the Principal
3. The Principal will report any suspected cases to the appropriate health officer.
4. Parents/guardians will be notified if their child requires treatment.
5. Students with confirmed cases will be allowed to return to school when treatment has been completed.

Example Two

Head lice, or pediculosis, is a very difficult organism to eradicate. The school is committed to taking steps to provide a preventative school environment and addressing outbreaks.

Preventative School Environment

1. Basic precautions which generally prevent the transmission of lice from one child to another should be taken at each school. These include the following:
 - Children should place their hats and mitts in the sleeves of their coats as opposed to cubby holes and ledges.
 - Do not encourage coats to pile up.
 - Students should be reminded that sharing headgear is not encouraged.
 - Clothing in drama centers must be regularly cleansed.
 - Parents, upon registration, are to be approached regarding consent for head checking during outbreaks. Staff members should be aware, and understand, the reasons for this protocol.
2. Staff, parent and student awareness
 - Staff handbooks will contain the most relevant information regarding lice and the highlights of this protocol.
 - A similar level of information will be provided to parents in the school's parent handbook.
 - The school will communicate with others in the area and the community at large when problems arise.

When a Case of Lice is Identified

1. Basic precautions which generally prevent the transmission of lice from one child to another should be taken at each school. These include the following:
 - Parents of students in that classroom are notified by a letter.

- The principal advises the parent of the student with lice that the child will need to remain at home until he or she receives his/her first treatment.
 - The principal will make a follow-up call to the parent on the next day to offer assistance from the Public Health agency.
2. When the second case of lice occurs within the same classroom within 2 weeks:
 - Parent volunteers will screen all students in the class.
 - Any lice detected within that class will be reported to the principal.
 - Siblings and their classrooms will be checked within that school.
 - The principal will advise the parent of the student with lice that the child will need to remain at home until treatment is complete and nits are removed and that the student will be assessed upon return.
 - The principal will make a phone call to the parent on the next day to offer assistance from Public Health.
 - Classroom centers that involve shared clothing (drama centers ...) and the use of head phones will be discontinued within the class for a two week period.
 - Parent volunteers will return to the classroom in seven days to again check for lice.
 - When a treatment failure is identified, the Public Health Nurse will be notified.
 3. When a second case of lice occurs in the school within two weeks:
 - A school-wide letter to parents will be issued.
 - The school will notify all other schools in the area.

In all cases, priority will be given to communications with parents to support no transmission of lice in the building. At all times, staff will recognize that there is a large stigma attached to lice and we will do everything in our power to ensure that accurate information is communicated to parents.

Dealing with Distraught Parents

1. Parents must be reassured that head lice does not necessarily reflect unsanitary households or neglected children. Learning that a child has head lice can be distressing, and can provoke feelings of shame.
2. School staff must be prepared to explain procedures and answer questions. Parents who have experienced infestation may feel unable to cope with a recurrence.
3. Staff must exercise caution against over-treatment for children with repeated infestations and encourage manual removal.

Sample Information for Parents

How to Get Rid of Head Lice

Different kinds of products to treat head lice are available from the drugstore without a prescription. These are in the form of shampoo, cream rinses, or lotions. You may wish to talk to the pharmacist, your doctor, or the public health nurse about these products.

Talk to your doctor before treating anyone who is pregnant or nursing a baby.

Check all family members.

Treat the hair of everyone who has head lice.

Treating the hair is the most important step.

- Apply the product to the hair following the instructions on the label.
- Remove all the nits (eggs) by hand or with a nit comb (fine tooth comb). Pull them off the end of the hair. Put them into a paper bag and then into a garbage pail.
- Check the hair daily. Continue to remove any nits that are found.
- Shampoo the hair again in about 7-10 days. A second shampoo will make sure that any head lice which hatch after the first shampoo are killed before they lay more eggs. Wash towels and store shampoo safely. Remove any nits that are left.

Your child can return to school after the first treatment.

Home and Clothing

- The articles most likely to enable lice to move from one head to another are hats and other headgear, furry cost collars, scarves, combs, brushes, and hair ornaments.
- Soak hair brushes and combs in very hot water for 10 minutes or in a disinfectant solution for one hour.
- Hats, scarves, and hooded coats etc. should be washed in hot water and put in the dryer on the hot cycle. Those items that cannot go into the dryer can be sealed in a plastic bag for 10 days or placed in the freezer for 24 hours.
- Lice are not likely to spread to others through contact with pillows, towels, bedding, sofas etc. However, as an added precaution please wash clothing, bed linens, and towels used by the person with headlice. Use the hot water cycle and put in the dryer on the hot cycle.
- A major clean up of the house is not necessary.
- Avoid using insecticide sprays as they are unnecessary.

Sample Letter to Parents

Dear Parent

A case of head lice has occurred in your child's classroom. Please check your child's hair carefully for head lice or nits as well as other members of the family. Monitor over the next week. Treat those who have lice or nits following the steps on the next page. Please notify the school if you do find any head lice or nits.

Head lice do not carry disease and do not have anything to do with cleanliness. Tell your child not to share hats, helmets, scarves, coats, combs, brush, and towels with other children. If you need more information please contact the school or public health office.

Thank you for helping us to stop the spread of head lice.

Handling Fights or Threats of Fights

Threat of Fights

1. Any staff person who becomes aware of the possibility of a fight occurring at a later time should notify the principal immediately.
2. A staff person who is a witness to two students "squaring off" to begin a fight should remain at the scene. A student should be sent to the office to notify the principal of the situation.
3. The students should be spoken to in an easily heard, confident tone of voice, and should be encouraged to find other means to solve their differences.
4. The staff person should continue talking to the students until they agree to walk away, assistance arrives, or they begin fighting.
5. If the individuals walk away, they should both be asked to report to the office. The students should be allowed an opportunity to gain their composure. The staff person should try to find a way to ensure that the students do not go to the office in each other's company.

Attending the Scene of a Fight

1. The first staff person at the scene of a fight should protect their own safety and that of all students in the area.
2. If possible, staff members should arrive on the scene as a group. They should then break up the fight and ensure that the principal is notified, the principal decides if the RCMP are to be called, the crowd should be controlled/dispersed, and

witnesses should be canvassed. If a teacher arrives on the scene alone, some of those tasks can be delegated to students, as appropriate.

3. Everyone must be aware that the combatants may be significantly affected by their own adrenaline. They may be unable to respond in a rational manner for a time.
4. No one should physically intervene in a fight.
5. Individuals should be yelled at to get their attention. They should be called by name and commanded to quit fighting, repeated several times if necessary.
6. When the combatants are showing signs of exhaustion, adults may begin to separate the individuals.
7. The combatants should be escorted to the office and allowed an opportunity to regain their composure.
8. Any student injuries should be reported to the office so that their parents can be notified as soon as possible.
9. If a staff member has been injured, a report should be completed.
10. The incident should be documented and filed with the principal.

Homework

Preamble

Homework is an important aspect of a child's education. Assigning homework assists the student in learning important concepts, as well as bringing the education of each child into his or her home.

The following policy has been designed to guide our practice in assigning homework.

Homework Policy

The staff at our school recognizes that it is necessary, and in the students' best interests, to assign work to be completed outside of school hours.

Homework Regulations

Homework is an integral part of a students' education, and will be assigned at the teacher's discretion, for the following reasons.

1. Homework is assigned in order to give extra practice of skills assigned in school.
2. Homework is assigned in order that students may complete work started during the school day.
3. Homework is assigned at the parent's/guardian's or student's request.
4. Homework is assigned in order to facilitate parental/guardianship support and awareness of the student's education.
5. Homework will make up a part of each student's assessment, evaluative and reporting process.

Illness and Accident

1. In the case of illness students will be allowed to rest in the school's sick room. Their condition will be checked on periodically. Parents will be contacted and, if the illness is serious enough the parents will be asked to come and pick up their child.
2. It is the general policy of the school that staff will not be responsible for the administration of medication. The only exceptions would be for time sensitive medications and then only if the parent brings in prescription and dosage information. Teachers must keep such medications under lock and key and at all times.
3. In the case of an accident the following steps should be followed.
 - Communicate with parents.
 - Give minor first aid only. If the extent of the injury is serious, or if there is any doubt about the extent of the injury, the parents should be contacted and requested to take the child for a medical examination. If the parents cannot be contacted in a reasonable length of time, a teacher or some other school official should call an ambulance to take the child to the nearest medical facility and every effort must be made to get the parent or guardian to the scene as quickly as possible.
 - Remember that with many types of injuries, the accident victim should not be moved without a doctor's authority. In such a case do everything to make the victim as comfortable as possible until an ambulance arrives.

All accidents must be reported in writing to the Principal. An accident report form has been established and must be used.

Inclement Weather

Example One

Policy

The school may close due to inclement weather.

Regulations

1. The Principal, upon his/her discretion, may deem the weather conditions unsafe for either safe transport of students, or unsafe for classroom occupancy.
2. Students will be kept indoors during breaks when weather conditions are such that student safety and well-being cannot be assured while outdoors.

Example Two

1. If there is a serious deterioration in weather conditions while school is in session the Principal may dismiss school early.
2. If the weather conditions so warrant it on any morning on which school is prescribed to open the Principal may cancel school.
All such actions shall be immediately communicated to Radio Station CBC 91.7 FM for release as a public service notice. The Principal shall be responsible for this communication. The Education Committee Chairperson is to be advised of all class cancellations due to inclement weather.

Instructional Day

Policy

The school operates according to the schedule maintained by the Ministry of Education, which ensures that minimal instructional times are met.

Regulations

1. The school's daily schedule is as follows:

Monday to Friday 8:45 a.m. – 12 p.m.; 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Elementary		Secondary	
8:45 – 10:30	Instruction	8:45 – 10:45	Instruction
10:30 – 10:45	Recess	10:45 – 11:00	Recess
10:45 – 12:00	Instruction	11:00 – 12:00	Instruction
12:00 – 12:45	Lunch	12:00 – 1:00	Lunch
12:45 – 1:45	Instruction	1:00 – 3:00	Instruction
1:45 – 2:00	Recess		
2:00 – 3:00	Instruction		

2. Afternoon recess for K4 and K5 is at the discretion of the teacher.

Kindergarten 4-Year Olds Orientation

Policy

The school recognizes the value of school orientation for children entering school for the first time.

Regulations

1. Parents/guardians of children known to be entering the K4 program will be notified in May of the preceding year, in order to facilitate orientation for those students.
2. The non-school aged children must be accompanied to the orientation by a parents/guardian or adult caregiver.
3. It is the discretion of the K4 teacher and Principal as to the length and content of the orientation.

Opening Day Procedures

Enrollment of Students

1. On class list:
 - a) Leave on names of students who are not in attendance but will be entering the school at a later date (by September 30)
 - b) Delete students who have moved to another location within or outside of the province.
2. Submit the form to the secretary's office by 9:30 a.m.

Teacher Expectations

1. Please make sure students are aware of your expectations and procedures for the following:
 - c) Classroom movement
 - d) Use of washrooms
 - e) Discipline procedure
 - f) Assignment expectations
 - g) Appropriate student responses
 - h) Homework expectations
 - i) Materials required for class

Classroom Routines

Pro-active planning works with all teaching and organizations styles and will help teachers and students work more effectively together. Teachers are encouraged to establish routines that will allow more instructional time to be allocated to academic activities.

Operation of the School

Policy

Our school will offer the mandated number of instructional days by the Ministry of Education.

Regulations

1. The school will remain open on all designated days of instruction except where the Principal decides it should be closed because of:
 - a) failure of an aspect of the school’s physical plant such that student and staff comfort and safety cannot be assured
 - b) other extenuating circumstances
2. The school staff will attempt to contact parents/guardians in the event of a school closure or early dismissal.

Overviews

1. Teachers are to have overviews submitted to the office for the following time periods:
2. Overviews should include timeframes, evaluation criteria, and learning objectives. The overviews must be referenced to IRPs.
3. Sample formats for overviews are available from the principal. A standardized form that you may choose to use follows.

Overview Sample Form

Subject: _____

Timeline	Topic Theme Unit	Skills Objectives	Activity Strategy	Resources Materials	Evaluation

Physical Restraint of Students

In order to effectively deal with a student who poses a threat to themselves, others, or school property, it may be necessary to restrain the individual physically. The purpose of the restraint is to control the movement and behavior of the individual so as to limit the possible threat of injury to the individual, others, and/or school property. Physical restraint is viewed as a temporary measure when, in the view of the supervising adult, the threat of

violence is real and immediate and that other measures of alleviating the threat have been of little or no benefit to an individual who may pose as a threat. It is also recognized that physical restraint may be an appropriate course of action, by the supervising adult, even though other control methods have not yet been utilized. This is most likely to occur when the individual is viewed as being a threat to themselves or others.

Restraint Responsibilities

Restraining should be done only by a supervising adult and may be carried out during any school related activity either on or off school property. Prior to the restraint, when able to, contact with the individual should be conducted in the following manner:

- * Controlled, reassuring statements to the individual providing reasons for the restraint and the manner in which the restrained individual can end the restraint.
- * Least amount of force required to adequately restrain the individual and still protect the individual as well as the adult applying the restraint.
- * Least amount of disturbance to the rest of the class
- * In the presence of another adult

Restraint Procedures

There are three steps to completing a restraint. These steps include the restraint, the debriefing, and the documentation of the restraint.

1. Restraining techniques include;

- i. Holding the students hands or arms (avoid the wrist if possible)
- ii. Holding the feet or legs
- iii. Holding the student on the floor, face down toward the floor, supporting his/her own weight, and exerting only the required pressure to control the student
- iv. Sitting on the floor with their back against a wall, and holding the students arms crossed over their chest.
- v. Holding the student against the wall, facing the wall with their hands behind their back.
- vi. Use of arm techniques to remove a student from a situation either in the school or in a public place.
- vii. Working together with another adult to restrain a student who may have more strength than one adult.

2. Debriefing

This should occur as soon as possible after the restraint and focus on:

- i. The student understanding the reason for the restraint and what happened.
- ii. The student understanding the area of the Student Management Policy that was not adhered to.
- iii. The student understanding alternative methods of behavior and formulating, along with the adult, a suitable behavior alternative.

3. Documentation

The supervising adult is required to document all events involved in the restraint. This includes the following:

- i. The time and location of the incident
- ii. Describing the events leading to and including the restraint as well as steps taken to resolve the situation
- iii. The names of all those who witnessed the incident
- iv. Informing the school administration, in writing, of the incident, as well as the legal guardians of the child and any other relevant agency.

All staff are to be aware of the restraint procedure as outlined in the policy manual. Staff will receive necessary information and in-service to deal with student restraint through the school administration and with the approval of the Education Committee.

Reporting Student Progress

Example One

Policy

The school recognizes the benefits of doing regular assessment, evaluation, and reporting of student progress. We also recognize the students' parents/guardians right to receive such information.

Regulations

1. Students in K to grade 8 will receive three formal reports per year (November, March, and June) and one interim report per year (January).
2. Students in K4 and Grades 9 to 12 will receive 4 formal report cards per year (November, January, March, and June).
3. All parents/guardians will receive at least one informal report each year (phone calls, conferences, notes).
4. With the exception of the students in K4 and students with learning disabilities, not students will be passed on to the next grade until they have demonstrated mastery of the requirements for their grade.
5. The formal and informal report for the period of January will indicate if the student is on track for passing or failing.
6. The formal report for March will also indicate if the student is passing or failing.
7. Parents/guardians/teacher conferences will be provided for after the November and March reporting periods.

Example Two

The Board of Education considers the reporting of pupil progress as an integral part of the teaching/learning process. In addition, report cards are an important link in the communication process between home and school.

1. There shall be three (3) reporting periods during the year: first report in November of each school year, second report in March of each school year, and final report in mid June of each school year.
2. Parents need to be kept fully informed of the progress of their child. This is especially true for children who are having difficulty. Frequent reports should be made informally to parents about how their children are doing in school and what things they can do to help their child.
3. The Board of Education approves of parent/teacher interviews as a valuable supplement to report cards and other means of communicating to parents, the progress and conduct of their children in school. Notifications of parent/teacher interviews will be sent to all parents or guardians well in advance of the date of such interviews. A notice indicating the dates of parent/teacher interviews will be posted in the Band Office and other prominent locations around the community.
4. In the event that parents or guardians do not or cannot meet with teachers, the teachers, in co-operation with the school principal shall do the following.
 - Contact the parents by phone and discuss the report card with them.
 - The teacher may make a home visit to discuss the progress of a student.

Example Three

Reporting Periods

1. There are five reporting periods throughout the year. Three of these reports must be written.
2. One report will take the form of a Parent-Teacher interview.
3. The written report periods are:

First Report	November
Second Report	March
Third Report	June
4. As well, teachers must log, in their daybook, the date of one phone call (per students) to parents.

5. Prior to distributing the report cards, ensure you have photocopied the report and placed the copy in the student's file. It is also advisable to encourage students to return their reports as soon as possible to reduce lost report cards.
6. If a report card is lost, a supplicate must be made for the next reporting period. The previous term's letter grades do not need to be recopied, but a slash mark should be made through the pervious letter grade spaces. On the front cover it should indicate that this is a duplicate report.

Example Four

A report of student progress shall be sent to parents three times per year. Report dates are generally in December, in March and at the end of the term in June. As well, two interim reports may be sent to the parents. The issuing of the first and second reports shall be followed with a day set aside for parent/guardian - teacher - student conferences.

Reporting to parents/guardians shall be done on the approved report cards.

School Bus

Example One

The bus driver is responsible for the safe transportation of students and has the responsibility to ensure that student behaviours do not interfere with safety. Therefore, the following rules must apply:

- Pupils must behave on the bus as if they were in school.
- Pupils will be assigned seats by the bus driver.
- Pupils must not litter the bus with papers or other garbage.
- Pupils must remain seated while the bus is in motion.
- Pupils must not extend their head or arms out of the windows.

For pupils who continuously refuse to obey the rules the following consequences may result.

- The bus driver will report the student to the Principal who may take corrective action.
- The bus driver may complete a warning report and submit to the parents.
- After repeated warnings, the bus driver may suspend the student for a period of time not exceeding one week.

Example Two

Busing

1. There are two after school bus runs. The first leaves the school at 3:05 and the second bus leaves at approximately 3:20 p.m. The staff members assigned to busing has the responsibility of supervising the students awaiting the second bus. These students are to be in the gym using the equipment available.
2. The supervisor is responsible for helping the younger students organize their clothing and belongings prior to boarding the bus.
3. It is the bus duty supervisor's responsibility to ensure the gym storage room is tidy following after-school bus duty.
4. Bus conduct is expected to conform to the policy of the Board. The staff member on duty is to assist the bus driver with the loading whenever possible.

Student Conduct on Bus Policy

The Board believes that the provision of appropriate transportation for students is a necessary part of its function in providing an educational service to children.

The Board believes that a school bus is an extension of the school. *Student safety is paramount.*

Guidelines

1. Students will conduct themselves in an ordinary manner, follow all instructions given by the bus driver, remain seated until they reach their destination, and follow safe bus procedures and rules.
2. Parents shall ensure that their child: is at the correct pick-up location approximately five minutes early; waits for and boards the bus in a safe manner; returns home safely from the designated bus stop at the end of the school day; and understands that bus drivers are given authority to appropriately report the misbehaviour of students placed in their charge.
3. School personnel will anticipate that bus drivers will address rule infractions; utilize written discipline procedures which apply fairly and consistently to student conduct; and while using their best judgment, follow consequences which include the steps outlined in guideline 4
4. Student discipline consequences:
 - 4.1 Verbal warning
 - 4.1.1 Normally a verbal warning will be given by the Bus Driver to correct student behaviour while aboard the bus.
 - 4.2 Written warning
 - 4.2.1 Should the verbal warning be ignored and student conduct continue to be unacceptable, the driver will issue a written warning. Written warnings may

also be given where misconduct is serious enough to warrant parents/guardians of the student being advised of the student's behaviour.

4.3 Suspension

- 4.3.1 Should the written warnings not be heeded or extreme behaviour occurs, the driver will request a suspension of riding privileges. The driver will not determine the length of the suspension but will provide input to the Principal.
- 4.3.2 Once a request for suspension is received, the Bus Driver and the Principal will discuss the incident. A suitable period of suspension may then be determined and notifications given as required.

School Bus Accidents

All persons in charge of students must exercise care and caution for the safety and well being of those students. This requirement becomes of paramount importance in the case of an accident involving a school bus carrying students.

1. In case of an accident the driver must immediately:
 - Administer first aid and contact the ambulance and police or hospital.
 - Report the accident to the school office as soon as possible and notify the parents concerned where deemed necessary.
2. In the case of an accident where considerable damage, injury or loss of life has occurred, the bus driver will be temporarily suspended with pay until the Board has met and reviewed all reports of the accident and deems the driver fit to continue his/her route, or, if warranted, to be dismissed.

School Bus Incident Report Sample

The purpose of this report is to inform you of an incident involving your child on the school bus, which may jeopardized the safety and well-being of all students.

Date: _____ Time: _____
Driver: _____ Student: _____
Grade: _____

Please note:

1. The driver has immediate authority on the school bus at all times.
2. The Driver may designate the seat which the student shall occupy.
3. Student behaviour and conduct must not create a distraction for the Driver or discomfort for other students.

4. For the safety of students, no eating or drinking is permitted on the bus.
5. Students are responsible for maintaining their area of the bus in a neat and presentable manner.
6. To ensure safety, students will remain on the bus.
7. When loading or unloading the bus, students must listen to the Bus Driver's directions.

Circle the Infraction:

Failure to remain seated Refusing to obey driver Shoving/Pushing
Rude, discourteous Throwing objects Other behaviour

Specific Details

Warning: If behaviour of student does not improve a bus suspension may be issued. This incident report is given to your son/daughter for reasons as shown above. We would appreciate your cooperation in talking to your child about this incident and reinforcing the need for all of our students to behave appropriately on the school bus. If you wish to discuss this with the Principal, please call her.

Please sign this form and return it to the bus driver so we know you received it. Thank you for your cooperation.

Bus Driver: _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _____

Cc: Principal

School Bus Pick-Ups and Service

The Board of the school wishes to operate its bus service as efficiently and effectively as possible.

1. Parents are responsible to notify the Bus Driver when bus service is no longer required.
2. The bus driver shall stop at the designated pick-up location for each family along the published route for a period of one week. If the bus service is not used within

this time the stop will be discontinued. Parents may reapply for bus service when it is required.

3. Every effort will be made to arrange the bus schedule so that students spend an equitable amount of time on the bus. However, since one bus must cover all of the city as well as the First Nations territory, some students may have a longer ride in the morning and a shorted on after school or vice versa.

Staff Absence Policy

If you are absent for any reason, you must inform the principal as soon as possible and fill out an Employee Absentee form as well. If the payroll department does not receive a form signed by the principal, you will not be paid for your absence. Please remember that you have only a specific number of paid absences for your working terms each year:

- 1.5 sick days per month (non-cumulative), or 15 days for any employees working from September to June. This includes absences for medical and dental reasons.
- 7 days compassionate leave for the school year. This includes absences for funerals and other incidences of a personal nature.
- 1 personal day, which is at the discretion of the principal.

Any absences over and above these mentioned will be unpaid.

When you are absent for any reason, you must first contact the Principal. It is then your responsibility to arrange for a substitute for all of your classes. A copy of the sub list will be given to you early in September. Make sure you have a copy of this at home, so you can call someone in if you are unable to come to work. Do not ask anyone else, especially office staff, to do this for you. This is your responsibility.

Lesson/work plans are to be thoroughly prepared for your subs. Subs are not certified teachers and it is not up to them to come up with a lesson for the class. A detailed lesson plan for each day you will be absent is required. For this reason, it is imperative that you have at least one generic lesson plan set aside in the event of an illness or unexpected absence. It is important you leave your sub with all the information/supplies they'll need to run your classroom.

Please sign the white board in the staff room indicating any planned absences and who your sub will be.

Staff Guidelines

1. Staff are to have Daily Plan Books prepared before classes start each instructional day.
2. Whenever possible, staff are to notify the administration at least two weeks prior to known absences from school.
3. Where appropriate, requests for leave will not be approved if more than two staff members have already had requests for leave granted.
4. Whenever possible, please notify the Administration Office by 7:00 a.m. if a substitute is required.
5. It is expected that staff meet all dates handing in materials and reports requested by the Administrator.
6. Teacher's classes are to be fully ready by the first day of school, including bulleting boards, charts, materials for instruction.

Staff Meetings

Staff meetings are held the first and third Tuesday of each month. Please give the principal prior notice if you are unable to attend. Except in cases of unexpected illness, doctor and dental appointments are not an acceptable reason for not attending the meetings.

Student Detentions

Policy

In certain situations it is necessary to detain students following dismissal or during scheduled break periods.

Regulations

1. Students may be detained after school for academic or disciplinary reasons, and if so, teachers will notify parents.
2. Students shall not be detained for more than one half hour.
3. Detained students will be supervised by a teacher.

Student Evaluation Procedures

Each staff member will complete a policy on student evaluations and promotions. While these policies may vary from grade to grade, the following are to be incorporated as underlying principles.

1. Student evaluation must be fair and just.
2. Wherever possible, final examinations should be given. Final exams shall constitute 25-30 percent of a student's final standing.
3. Students are to reminded, frequently, of the manner in which final marks will be awarded.
4. An appeal process must be an integral part of this policy. These appeals may be made by parents on behalf of their children. The appeal process should include the following.
 - i. Direct appeal by the student or his/her parent to the teacher involved.
 - ii. If resolution is not possible, then appeal may be made by the student of his/her parent to the Principal.
 - iii. If the Principal and parent cannot resolve the situation a Board member will be asked to become involved.
5. Student retention or promotion may not necessarily be based on a student's mastery of prescribed concepts and skills. Age, special needs, attendance, etc. may also be factors that need to be considered. Individual cases must be judged on an individual basis with the good of the student being the primary consideration.
6. In May of each year the staff and Principal shall meet to discuss any students at risk of being retained. At that time specific plans need to be made as to the provision of programming for those students who may be retained. Parents need to be informed of and approve of the decision and of the plans for next year programming.
7. Notwithstanding the above, if, at any time during the school year, the success of the student is in doubt, the parents need to be contacted and arrangements made for intervention. The Principal, the Learning Assistance Teacher and the classroom teacher must ensure that parents understand the situation and are informed of what efforts are being made to help their student achieve their utmost potential.

Student Injury

Policy

Injuries can occur at school. The school staff recognize that students may become injured during a school activity. We will do our utmost to prevent injury from happening. In the event of an injury we will provide the best treatment and care as possible; that treatment

and care may require transport to a medical facility for examination and treatment, if necessary.

Regulations

1. All but the most minor injuries will be reported to the Principal.
2. Parents/guardians will be notified concerning serious injuries.
3. The Principal will notify the School Board President verbally as well as in writing of all serious injuries.

Student Promotions (Grade)

1. Student Placement and Progress - General

a. Decisions on progress and placement shall be the responsibility of the Principal and may be made at any time during the academic year. The Principal shall arrange for consultation with pupils, teachers, and parents regarding student progress and placement. Decisions will be based on the students' classroom work, tests, written assignments, presentations, general observations, and other sources deemed useful.

2. Grade Promotion

a. Junior Kindergarten/Kindergarten

As these programs are more socially based than academic based, students enrolled in these programs shall proceed through these programs unimpeded. However, exceptional cases may be presented that may warrant exception to this policy.

b. Grade 1 to 3

The concept of continuous progress is the ultimate goal of the promotional policy. Students shall proceed through these grades on a continuous progress basis. Students shall not spend more than two years in one grade, or more than five years in the primary program.

In some instances students, with the mutual agreement of parents, staff member, and the school administration, may be placed on an individual education program and receive a social pass to a more age appropriate grade.

c. Grade 4 - 7

Students in the middle years shall be grade promoted, with an emphasis on skill acquisition in mathematics and language arts. Where students with deficient or marginal skills in these two disciplines are being promoted such deficiencies must be clearly stated to the parents in conferences and in writing prior to the conclusion of the school year. A copy of this report with specific programming recommendations for the next year teacher

will be included in the student's cumulative file. No student shall spend more than two years in one grade.

d. Grade 8 - 12

Students in grade eight to twelve shall be grade promoted. All students in grades eight to twelve shall write a June examination which will determine at least 20% of the final mark but not exceeding 50% of the final. The balance of the mark will be determined by averaging the student grades throughout the three previous report periods. Provincial examinations will be excepted from this grade.

A student;

- shall earn full academic promotion by passing a minimum eight courses, as recognized by the provincial established curriculum, with an emphasis on the five core courses of English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies being compulsory.
- may be recommended, by agreement of teachers and administration, for academic promotion in the event all of the above requirements are not met. Such recommendation shall consider the importance of the subject as a prerequisite, grade earned in the course(s) not passed, grades earned in other subjects, work habits, and attendance. Such promotions may be subject to conditions and will only be considered if a student has earned a passing grade in at least five subjects with four of those being compulsory.
- shall be socially promoted in the event academic promotion requirements are not met after two years in the same grade or where the difference between age and grade achievement warrant such a placement. Students will be subject to the age policy as established by the school.

Where a student with deficient or marginal skills is being promoted such deficiencies must be clearly stated by the homeroom teacher to the parents in conference and in writing prior to the conclusion of the school year. A copy of this report with specific programming recommendations for the next year teacher will be included in the student's cumulative file. Where a student has not met the requirements for promotion the homeroom teacher shall arrange a conference with the parents prior to the conclusion of the school year to discuss the possible placement for the next school year.

e. Grade 10 to 12

Students shall be subject promoted until such time as graduation requirements are met. Students will be subject to age requirements of the school. Students will be able to challenge the Provincial exams.

f. Grading System

A	86%-100%
B	74%-85%
C+	67% - 73%

C	60%-66%
C-	50%-59%
I/F	0%-49% (I changed to F in final report)

Student Textbooks, Instructional Materials, and Supplies

Policy

Our school will supply students with all of the necessary instructional materials. Parents/guardians are responsible for providing each student with the required students' supplies.

Regulations

1. Students will be loaned all necessary textbooks on the understanding that they will be treated with care and respect and returned in the best condition possible, given normal wear and tear.
2. Teachers will maintain a list of books being borrowed and the borrower's name.
3. Students will be responsible for the replacement cost of books lost or damaged.
4. The school will provide the parents/guardians/students with a list of necessary school supplies at the beginning of the year.

Suspected Abuse

Example One

Policy

All teachers and support personnel should be familiar with the Inter-Ministerial Abuse Handbook, and follow the established procedures in the event of a well-founded suspicion, an allegation, or a disclosure of child abuse.

Administrative Procedures

1. Staff will attend an annual orientation on Child and Family reporting protocols and guidelines.

Example Two

We as professional people to whom the care of children has been given have the responsibility to care for those children as would a "kind, firm and judicious parent." This means that we have a clear moral and legal obligation to intervene on behalf of children needing protection. It is the policy of the Board of the school that no child should be

subjected to physical, sexual or emotional abuse. As such, it is the responsibility of all members of the school staff to monitor children's behaviour for evidence that such abuse may be a factor in their home environment.

1. All staff who suspect that a child has been abused have a legal responsibility to report their suspicions to the proper authority. Legal penalties exist for those who fail to report such incidences.
2. Staff should report directly to the appropriate agency and inform the Principal of their action. This report will be in writing and copies will be stored where their confidentiality can be protected.
3. Staff should keep notes on their observations: what the child said to them, when they reported their suspicions, to whom etc. These notes should be kept in a secure location so that the utmost confidentiality can be maintained.
4. If the condition of the child is such that immediate medical attention is required then the school should follow the regular procedures for injured students and get them to a medical facility as soon as possible.
5. Reports received by social services or by the RCMP are treated in a confidential manner. Those making the report will not be identified and will not be required to appear in court unless their testimony is crucial to the prosecution of the case.
6. Once a report has been made to the proper authorities the responsibility of the school and the staff has been discharged. Any further action that might be taken in the case is the responsibility of the appropriate authority. It is not in the interests of the school, the staff, or the child to continue involvement past the action of reporting.
7. The element of confidentiality cannot be overstressed. The fewer persons who are aware that a report has been made, the easier it is to maintain confidentiality. However, in a small community it is often difficult to keep secrets. Occasionally parents may come to the school and object to reports having been submitted. Such objections should be brought to the attention of the Principal.

Suspension and Expulsion

Policy

Our school believes that suspensions and expulsions of students may not be in the best interest of a students' education. However, some circumstances may deem suspensions and expulsions necessary for safety, well-being, and growth of our school.

Regulations

1. Parents/guardians of a student to be suspended or expelled will be contacted by the Principal.

2. Suspensions and expulsions will result in a letter to the parents/guardians, as well as in the student's file.
3. The Principal will contact the President of the School Board to report all suspensions and expulsions.
4. A copy of the discipline letter will be forwarded to the President of the School Board as well as the Education Coordinator of the student's home Band.

Teachers-on-Call

Policy

Substitute teachers are required to teach in a classroom from time-to-time.

Regulations

1. In hiring substitute teachers, our school will consider the applicants' education, life experiences, and role modeling ability.
2. Teachers shall have the discretion to request who their substitute teacher will be.
3. All substitute teachers will undergo a criminal records search.

Teacher Professional Development

The Board recognizes that the professional education of a teacher is a continuing process and that certain short courses and seminars are an asset in achieving and maintaining professional competence. This policy applies to all education staff.

1. Budgets for professional development are limited and in no case will the Board be in a position to reimburse teachers for all costs associated with professional development.
2. Requests are to be made to the principal of the school who is empowered to approve or disapprove in accordance with budgets and planned expenditures and usefulness to the school program.
3. Consideration will be given to the value and importance of the professional development request to both the teacher and to the school system.
4. Teachers attending short courses and seminars must be prepared to share the knowledge they have gained with other members of the teaching staff.
5. Three days each year will be set aside for professional development. The activities and location of these professional development activities will be decided by the staff in a cooperative and facilitative manner.

Teacher Professional Development Planning

In order to streamline processes related to teacher professional development, the following procedures will be followed.

1. Each teacher and the principal will discuss the teacher's professional development plans for the year in terms of their support of professional growth in areas of current/future teaching, special instructional needs, interests, etc.
2. The principal will verify that proposed expenditures reflect the teacher's professional development goals and the school's priorities.
3. The principal will ensure that the leave requested for the professional development activities is reasonable, and will remind the teacher of travel booking procedures.

Violence and Intimidation

Example One

Policy

Our school shall consider any act of violence or intimidation on school property, or during a school function, to be a serious threat to the school environment, to the health and safety of others, and to the community at large.

Administrative Procedures

When the Principal reasonably believes any act by a student to be violent or intimidating, the Principal:

- a) shall make all reasonable attempts to minimize the risk of injury to others;
- b) may suspend the student; the length of the suspension is at the discretion of the Principal in accordance with the circumstances and seriousness of the offense;
- c) may expel the student; expulsions are for serious, or ongoing breaches to the safety of others.

Example Two

The school's threat/violence report form is to be used to meet the Worker's Compensation Board requirements regarding reporting of acts of violence directed at employees by non-employees.

1. For reporting purposes, the definition of "violence" is "the attempted or actual exercise of physical force so as to cause injury to an employee and includes any

threatening statement or behaviour which gives an employee reasonable cause to believe that the employee is at risk of injury.”

2. The focus of this reporting process is on the employee/victim and is separate from any reporting or procedures which occur in regard to student discipline.
3. For each incident, a Threat/Violence Report form will be completed, which includes the following information:
 - Name of employee involved
 - Date and Time of Incident
 - Name(s) of Witnesses
 - Name of person making threat/assault (if known)
 - Description of person (parent, student, other)
 - Type of incident (threat/intimidation, physical assault, possession of a weapon, use of a weapon, and description of weapons involved)
 - Were the police notified? If yes, name of investigating officer and case number
 - Description of the incident
 - Previous incidents reported
 - Actions taken by employee/victim
 - Summary of actions taken by school to ensure employee safety
 - Signature of principal and employee, and date

Example Three

Violence means the attempted or actual exercise by a person of any physical force so as to cause injury to a staff or school member, and includes any threatening statement or behavior which gives a staff or school member reasonable cause to believe there is a risk of injury. (WCB 8..88 Definition of Violence).

- a. B.C. School Act Section 191 reads;
 1. No person shall disturb or interrupt the proceedings of a school or an official school sanctioned function, either on or off school premises.
 2. A person who is directed to leave the land or premises of a school by an administrative officer or a person authorized by the Principal or Education Committee in writing to make that direction;
 - a. shall immediately leave the land and premises, and
 - b. shall not enter on the land and premises again except with prior approval from the administrator or a person authorized by the Principal or Education Committee in writing.
 3. A person who contravenes subsection 1 or 2 commits an offense.
 4. An administrative officer of the school or a person so authorized by the committee may, in order to restore order on school premises, require assistance from a peace officer.

This section of the School Act applies to all school activities, even after school, on weekends, or off site. Any person disturbing the proceedings of a school function who is not on school property is also committing a criminal offense.

b. The following statement may be used towards a person, or persons, intruding upon the operation of the school. This is to be read by the administration of the school or person so delegated, in writing, to carry out this duty.

" Pursuant to Section 191 of the School Act you _____ are hereby directed to immediately leave the lands and premises of this school and you are not to enter upon these lands and premises again before _____(end of school year). Failure to comply with this order constitutes an offense under the School Act. Do you understand? Please repeat back to me what I have just said."

Ensure that the individual has paraphrased what has been said. This admission of understanding can be used later in court if they return. All such actions must be documented. If the individual refuses to leave the administrative delegate may contact a peace officer to assist. Individuals who refuse to cooperate with a request are subject to criminal charges under Section 175 of the Canadian Criminal Code, Causing a Disturbance.

Our School recognizes the potential for violent acts or threats directed against staff by persons other than employees. Every effort will be made to ensure the safety of all those attending and working at the school. The school administration will ensure that all staff personnel are aware of any hazards and informed as to the procedures for dealing with acts or threats of violence.

Visitors to the School and Premises

1. Parents should be encouraged to visit the school whenever they wish to discuss school matters with teachers or the principal. Parents may visit classrooms during instruction time if they wish. However, if the teacher or the principal feels that a visit is detrimental to the welfare of the student, the class, or the school, then the visit may be refused.
2. Members of the Board as well as the principal have the right to visit the classroom as they see fit.
3. Staff should be aware of possible legal conflicts between parents regarding custody of children. Staff must exercise caution in allowing any parent to remove a child from school during school hours. If a staff member has doubt about the legal custody of a student they should immediately consult the school records or require proof from the parent that they have legal custody of the child.

4. Any person visiting or volunteering in the school on a regular basis must have a criminal records check. Those who have any record of offenses dealing with children will not be allowed in the school building.

Weapons

Policy

The possession or use of any weapons on or near the school shall be considered a serious threat to the entire school environment and community at large. All school personnel who believe that such a threat exists, shall take appropriate action as per the following regulations to ensure the safety of all.

The definition of a weapon is: any object that has the potential to be used and is intended to be used, or is used, to injure, threaten, or intimidate any person.

Administrative Procedures

When the Principal reasonably believes that any person on the school premises possesses a weapon the Principal shall:

- a) make all reasonable attempts to minimize the risk of injury to any person
- b) arrange for the removal of weapons from the school premises

Reporting Procedures

After the Principal has ensured the safety of all, she/he:

- a) shall, as soon as practical, notify the parent/guardian of any child involved in the situation
- b) may report the matter to the RCMP, and if appropriate, seek their assistance
- c) make an immediate verbal report to the School Board President followed by a written report

Suspension of Student

Our school recognizes that the possession of any weapon by a student on or near the school premises, or at any school function, is a serious threat to the school environment and the community at large. Therefore, the principal shall suspend any student in possession of or using a weapon.

All cases involving weapons shall result in a suspension. The length of the suspension is at the discretion of the Principal in accordance with the circumstances and seriousness of the offense.

Workers Compensation Board Employer's Report of Injury or Occupational Disease

When an employee is injured on the job or has required an occupational disease, it is the employer's responsibility to complete a report of injury. As the employee submits their own report of events it is essential that the Employer's report be completed by the principal.

This report validates the employee's claim and services as an opportunity for the principal to review safety issues.

N.B. Please refer to the First Nations Schools Employment Handbook, available through the FNSA office, for further details about Workers Compensation Board.

Appendix Three: Teacher Evaluation Tools

Teacher Evaluation Policies

As described in the text of this handbook, it is critical that the issue of teacher evaluation be taken very seriously. Therefore, it may be beneficial to have a teacher evaluation policy. Included below is a sample teacher evaluation policy that may be adapted as necessary.

In order to avoid any future disagreements about whether the teacher evaluation policy was clearly introduced to each staff person, the principal should make every effort to ensure that each teacher is provided a copy of the policy and is fully aware of its contents. Some principals make it a practice to read the policy aloud to each new teacher. Principals may also consider having each teacher sign the bottom of a copy of the policy indicating that he or she has heard the policy and understands its contents.

Sample Teacher Evaluation Policy

The School Board recognizes that the critical element in a sound educational program is the individual teacher. It is also the belief of the Board that teacher evaluation will assist teachers in the realization of their full potential, thereby resulting in the improvement of instruction.

The Board is responsible for maintaining a Teacher Evaluation Policy for the purpose of establishing standards of performance for teachers and the determination of teacher performance in respect of these standards. A comprehensive evaluation process will enhance professional growth and confidence which will mutually benefit both the teachers and our students.

The Board believes in an evaluation process which evaluates the performance of every teacher in a fair and just manner. The evaluation of a teacher's performance shall be conducted in an atmosphere of trust, confidence, and support to the greatest extent possible.

The principal is responsible for the implementation of the Teacher Evaluation Policy. Each teacher participating in an evaluation program shall be made aware of the process and criteria prior to the commencement of the evaluation.

The classroom performance of teachers provides the basis for making decisions regarding tenure, transfer, or termination.

Guidelines

In evaluating teacher performance, the following procedures will apply.

1. All teachers will participate in an evaluation of their performance as the need is identified.
 - 1.1. Teachers on a temporary contract exceeding six month's duration will receive an evaluation prior to the expiration of their contract.
 - 1.2. Teachers newly appointed will receive an evaluation in their first nine months of employment which will determine eligibility for continued employment.
 - 1.3. Teachers may request, in writing, an evaluation of their performance if the request is made by February 1.
 - 1.3.1 In the event that the teacher does not request an evaluation by February 1, the decision to undertake the evaluation shall be at the discretion of the administrator.
 - 1.3.2 When a request is received from a teacher, the evaluation shall commence within one month of receipt of the request.
 - 1.4 Notwithstanding the above, the principal may initiate an evaluation of any teacher's performance at any time.
 - 1.4.1 A teacher identified by the Principal will be notified in writing prior to the commence of the evaluation.
 - 1.5 Each teacher inclusive of any evaluations conducted as per 1.1 – 1.4 above shall be evaluated once every five years.
2. Each teacher who is participating in an evaluation of their performance shall be apprised of the process and criteria prior to the commencement of the evaluation.
 - 2.1 Teachers new to the school shall receive a teacher evaluation guidebook which will summarize the process and criteria.
 - 2.2 The evaluator shall hold an introductory meeting with either small groups of teachers or individual teachers to recap the evaluation policy and clarify each teacher's understanding of the expectations for their performance.

- 2.3 Each evaluator and teacher shall endeavor to establish a climate of trust and respect.
- 2.4 Teachers who are being evaluated shall strive to make improvements to their performance and clarify their understanding of suggestions on an ongoing basis.
- 3 An evaluation of a teacher's performance will include the following.
 - 3.1 A minimum of three classroom observations and post-conferences.
 - 3.1.1 Whenever possible, periods chosen for observation should not occur during the week prior to Christmas.
 - 3.1.2 The teacher shall be advised of the first visitation schedule in advance and the teacher may be advised in advance of the remaining visits.
 - 3.1.3 The evaluator will observe the teacher through a minimum of one complete lesson during each visit unless the teacher is otherwise notified.
 - 3.1.4 The evaluator shall complete an observation report to be discussed promptly at a post-conference. This report shall: summarize the observations made in respect of criteria; and contain suggestions and/or comments.
 - 3.2 Prior to April 30, the evaluator shall complete a final report of the teacher's performance. The report will identify the following.
 - 3.2.1 The teacher's assignment, professional experience and training, and any discrepancies among them.
 - 3.2.2 All observation dates.
 - 3.2.3 A summary of performance as outlined in the Observation Reports.
 - 3.2.4 The evaluator's opinion of the teacher's overall performance with a statement indicating that the teacher's performance is either less than satisfactory or meets expectations.
 - 3.2.5 This report shall be presented as a draft, 48 hours in advance, to the teacher and the teacher and principal shall discuss the draft report in the company of a third person, if the teacher chooses.
 - 3.2.6 A final report shall be signed by the teacher indicating both receipt and acknowledgement of placement on her/his personnel file. The teacher shall have the right to submit to the evaluator written commentary on the report which shall be filed with all copies of the report.
- 4 Supervisory support shall be provided to a teacher who is experiencing difficulties.
 - 4.1 This support could be in the form of a supervisory visit with a pre-conference followed by a classroom observation and a post-conference.

- 4.1.1 The teacher shall be consulted as to her/his views on whether a teacher or an administrator would conduct the supervisory visit.
- 4.1.2 The teacher shall be advised of the visitation schedule in advance.
- 4.1.3 The visit shall result in specific recommendations that are designed to improve the instructional expertise of the teacher.
- 4.1.4 A written summary of each visit shall be prepared by the Supervisor. This summary will describe the pre-conference focus, classroom observation, and post-conference recommendations. Further support, if necessary, will be indicated. A copy of the written summary will be placed on the teacher's Personnel File with a second copy being retained by the Supervisor.
- 4.2 This support could also be in the form of an interclass visit by the teacher.
 - 4.2.1 The teacher shall be advised of the opportunity to observe another teacher in advance.
 - 4.2.2 The visit shall be designed to assist the teacher to make the appropriate modifications to her/his teaching.
- 4.3 This support could also be in the form of a directed in-service opportunity.
- 5 Notwithstanding the above, a teacher who wishes to appeal an evaluation must do so in writing to the Board of Education.
 - 5.1 The letter of appeal must be received within fifteen days after receipt of the final report.
 - 5.2 The letter of appeal must state specific reason(s) consideration should be given.
 - 5.3 The Board of Education will review the evaluation.
 - 5.3.1 The Board may rule the evaluation will stand or grant another evaluation to being within three months of completion of the first.
 - 5.3.2 The Board shall advise the teacher of any subsequent actions as a result of the appeal within fifteen days after receipt of the request.
- 6 Criteria to be considered in an evaluation of a teacher's performance include the following.
 - 6.1 Preparation for Teaching
 - 6.1.1 Adequate knowledge of the subject matter is evident.
 - 6.1.1.1 The teacher facilitates the accurate acquisition of information.
 - 6.1.1.2 The teacher can respond informatively to student questions regarding the subject matter.
 - 6.1.2 Individual differences are taken into account.
 - 6.1.2.1 The teacher is aware of exceptional students.
 - 6.1.2.2 Consideration is given to exceptional students' needs.

- 6.1.3 Program goals are consistent with provincially and locally-developed curriculum.
 - 6.1.3.1 Program overviews make reference to the curriculum.
 - 6.1.3.2 Lessons reflect the curriculum objectives.
- 6.1.4 Units are adequately developed.
 - 6.1.4.1 Units follow a logical sequence.
- 6.1.5 Lesson objectives are organized and are at varying levels of learning.
 - 6.1.5.1 Lessons are focused around what students are expected to learn.
 - 6.1.5.2 Over the course of a unit lesson objectives address a variety of levels of complexity from knowledge through evaluation.
- 6.1.6 Materials are prepared and available when needed.
 - 6.1.6.1 Resources are used in a timely fashion.
- 6.2 Classroom Organization/Climate
 - 6.2.1 Classroom is physically organized for instruction.
 - 6.2.1.1 Furniture and material placement enhance instruction.
 - 6.2.2 Classroom climate promotes or enhances learning.
 - 6.2.2.1 The teacher shows interest in and concern for the student.
 - 6.2.2.2 Preventative classroom management techniques are used.
 - 6.2.2.3 The teacher strives to build positive relationships with students.
 - 6.2.2.4 Displays of student work, where appropriate, are evident.
- 6.3 Classroom Management
 - 6.3.1 Expectations for student behaviour are delineated.
 - 6.3.1.1 Students are aware of classroom rules.
 - 6.3.1.2 Efficient classroom routines are established and students handle routine tasks or procedures smoothly.
 - 6.3.2 Misbehaviour is addressed appropriately.
 - 6.3.2.1 Logical consequences are used.
 - 6.3.2.2 The teacher uses appropriate judgment when dealing with disruption.
 - 6.3.3 Consistency and fairness are exhibited.
 - 6.3.3.1 Expectations are consistent.
 - 6.3.4 Mutual respect is developed and maintained.
 - 6.3.4.1 The teacher models and encourages politeness.
 - 6.3.4.2 The teacher reacts constructively to students' feelings and attitudes.
 - 6.3.4.3 Displays of student work, where appropriate, are evident.
- 6.4 Instructional Techniques
 - 6.4.1 Effective use is made of instructional time.
 - 6.4.1.1 Lesson objectives are accomplished.
 - 6.4.1.2 Lesson pace is appropriate for learners.
 - 6.4.1.3 The teacher handles transitions smoothly.
 - 6.4.1.4 Activities are available for students who complete work early.

- 6.4.2 Instructional strategies or techniques are varied when suitable.
- 6.4.3 Learning expectations are communicated to students when appropriate.
 - 6.4.3.1 The teacher shares the objective and the purpose of the lesson.
- 6.4.4 Students are focused on the lesson.
 - 6.4.4.1 High on-task behaviour is evident.
 - 6.4.4.2 Motivational techniques are incorporated.
 - 6.4.4.3 Student interests are taken into account.
- 6.4.5 Concepts are developed appropriately.
 - 6.4.5.1 Analogies, models, manipulatives etc. are used.
 - 6.4.5.2 Critical attributes of concepts are taught.
 - 6.4.5.3 Provision for transfer of previous content to new content is made.
- 6.5 Assessment of Learning
 - 6.5.1 Expectations for student performance are communicated clearly.
 - 6.5.2 Evaluation criteria are defined to students and parents. Student progress is assessed on a regular and frequent basis.
 - 6.5.2.1 Prompt feedback is provided to students on notebooks and assignments.
 - 6.5.2.2 The results of assessments are used to diagnose learner abilities and needs.
 - 6.5.3 Accurate student records are maintained.
 - 6.5.4 Student grades are based on a large variety of student work.
 - 6.5.4.1 A variety of methods are used.
 - 6.5.4.2 Assessment instruments are relevant.
 - 6.5.5 Student progress is communicated effectively to parents.
 - 6.5.5.1 Parents are apprised of student progress in a timely manner.
 - 6.5.5.2 The teacher reports factual, well documented information to parents.
- 6.6 Professional Qualities
 - 6.6.1 The teacher establishes and maintains effective, respectful, and ethical working relationships with pupils, parents, colleagues, and others in the educational community.
 - 6.6.2 The teacher demonstrates a professional attitude towards constructive criticism.
 - 6.6.3 The teacher demonstrates an awareness of current developments in education.

Summary of Teacher Evaluation Criteria

Criteria to be considered in an evaluation of a teacher's performance include the following.

Preparation for Teaching

- Adequate knowledge of the subject matter is evident.
- Individual differences are taken into account.
- Program goals are consistent with provincially and locally-developed curriculum.
- Units are adequately developed.
- Lesson objectives are organized and are at varying levels of learning.
- Materials are prepared and available when needed.

Classroom Organization/Climate

- Classroom is physically organized for instruction.
- Classroom climate promotes or enhances learning.

Classroom Management

- Expectations for student behaviour are delineated.
- Misbehaviour is addressed appropriately.
- Consistency and fairness are exhibited.
- Mutual respect is developed and maintained.

Instructional Techniques

- Effective use is made of instructional time.
- Instructional strategies or techniques are varied when suitable.
- Learning expectations are communicated to students when appropriate.
- Students are focused on the lesson.
- Concepts are developed appropriately.
- Effective questioning strategies are used.
- Students are engaged in relevant activities.
- Opportunities for practice are provided.
- Opportunities for review are provided.
- Student performance is monitored as students engage in activities.
- Instruction is closed appropriately.

Assessment of Learning

- Expectations for student performance are communicated clearly.
- Evaluation criteria are defined to students and parents. Student progress is assessed on a regular and frequent basis.
- Accurate student records are maintained.
- Student grades are based on a large variety of student work.
- Student progress is communicated effectively to parents.

Professional Qualities

- The teacher establishes and maintains effective, respectful, and ethical working relationships with pupils, parents, colleagues, and others in the educational community.
- The teacher demonstrates a professional attitude towards constructive criticism.
- The teacher demonstrates an awareness of current developments in education.

Teachers are given a final rating of either “less than satisfactory” or “meets expectations.”

Script Taking

Evaluators may choose to employ the use of script taking during a classroom observation visit. Using that technique involves taking notes about everything that happens in the classroom during a specific period of time. The evaluator writes as quickly as possible, recording observations of the classroom set-up, what the teacher and students are doing, as well as notes about how well the classroom is functioning. The detailed script that results is very useful in providing specific examples to teachers during the post-conference session. The very detailed information would also prove useful in the event that a teacher must be disciplined or, in the worst case scenario, terminated.

An example of a script tape is included below.

	Date: _____ # of students in the Classroom: _____	
	Teacher Name: _____	
Time	Observations	Notes
9:28	Spelling test - pin drop quiet. All focused. Remember - just a pre-test	
	Room is fabulous Cosy corner furniture from home, books to read, math display - visual rules up, super stars, monitors, grammar fast facts, displays outside	
	Day plans being used	
	Fold them up see who's group quickest neatest Everyone glance at board if you're not sure Sentence something with computer Group - we are working on diet, look up words, then see diet sign, First guide words top of p., if you look up p. 266 First word see on left hand side impolite Very first word on page see in last word on page Find all words very important, word we're looking for on page Entry word Use guide words to find that word (kids practicing)	Great use of voice ? Scan for on task in desks

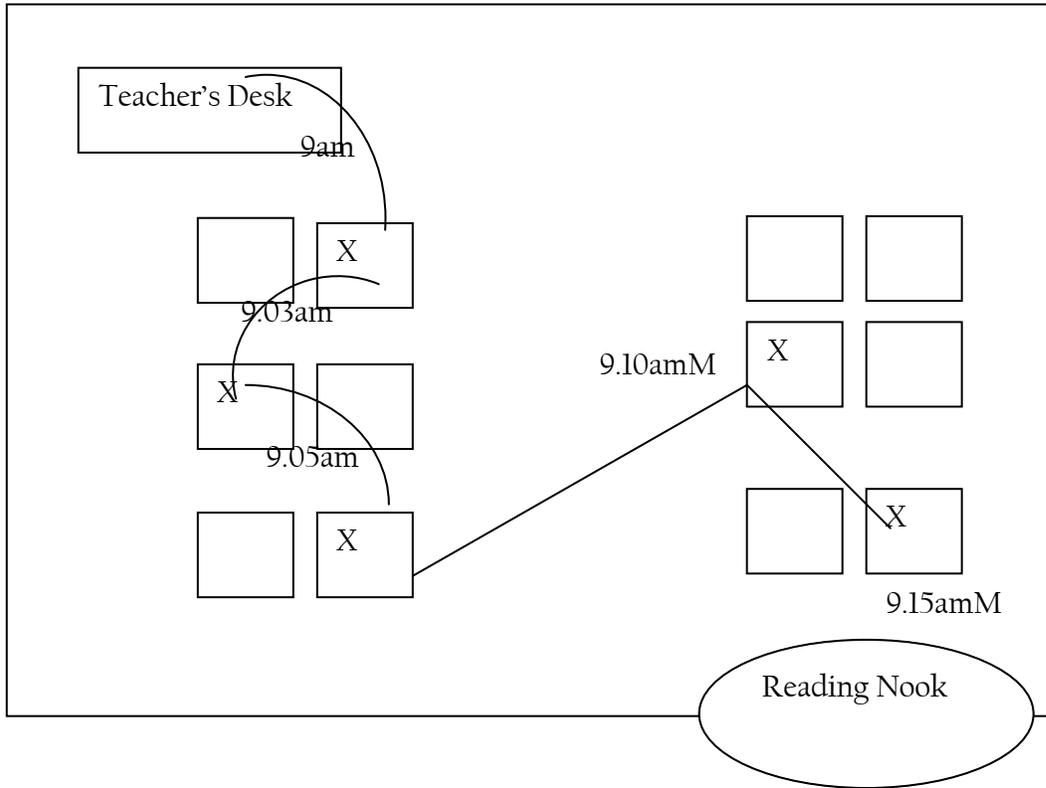
9:40	<p>Are u using words closing book with finger in it use your words what p. 276 Very good watch me for more first of all (i) I know I need to go to I Working so well me class</p> <p>Parts of speech nouns, adverbs, what part of s is intrude (verb) right there what part of speech is it tells us how to pronounce what type of word what's next</p>	Coming in and out
9:43	scan	
9:44	<p>Look at words if word intrude (scan) What's other guide word, now I have a column, which part of speech, don't have to guess right there, what other forms (intruded, intruding) Second word to look up, there you go, hints</p> <p>Scan ... N sit down in your desk pls.</p>	Guided practice
9:47	<p>Not an option I need it to do word of the day</p>	Move?
9:50	<p>Word on these before word of the day Let's get on track Extra ticket for good guess</p>	<p>+ R</p> <p>Think about? doing some more examples right thee with you, then practice an old skill</p>

Teacher Evaluation Tool Sample Two

Classroom Observation Technique – Mapping Teacher Movement

Another tool that is useful for classroom observations is a map of their movements during a specific period of time. This tool provides a visual demonstration for teachers so that they can actually see how they move in the classroom.

To create this tool, the principal draws a map of the classroom, showing the location of the teacher's and student desks. The principal then draws the teacher's movements, noting specific time intervals, as shown below.



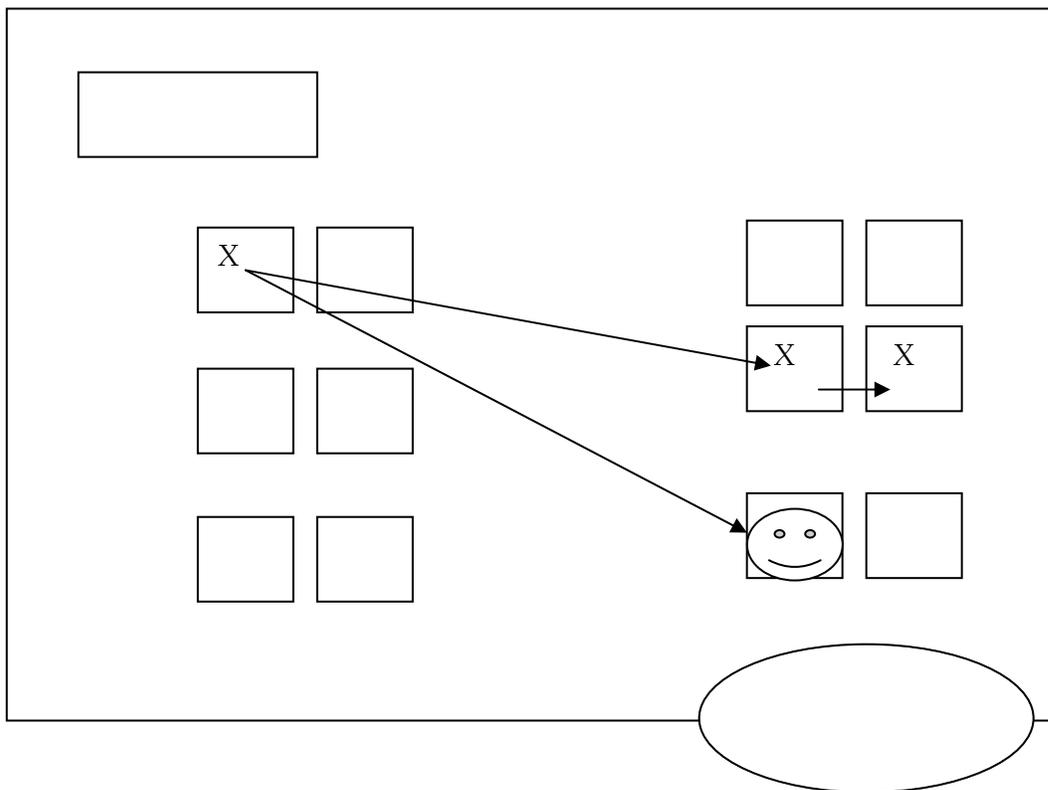
Code: _____ teacher movement x teacher stops and talks to student

() time of monitoring

Teacher Evaluation Tool Sample Three

Classroom Observation Technique – Mapping Student Movement

A similar tool can also be used to map student movement, and is particularly useful for tracking the movement of one student with whom the teacher is experiencing difficulty.

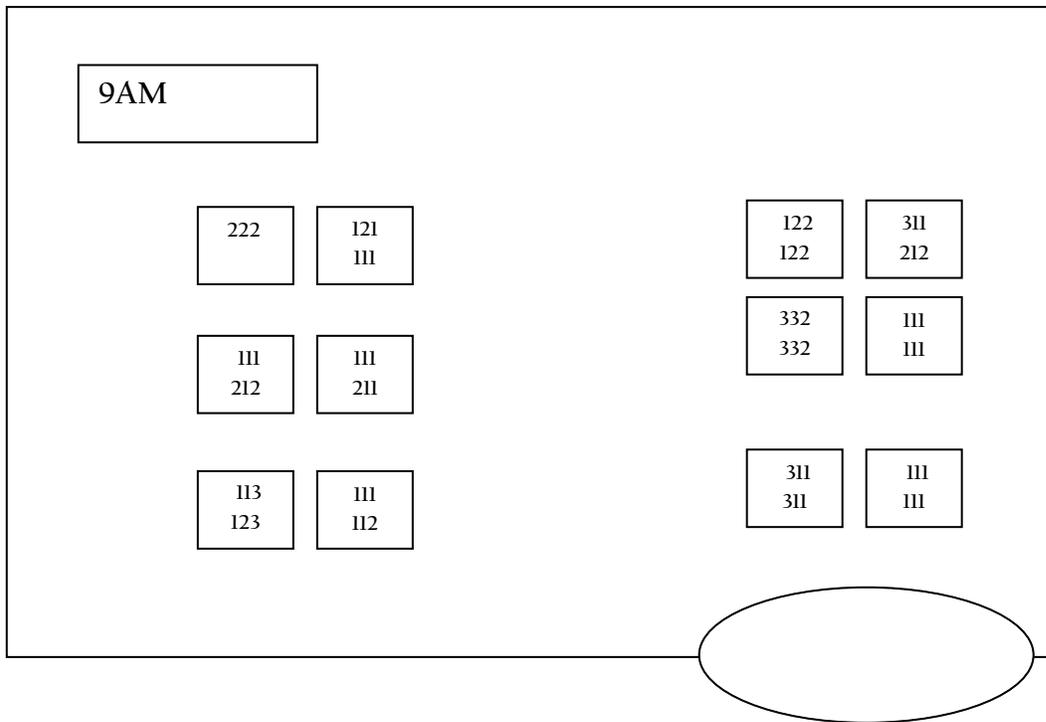


Code: _____ student movement x disturbing other students

Teacher Evaluation Tool Sample Four

Classroom Observation Technique – Showing Student Attention

Principals may also choose to use a classroom map to demonstrate how students are responding to a teacher’s techniques. For this exercise, create a code, such as that shown below. The principal then scans the room every couple of minutes and shows what the students are doing at those times, as demonstrated in the example below.



Code: 1 = at task 2 = gazing, doodling 3 = talking 4 = out of seat
 Scan 1: 9.15 Scan 2: 9.20 Scan 3: 9.30 Scan 4: 9.37 Scan 5: 9.45 Scan 6: 9.55

Teacher Observation Report Sample One

Teacher Name:

Date/Time of Visit: October 9, 2001, 9:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

Subject Area: Language Arts

Grade: 5/6

No. of Pupils: 9

Pre-Conference Focus (if applicable):

[teacher name] and I reviewed the school's Teacher Evaluation Policy at a meeting held September 25, 2001.

Post-Conference Observations, Commendations, and/or Recommendations:

Preparation for Teaching

[teacher name], it was clearly evident that you were well prepared for your lessons. Your day plans outline the subject, the method you plan to use and any resources you will need. Student materials are laid out in sequential order and easy to access.

Of particular note is the individual planning you have completed for the different levels of learning that exist in your classroom. This planning practice is exemplary and certainly benefits your students.

Well done!

Classroom Climate / Organization

Your classroom is a wonderful environment for your students. Displays adorn the walls and a reading corner reflects a cozy, caring atmosphere. Displays reflect a variety of curricular areas; language arts, math, and science just to name a few. These displays are changed frequently and definitely support our students' visual learning skills. Student desks are arranged in groups to support group interaction and individual student work when it is required.

You continuously thank students for a job well done. It is so clear that already, this early in the year, you have established a positive relationship with each one of your students. This technique combined with your effective use of voice, proximity, and ‘with-it-ness’ promote a classroom atmosphere that certainly promotes learning.

In summary, you have established a warm and caring classroom climate that focuses on quality academic learning time. An exceptional climate exists. Bravo.

Classroom Management

You are a model of kind politeness for your students and they respond in the same caring manner - not an easy task with this challenging group of students. Your students are clearly aware of the rules and routines in your classroom. Efficient routines have been established and students handle procedures smoothly. For example, students know where to hand in their materials for assessment without question or hesitation. Misbehaviour is minor, when it exists at all.

Congratulations on being consistent with your expectations and for using logical consequences to limit any disruption.

Instructional Techniques

[student name], you possess talents of an experienced teacher even though I know you are early in your career. Your lesson presentation was flawless. You stated the objective of your lesson and gave your students a process. (“We are going to be working on words in the dictionary, and I’m going to show you a way to find words more quickly”). You followed with instructional input and then gave the students an opportunity to practice the method you explained. Students were then asked to complete seatwork that was appropriate to your lesson. Clearly, effective use was made of instructional time.

Throughout your lesson you ensured students were focused on the tasks at hand and the critical attributes of the dictionary pages were taught.

Professional Qualities

[teacher’s name], you are simply a delight to have with us at our school. Your organizational talent, as well as the genuine care and concern you have for your students is exceptional. Your response to constructive criticism truly reflects your desire to be the best you possibly can be for your kids.

As well, the extra curricular work you complete for the benefit of all the students in the school is second to none. Your coordination of the school's duathalon, the time you spend coaching volleyball, and the extra curricular fieldtrips are all valued by students and the general population of the community at large.

I consider it a privilege to be able to work with you.

Principal's signature

Date of Conference

I acknowledge receipt of this report:

Teacher's signature

Date of Conference

Teacher Observation Report Sample Two

Teacher Name:

Date/Time of Visit: March 14, 2001 9:15 a.m. to 9:55 a.m.

Subject Area: Language Arts

Grade: 4

No. of Pupils: 8

Pre-Conference Focus (if applicable):

Post-Conference Observations, Commendations, and/or Recommendations:

Preparation for Teaching

As usual, your day plans are complete and outline your objects and your activities for the day and the week.

Classroom Climate / Organization

I look forward to discussing my observations with you during our post-conference. Your lesson presentation is sound. You state the objective and purpose of your lesson and then you review previous concepts with your students. After the review you offer new instruction input. In this lesson you introduced another capitalization rule.

[teacher's name], be conscious to distribute your questions to all you students and be sure to enlist wait time prior to getting a response. As well, you need to add the technique of sustaining student responses to your repertoire. We will discuss this technique during our post-conference.

I also think that you could be making better use of instructional time. You can clearly deliver quality instruction and your students would benefit from more instructional time with you. The students in your classroom have many, many learning challenges and a more rigorous curriculum would benefit their needs.

I would recommend that you incorporate ore elements of your language arts program on a daily basis. For example, vocabulary, grammar, and reading instruction/comprehension could be delivered daily, or every second day. The time students spend completing seat work at their desk could have been more productive. (55 minutes as indicated in your day plans).

You clearly know how to teach and your students have much to gain from your abilities.

Principal's signature

Date of Conference

I acknowledge receipt of this report:

Teacher's signature

Date of Conference

Teacher Observation Report Sample Three

** this is a sample report for the same teacher as in sample two, but later in the school year. The date of this observation is much later than would normally be the case; the observation took place extraordinarily late in the school year because of the principal's concerns about the teacher's suitability for the school.

Teacher Name:

Date/Time of Visit: May 7, 2001, 9:15 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.

Subject Area: Language Arts

Grade: 4

No. of Pupils: 8

Pre-Conference Focus (if applicable):

Post-Conference Observations, Commendations, and/or Recommendations:

Instructional Techniques

[teacher name], again during this observation as in my last, I think that you could be making better use of instructional time. You can clearly deliver quality instruction and your students would benefit from more challenging instruction from you. As we discussed in our last post-conference, the students were being taught at their frustration level. Students were very able to complete the tasks you had planned for them. They were practicing tasks rather than learning new material.

As well, the pace of your lesson could be quicker. A brief review to see if students already know the content would allow for more time spent introducing new and challenging material. For example, during one lesson you had the students repeat the words after you and then you asked the students to make sentences from the words. The students completed this task easily. This would have been a good 5 minute review, rather than the majority of the lesson.

Some thoughts for your consideration.

1. Students do not need to copy problems from the board unless you have a specific objective in mind (for example, the copying becomes the handwriting practice for the day).
2. One student had 11 errors on his spelling test. Are his guardians aware of his lack of success?
3. While you were working with groups, other students [names] were not completing work in a timely fashion. You need to scan these students frequently to ensure they are on task. As well, I would recommend that [name] not be allowed to move about the room, and [name] would be better situated closer to your instructional area.

Teacher observation report page two

Assessment of Learning

[teacher's name], I feel the decline in our working relationship is impacting your teaching performance.

During this observation visit, I perused students' Problem Solving Books. [name] book had pages that had not been assessed, and he had corrections that had not been completed (April 4 and 9). [name] book had not been assessed May 3 and 4 and she also had corrections that had not been completed. [name] book had not been assessed May 1 and 4. [name] has a money book that she has been working in. There are errors on the first, second and fifth pages of this book and there is no assessment in this book at all.

I know you are aware of how important it is for your students to receive prompt feedback so that the results of assessments are used to diagnose learner abilities and needs.

At our March 6 staff meeting we discussed consistency for our students. I spoke of the need to have similar expectations for students' writing in all subject areas. (for example, science exercise books should reflect correct punctuation, capitalization, etc). Student home school communications are not reflecting this standard in your room. [name] has spelling errors in his entries and so does [name]. [name] entries are very irregular.

Finally, your room does not reflect the vigorous learning atmosphere that it did earlier in the year. The motivational posters that were posted in September still exist.

Summary

[name], you are clearly an educator with many strengths. Your lesson delivery is sound. There is no question that you have the ability to make a difference for your students, yet I feel that your response to my constructive criticism is influencing your performance.

We need to work together to address the concerns outlined in this observation report.

Principal's signature

Date of Conference

I acknowledge receipt of this report:

Teacher's signature

Date of Conference

Teacher Evaluation Report Sample

Teacher Name:

Date:

This report form is used by the principal, school name. This report is distributed to the Board of Education, the teacher's Personnel file, and the teacher.

Assignment: Grade 4/5

Professional Experience: 4.8 years as of April 30, 2000

Professional Training:

Circumstances of the Assignment

[teacher name] is currently completing her fifth year as an intermediate teacher at our school. Her class enrolls 18 students.

Our school is operated by [name] First Nation. The school follows the prescribed curriculum of the Ministry of Education, and has been a part of the FNSEA school assessment project in 1999/2000.

The school enrolls 126 pupils from preschool three year old to grade seven. The school has a staff of nine teachers and support staff of five. Within this contingent of support staff, [name] works with our student services coordinator to offer individual to students with special needs.

This evaluation report is based on a pre-evaluation conference on October 20, 1999, observations on November 4, 1999, January 17, 2000 and April 13, 2000.

I acknowledge receipt of this report:

Teacher's signature

Date of Conference

Terms used are: meets expectations of evaluation policy or less than satisfactory
Page one

Preparation for Teaching

[teacher name]'s planning and organization are exemplary. Her long range plans are indicative of the time and thought she brings to all aspects of her teaching. Plans outline monthly objectives for each subject area and specific objectives are sequenced to build upon existing skills. Both are consistent with provincial curriculum requirements. Her plans are enhanced with the inclusion of resources she is planning to use. She also includes plans for evaluating her students which incorporate a wide variety of evaluative techniques. Of special merit in her plans are the inclusion of relevant outcomes that are related to First Nations curriculum content. Lesson plans are well written and organized. They address a variety of levels of complexity from basic knowledge to evaluation. [name] is to be commended for including many strategies to incorporate higher thinking skills. It is evident from observing her teaching that her individual lessons are very well planned. The amount of subject knowledge that she brings to her lessons is apparent by her ability to respond effectively to student's questions. In summary, [name]'s preparation and planning skills are of the highest caliber.

Classroom Organization/Climate

[name]'s classroom is a stimulating and vital environment for her students. She has created an industrious atmosphere where clearly students are thinking and learning. Students' desks are arranged in groups which allow students the opportunity to work both individually and cooperatively. The room and adjoining hallway are adorned with attractive displays that highlight student accomplishments, and the displays are changed on a frequent basis. These displays are always a representation of the fine work her students' accomplish and are often culturally relevant for our First Nation learners. Examples include "peek a boo" maps of provinces with facts presented artistically, poetry samples, research projects, etc. Through consistent use of preventative management techniques such as "positive reinforcement, private dialogue, and proximity, potential behaviour problems are limited. [name] has developed an industrious classroom climate that certainly promotes quality academic learning time.

Classroom Management

[name]'s calm and persistent manner contributes to a classroom atmosphere where little misbehaviour exists. Her students are clearly aware of the rules and routines in the classroom. Students raise hands prior to answering questions, and the use of a "limited countdown" moves students through transitions quickly and effectively. Students know where completed work is deposited. [name] is a model of politeness (thanking students frequently) and because of the rapport she has established with her students there is little

misbehaviour. Logical consequences are used for inappropriate behaviour and the students respond as requested. To summarize, [name]'s management techniques are a very high calibre.

I acknowledge receipt of this report:

Teacher's signature

Date of Conference

Terms used are: meets expectations of evaluation policy or less than satisfactory Page two

Instructional Techniques

[name]’s lessons contain the essential elements of lesson design. The objective and purpose of the lesson is stated and focuses her students’ attention and allows them to see why the lessons are of value. She uses precise terminology to describe the critical attributes of the concepts being taught, and she utilizes a variety of instructional strategies effectively (observed grouping for instruction, use of manipulatives, inquiry, and direct instruction). Lessons are appropriately paced, student attention is focused, and transitions between elements of the lesson occur quickly and quietly. [name] has acted upon recommendation to be conscious to hold all students accountable for work completion and participation. She is developing her skills to regularly scan the entire class for high on task work completion.

[name] questions a wide variety of students, and enlists wait time to ensure the majority of her students are responsible for thinking of the answer. A strength is her ability to challenge students’ thinking with higher level questioning. Students are frequently asked “why” or “what would happen if” questions. Another strength for [name] is the time she takes to develop lessons that are relevant for her students. Student interests and need are regularly taken into account. As an example, [name] has adapted her lessons to meet the needs of her learners. [name] consistently ensure students are engaged in relevant seat work activities and incorporates closure to reinforce the primary concepts of the lesson.

To summarize, it is clear that the repertoire of instructional strengths [name] possesses is positively impacting her students’ learning.

Assessment of Learning

It is clear that [name] places emphasis on encouraging students to produce neat, standardized written work. Student workbooks are complete documents that reflect the high standards that she has set for her students. [name] has taken time to make individual written comments to encourage students to do their best possible work. [name] utilizes a wide variety of assessment techniques in every subject area. Test scores, indication of complete/incomplete work, homework completion, results of daily assignments, research projects, and student self-assessment are a few of the strategies employed. Assessment strategies are relevant and support the letter grades and comments on students’ report cards. [name]’s report cards to parents are well written documents with letter grades that reflect accurate student progress. Letter grades are supported with comprehensive comments that outline student strengths, needs, and goals.

I acknowledge receipt of this report:

Teacher's signature

Date of Conference

Terms used are: meets expectations of evaluation policy or less than satisfactory
Page three

Professional Qualities

[name]'s obvious commitment and dedication toward the best interests of her students is remarkable. She not only accepts constructive criticism, she seeks it because of her desire to be the best educator she can possibly be for her students' benefit. The degree of professionalism [name] demonstrates is of the highest caliber. She has attended pro-d workshops and in-services to demonstrate her awareness of current developments in education. Of special note is [name]'s participation as a presenter at the FNSEA conference.

Summary

It has been a pleasure to work with [name] the past four years. She is an extremely talented educator with exemplary planning and solid instructional techniques that benefit the students in her care.

It is a pleasure to confirm that [name]'s performance is meeting all expectations of the First Nation's evaluation policy.

I acknowledge receipt of this report:

Teacher's signature

Date of Conference

Terms used are: meets expectations of evaluation policy or less than satisfactory

Page four

Appendix Four: Teacher Orientations

An effective orientation is critical to ensure that new staff people are adequately prepared for their role within the school. It is also important to ensure that the orientation takes place before the school year begins. Otherwise, the need for a thorough orientation could become overlooked in the midst of the other back-to-school demands.

Ideally, the principal will have an orientation meeting with the new staff people. At that time, all relevant documents should be provided, including the staff handbook, written school policies, supervision schedules, teacher evaluation forms, and other materials important for each school.

Rather than expecting new staff people read to the materials themselves, the principal should instead take the time to go through the most critical documents page-by-page. Doing so will allow the principal to highlight particularly pertinent items and make sure that the information is clearly understood. Also, having reviewed the materials together will be helpful in the unfortunate event that a difficulty arises in the future.

Included below is a sample agenda for an orientation meeting with new employees. Also included is a checklist that can be provided to new employees as evidence that the necessary materials were provided.

Orientation Meetings – Sample Agenda

1. The mission/vision/philosophy of the school
2. Expectations
 - Community expectations for the school
 - Expectations for teachers (including items such as providing opportunities for parental involvement, reporting to parents, and practices related to student attendance)
3. Staff handbook and school policies – including a page-by-page review of policies, forms, and important procedures
4. Teacher on Call policies and preparations teachers are to make for teachers substitutes
5. Gym routines, locking doors, and other critical administrative matters
6. Expectations related to course planning and overviews, including when they should be ready

7. A description of other relevant school programs, such as home reading program, extra-curricular programs, etc.
8. Review of the school's teacher evaluation policy

Sample Orientation Checklist

As a new employee, we would like to acquaint you with several aspects of your job and our organization, in order that your employment with us will be as rewarding as possible. All employees, upon joining our staff, will be asked to participate in an orientation. The following checklist is provided to serve as a guide to that orientation.

ISSUANCE OF SCHOOL MATERIALS	√	RECEIVED
A. School Handbook		<input type="checkbox"/>
B. School Staff Handbook		<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Building keys		<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Other _____		<input type="checkbox"/>
 INFORMATION REVIEW	 √	 DISCUSSED
Tour of building/facilities/introduction to staff		<input type="checkbox"/>
Hours of work/Overtime		<input type="checkbox"/>
Payday, Deposit of pay, Pay stub		<input type="checkbox"/>
Contract/terms of employment		<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety - emergency procedures, reporting	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Dress code		<input type="checkbox"/>
 POLICY REVIEW	 √	 DISCUSSED
Performance Review (Staff Handbook)		<input type="checkbox"/>
Benefits and insurance		<input type="checkbox"/>
Vacation Procedures (Staff Handbook)		<input type="checkbox"/>
Sick Days and Leave of Absence		<input type="checkbox"/>
Paid Holidays (Contract, Staff Handbook)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Grievance Procedure (School Handbook)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
 SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY REVIEW	 √	 DISCUSSED
Goals and Objectives (Staff Handbook)		<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Discipline (School Handbook)		<input type="checkbox"/>
Relationships within NTIB/other organizations		<input type="checkbox"/>

I have received the items listed and discussed the topics outlined, and I am satisfied with my orientation.

Signature of employee _____