EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITY Caucus

Sept. 18, 2008

Chairman Grimm and members of the task force:

Thank you very much for providing us the opportunity to submit our recommendations regarding the best possible funding strategy for K-12 Education in Washington State.

We don't think that anyone would argue that Washington State Education is fully funded; however, EOC contends that merely increasing the amount of money in education will not resolve the gross inequities experienced by historically marginalized students. In our position paper of July 8, 2008, EOC highlighted the fact that there is a lack of alignment among Washington State's Constitutional and Basic Education goals and where and how funding is currently directed. We asserted that Washington State is funding education with a goal of "survival" rather than aligning our funding to support education with the goal of building Global Citizens.

In that paper, EOC described education with the later goal (building Global Citizens) as a system which

- "...emphasizes interdependence and cooperation among differences/color, gender, status, language, physical feature, culture, values, worldviews, national origin and conflict resolution."
- Includes "...students performing differently are seen as assets, creative problem solvers, entrepreneurs, visionaries, artists, philosophers, and philanthropists."
- Is a process including "...continual learning - being open to concepts and principles which lie outside your frame of reference - communication, self-care, relationship and engagement within all facets of the community including the environment would be given priority and drive funding."

Attached is a document outlining a model used with extraordinary success (see appendix) since 1980 in Canada. The "Building Communities of Hope" model provides a comprehensive education that engages ALL students and the communities of which they are a part. It provides opportunities for all community members to actively participate in the broader global community facilitating a dynamic, participatory democratic education. It maximizes human potential, developing the skills, attitudes and capabilities necessary to maintain and expand the vitality of individuals, communities, cultures, and economies. Further, it nurtures the understanding that people can see things differently and that those differences merit acknowledgement, respect and acceptance rather than disregard, disinterest and diminishment. It is a model of education which emphasizes the attributes which EOC described as the process of Global Education. The model has four key components as its framework:

1. Learning Program

2. Family and Community Partnerships

3. Integrated Services

4. Community Development

The two most powerful features of this model are community empowerment and service integration. In the model, policy development, program implementation and evaluation cannot occur without the community. The approach is integrated ensuring that the services and supports students need, which cut across the boundaries of schools, human service agencies, and different departments and levels of government, are available within or linked to the school.

We, the members of the Equal Opportunity Caucus ask that the Joint Committee on Basic Education Funding move forward with both courage and vision by adopting and funding a transformative, empowering consumer (community, parent and student) driven model of basic education in the State of Washington. It is and has been our experience that the top down accountability and reform model, presently in place, has failed to properly address or significantly impact the persistent and ongoing expressed needs and concerns of the above mentioned stakeholders. What has transpired over the past decades has simply been a "reinventions of the wheel", with no meaningful change or progress. The present model has failed to effectively serve ALL the populations of the state.

What is needed is a total revamping of the structure and support of the Washington's basic education system so that it is truly accountable and responsive to communities, parents and students.

To this end we highly recommend and put forward a model that has proven advantages and has resulted in extraordinary success in Canada since 1980.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Kodama, Chair
The Equitable Opportunities in Education Caucus

EQUITABLE OPPORTUNITY Caucus

# Recommendations to the Basic Education Finance Task Force

July 8, 2008

## 1.0 Introduction

Sen. McAuliffe dropped a courageous bill last session, asking for the State to start from scratch and completely rewrite education law. In our proposal, we are inviting you to do something equally courageous.

We are not going to ask you to fund a silo approach; rather we are going to ask you to change the driving principles behind funding to provide equitable opportunity for all students.

We have inherited an education model that never included everybody to begin with. Property rights and a business approach rather than human rights and student potential have traditionally been the distinguishing factors in the development of education funding. (See Harris 1993)

Although we have existing Washington State Law which would suggest human rights and student potential be the underlying principles of funding, our State education funding structure has never been built on these principles. Take a look at our State constitution and the definition of basic education.

Washington State Constitution: ARTICLE IX Education

> Section 1: Preamble
>
> It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of **all children** residing within its borders, **without distinction or preference on account of race, color, caste, or sex**.

The Constitution clearly articulates our State's position on human rights and student potential, but this position was not fully articulated in the previous definition of basic education. Rep. Santos saw the need to more fully include, articulate and sponsor additional language that aligned the definition with the intent of the constitution.

Definition of Basic Education RCW 28A. 150.210

> The goal of the Basic Education Act for the schools of the state of Washington set forth in this chapter shall be to provide students with the opportunity to become responsible and respectful global citizens, to contribute to their economic well-being and that of their families and communities, to explore

and understand different perspectives, and to enjoy productive and satisfying lives. Additionally, the state of Washington intends to provide for a public school system that is able to evolve and adapt in order to better focus on strengthening the educational achievement of all students, which includes high expectations for all students and gives all students the opportunity to achieve personal and academic success. (June, 2007)

Before alignment, lawsuits were the only recourse citizens had to bridge the gap between constitutional intent and legislative rule. Unfortunately, most of the education lawsuits which have challenged the system have been upheld by the courts, but not enforced by the State. For example:

Seattle School District v. State 90 Wn @d 476, 585 P. 2d 71, at pgs. 517-51

> "The State's **constitutional duty goes beyond mere reading, writing and arithmetic.** It also embraces broad educational opportunities needed in the contemporary setting to **equip our children for their role as citizens** and as potential competitors in today's market..."

You have heard testimony that more than 80% of basic education dollars go to teacher salaries and administrative costs. This means what you are really talking about is the 20% or less of the total education dollars which go to the children. This is why what we ALL want is in conflict with what we do. What EOC is advocating for is an approach which would fund 21st Century Education where student potential is the priority.

## 2.0 21st Century Education

In order to visualize the future, it is important to understand where we are. We have a powerful constitution whose intent only recently became part of the definition of basic education. We are in need of a funding system which is driven by the same principle.

EOC is not unique in having identified this need. In the final report from Washington Learns *World Class, Learner Focus, Seamless Education,* Section 3 begins, "A world-class system would prepare today's students to be tomorrow's citizens, capable of competing in the rapidly changing global economy and (while) engaging thoughtfully in communities at home." 2006, p. 16

To illustrate, we are going use a theory of human development created by Dr. Caleb Rosado called Spiral Dynamics. The system of Spiral Dynamics builds on and illuminates Maslow's "hierarchy of needs" to include a level of diversity in thinking called "GlobalView." [1] (See http://rosado.net/spiralhtml Mission: Creating Caring Communities)

In the Spiral Dynamic System, there are eight levels of understanding that drive human development. For the purposes of this paper, we will focus on three levels: Level 1 "SurvivalSense"; Level 5 "StriveDrive"; Level 8 "GlobalView." If we apply this model to our education system, the problem with our funding structure becomes

[1] Dr. Clare Graves created a theory of levels of human existence which Rosado used as the basis for Spiral Dynamics.

clear. Today's education system is being funded at a survival level which in Spiral Dynamics and Maslow is assigned Level 1.

Level 1 SurvivalSense[2]: Applying Spiral Dynamics to our education system, we see education funded at the level of skill building rather than that of fully developing student potential. The focus is on reading and writing which pushes assimilation of all differences in color, gender, status, language, physical feature, culture, values, worldviews, national origin and conflict resolution. Students performing differently are evaluated as deficient, dropout of school and are often pushed into the prison pipeline. At this level, incarceration is funded at a higher percentage than education success.

Level 5 StriveDrive[3]: Even before Rep. Santos rewrote the definition of education, there was a clear goal to empower students toward economic viability. Focusing on this goal fosters competition and an emphasis on differences in color, gender, status, language, physical feature, culture, values, worldviews, national origin and conflict. The economic goal leads to a strong emphasis on math and science, career/technical education and technology. Students performing differently are evaluated as losers and put into minimum wage jobs and subsistence opportunities.

Yet, until recently, economics have not been the driver for education funding in our State. You only need to take a look at the problems with Math to understand the truth in this statement. More recently stakeholders within the education system have been working to see the economic goal more fully implemented. Strong efforts have been made to get more funding in math for teacher training, curriculum redesign, 21st Century assessments etc. At the same time, another stakeholder has managed to obtain funding for career and technical education.

Level 8 GlobalView[4]: EOC believes Level 8 articulates the system identified in Washington Learns. It is the level from which we must fund in order to prepare students to be world-class global citizens, 21st Century Citizens.

Level 8 emphasizes interdependence and cooperation among differences/color, gender, status, language, physical feature, culture, values, worldviews, national origin and conflict. For example, students performing differently are seen as assets, creative problem solvers, entrepreneurs, visionaries, artists, philosophers, and philanthropists. They move comfortably through the ambiguity of learning, being willing to accept there are things in this world which they don't know they don't know. At Level 8 continual learning – being open to concepts and principles which lie outside your frame of reference – communication, self-care, and relationship and engagement within all facets of the community including the environment would be given priority and drive funding.

In order to fund the new definition of education which includes providing students "the opportunity to become respectful global citizens" and to implement the goals of Washington Learns, our education system must be funded at the level of the GlobalView, Level 8.

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[2] The value system of Level 1 is "group bands together to stay alive." http://edu-cyberpg.com/iec/caleb.html

[3] The value system of Level 5 is "entrepreneurial, materialistic, success-driven http://edu-cyberpg.com/iec/caleb.html

[4] The value system of Level 8 is "harmony, holism, spirituality http://edu-cyberpg.com/iec/caleb.html

## 3.0 Recommendations

The new education model would require placing students and their families first, thus tapping into a user friendly system of supports that allow for multiple education pathways. This system would require funding for flexible supports around the student to assist them on their educational journey, instead of placing students into slots according to eligibility by funding silos or to meet ratio requirements. This would transform the current system from a bureaucracy based on funding streams (silo approach) into a public education service.

We recommend that the Basic Education Funding Task Force change the funding formula to fund our education system at Level 8 "GlobalView." We recommend that they create a new framework for funding which is student driven and allows students to work towards becoming global citizens. The funding system would be driven by concepts of interdependence and cooperation that empower, transform, align and connect, motivate, inspire and are sustainable without the imprint of institutional racism and classism.

We are asking you to fund complexity instead of silos in state driven programs.

- We are asking you to fund for the expectation of change – continuous improvement
- We are asking you to fund for interdependence
- We are asking you to fund for cooperation

The students will always be winners in this new system. Indeed, Washington State will always be a winner by funding for global success.

## 4.0 Conclusion

We are not telling you anything which hasn't been said before. In their final report, Washington Learns eloquently put it this way:

> While economic necessity drives these recommendations for education reform, we must never forget that a healthy democracy depends on educating citizens. More than ever before, our education system must prepare world citizens who respect cultural differences, who understand political differences, and who can make informed choices among different policies. Our democracy must be free and strong, and our citizens must be informed and engaged, if we are to set an example for the rest of the world. (2006)

"Today's students arrive at school with greater needs than ever before." (WSPTA Position Paper for Washington Learns, 2006) You have a new piece of clay which you can mold in any way that will lead to higher student potential. We don't have all the answers, and we don't expect you to have all the answers right now. We are simply asking for you to look inside yourselves and envision the greater picture. In their position paper, the PTA discusses the strategies that we need to move to a learner focused education system: a world-class system with parent involvement, community engagement, and equity and access as integral components of the process. Their introduction ends, "Be bold – define basic education in a way that reflects today's world and today's students."

Being a teacher means more than reflection, learning processes, and mentoring. It also means embracing broad educational opportunities needed in the contemporary setting to equip our children for their role as citizens. A teacher's job is to create global citizens rather than merely teach skills such as algebra. With teachers such as these, we believe students will feel valued, respected, motivated, challenged, inspired to stay in school and will know that learning is important, evolving over their lifetimes. These teachers are creating children who will take our place on earth.

Saskatchewan
Education

# Building Communities of Hope

***Best Practices for Meeting the Learning Needs of At-Risk and Indian and Métis Students***

Community Schools Policy and Conceptual Framework

# MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Over the past fifteen years, Saskatchewan's Community Schools have gained a wealth of experience as pioneers in educational innovation for Indian and Métis students and for students living in poverty - at risk. Today, the growing numbers of at risk children in the province, as well as the increasing number of Indian and Metis students are generating a renewed interest in the responsive and comprehensive educational program found in Community Schools.

The framework for Community Schools described in this manual provides direction for educators, families and communities to work together to create the comprehensive, preventive, and empowering learning program required by growing numbers of children. It puts forward a vision where the learning program is supported by the active involvement of parents, community partnerships, integrated health, education, social and justice services, and community development activities. Taken together, these "best practices" enable students to learn, teachers to focus on creating an innovative, relevant and challenging learning program, and parents and the community to contribute both to the school and to their own development.

I am strongly committed to the Community Schools approach to education and ask for your help in implementing it. I invite educators, boards of education, families and community members to work with us in making the vision in this manual a reality. By working together, building on the strengths of communities and sharing resources we can ensure opportunity, learning, and hope for all Saskatchewan's children.

Pat Atkinson

*Pat Atkinson, Minister*
*Saskatchewan Education*

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Building Communities of Hope: Best Practices for Meeting the Learning Needs of At Risk and Indian and Métis Students* was developed with the ideas and commitment of a number of dedicated people in schools, school divisions, and community organizations. Appreciation is sincerely extended to all those involved, including:

- Saskatchewan Community Schools Association
- Prince Albert Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 6
- Prince Albert School Division No. 3
- Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 81
- Regina School Division No. 4
- St. Paul's Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 20
- Saskatoon School Division No. 13
- the Indian and Métis Education Advisory Committee (IMEAC)
- the Steering Committee for Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Children
- the Minister's Working Committee on Integrated School-Linked Services
- Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation

This policy and conceptual framework is based on the strengths and experience of the original seventeen schools in the Community Schools Program (1980). We are indebted to the leadership of the Community Schools, boards of education, staffs, parents and communities involved. Through innovation and partnerships they have pioneered many of the best practices identified in this manual. In addition, this document draws extensively on the literature from the field. References are available in Appendix F.

## *Note:*

The term **"at risk"** is used throughout this manual as a common frame of reference to help educators, human service providers and policy makers to focus their efforts in order to meet more effectively the needs of a specific group of people. It is intended to focus supports and services on the needs of a growing number of Saskatchewan children and families who, for social and economic reasons, face barriers to success in school and life.

In this manual, the term **"parent"** is used to refer to a child's significant care-giver. This may include a child's mother, father, grandparent, aunt, uncle, sister, brother, foster parent or other guardian.

The role and contributions of the **"school"** are discussed throughout this manual. It is recognized that the school is made up of a number of people including teachers, principal, support staff, itinerant professionals, parent and community volunteers and human service staff from partner agencies.

*You are welcome to copy and distribute this manual.*

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I

# INTRODUCTION: BUILDING COMMUNITIES OF HOPE

Today in Saskatchewan, educators are facing immense challenges as they work to meet the learning needs of their students. Growing rates of child and family poverty, increasing family and community instability, and changing family structures are having a profound impact on the needs of students and on the expectations placed on teachers and other school staff. Schools are being asked to carry out many roles in the lives of children that were previously the responsibility of the family or the community.

Students have difficulty learning when they are hungry, emotionally distressed, lack stability and safety in their families and communities, are discriminated against, or when other primary needs are not being met. To remove these barriers to their learning, growing numbers of students require a diverse range of social, health, cultural, justice and other services. As well, if the learning program is to succeed, active and committed parents and stable contributing communities are critical. This understanding of what is needed for at risk students to succeed in school is challenging us to rethink the role of schools, how educational and other services are delivered for children and families, and who must be involved in the process.

The original Community Schools Program was implemented in 1980 to address urban Aboriginal poverty. Since that time, these schools have provided Indian and Métis students with a learning environment and program that is culturally affirming and that respects and reflects their histories, experiences, and educational needs. As well, they have provided innovative, caring and effective responses to the learning needs of students living in poverty in the inner cities of Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert.

Community Schools are founded upon a tradition of community education, which in turn has its roots in community development. Community Schools build strong relationships with their community members and organizations and work closely with families. These close ties serve to improve educational opportunities and programs and to strengthen the communities in which the schools are located. Community Schools recognize that the difficulties children experience in school are often the result of circumstances that originate in the home or the community. Their programs take into account the cultural and socio-economic life experiences of the students and provide the wide range of supports needed for children to learn.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR AT RISK AND INDIAN AND MÉTIS STUDENTS

*Building Communities of Hope: Best Practices for Meeting the Learning Needs of At Risk and Indian and M&is Students* builds on the innovations and successes of the original Community Schools Program to provide the policy, vision, principles and program direction for a revitalized and strengthened model for schools and the delivery of human services. The Community School framework described in this document incorporates a number of best practices that have proven to be highly effective in the education of at risk and Indian and Métis students. Taken together, this comprehensive approach has the potential to create the holistic, preventive, caring and empowering educational environment required by these students and their families.

*Community Schools serve as flagships for educational innovation for at risk and Indian and Métis students by:*

- providing the framework and elements for a **broadened definition of the role of schools** that brings together and **integrates the comprehensive range of supports** and programs that these students need in order to learn;
- creating a learning program and environment that is culturally affirming and that respects and reflects the experiences and realities of students' lives;
- emphasizing strengthened **partnerships** among schools, parents, community members and Indian and Métis groups in education planning and service delivery. The aim is to create a **shared sense of responsibility** for the education and well-being of children and to develop **opportunities for Indian and Métis peoples to have greater participation in decision-making** in public education;
- emphasizing **community development** and **community empowerment,** recognizing that the success of the learning program is largely determined by factors outside the school which affect the student, and that the school has a role to play in addressing those external factors;
- providing a **support role to neighbouring schools,** and **leadership in the province** in educational innovation for Indian, Métis and at risk students; and
- providing a mechanism for ongoing **planning and evaluation** within the school which will ensure the **continuous renewal and maximum effectiveness** of programs.

## WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD COMMUNITIES OF HOPE

The vision, philosophy and program elements outlined in this manual provide a picture of what schools can be and how human services can be delivered more effectively so that at risk and Indian and Métis students are able to succeed in school - a framework for creating learning communities of hope. **The achievement of this vision requires the commitment, support and shared resources of boards of education, educators, parents, community members, human service agencies, and the provincial government.**

# COMMUNITY SCHOOLS BEST PRACTICES FRAMEWORK: AT A GLANCE

## *What's New?*

**Increased emphasis on:**

- Comprehensive best practices framework;
- Partnerships, shared ownership and community development;
- Integrated services;
- Strengthened accountability.

## *Vision:*

Saskatchewan Community Schools are centres of learning and hope for their communities. They incorporate a comprehensive range of best educational practices for meeting the diverse learning needs of at risk and Indian and Métis students. They provide a responsive, inclusive, culturally affirming and academically challenging learning program and environment and are effective in addressing the challenges of the communities they serve. As hubs for a network of community organizations and activities, they use collaborative approaches to foster the development and well-being of the entire community.

## *Issues and Challenges:*

- Meeting the learning needs of growing numbers of students at risk;
- Responding to the education needs of Indian and Métis students;
- Establishing shared decision-making opportunities for Indian and Métis Peoples; and,
- Enhancing parent and community involvement and encouraging shared responsibility

## *Goals:*

- Student learning and success;
- A high quality education program;
- Shared responsibility;
- Enhanced participation in and management of public education by Indian and Métis peoples;
- Comprehensive, responsive services;
- Community empowerment;
- Equity and cultural harmony; and
- Leadership in educational innovation.

## *Principles:*

- Educational excellence;
- Cooperation and openness;
- Equity and respect for diversity;
- Preventive and comprehensive approaches;
- Empowerment; and
- Accountability.

## *Strategies:*

- Development of a relevant, responsive learning program;
- Collaboration and partnerships;
- Integrated planning and service delivery;
- Community development;
- Leadership development and capacity-building;
- School staff selection and development;
- A process of planning, evaluation and renewal; and
- Effective use of resources.

## *Elements of the Community School Plan:*

- The Learning Program
- Parent and Community Involvement
- Integrated Services
- Community Development
- School Effectiveness
- Staff Team
- School Culture and Climate
- Process for Ongoing Renewal
- Community School Council

II

# ISSUES AND CHALLENGES: WHY ADOPT A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH?

There are a number of reasons to strengthen and promote Community Schools in Saskatchewan. These include:

## 1 MEETING THE LEARNING NEEDS OF GROWING NUMBERS OF STUDENTS AT RISK: INCORPORATING BEST PRACTICES

Growing numbers of Saskatchewan students are coming to school with complex social, emotional, health and developmental problems that are barriers to their learning. As many as 40% of students are experiencing problems such as poverty, family breakdown, violence and abuse, teen pregnancy, and substance abuse (Government of Saskatchewan, 1993; Valpy, 1993). These problems impact on their educational experience and place them "at risk", compromising their opportunities for success in school and later in life.

*Although it is possible to discuss problems such as drug abuse, homelessness, and depression among children and youth as separate issues, it should be recognized that these problems are often interconnected and that many children suffer from more than one at the same time. For example, a child who is abused or neglected at home or has lived in a series of unsuccessful foster care placements may drop out of school and run away to live on the streets. The same child may be drawn to experiment with illegal drugs, become depressed, and attempt suicide. The factors that put children at risk tend to be cumulative.* (Advisory Committee on Children's Service, 1990).

- Between 1989 and 1993, the number of children in Canada living in poverty increased by 51.4% to 1,447,000 children (Freeman, 1994)
- Saskatchewan has the second highest rate of child poverty in Canada (23%). (The National Council of Welfare, Minister of Supply and Services Canada, "Poverty Profile 1993", Spring, 1995).
- *Saskatchewan* 2000, a demographic projection for the province into the twenty-first century, anticipates an increase in the rate of divorce, number of one-parent households, number of teen-age mothers, family violence, drug and alcohol addiction, and poverty - all factors that place children at risk. (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association Research Centre, 1991).

The solutions to the problems many students face require a range of services and supports that cut across the boundaries of schools, human service agencies, and different departments of government. Solutions also include the involvement of parents and the development of communities to create supportive, safe and stable environments out of school.

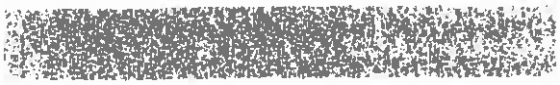
Research has demonstrated that taken together the **comprehensive range of supports and best practices** provided in this framework are the most effective means of addressing the complex needs of at risk students and removing barriers to their learning. Any **one of these elements in isolation or a piecemeal approach has limited chance of success.**

The comprehensive range of best practices include:

- a high quality, culturally affirming learning program;
- a comprehensive range of student supports and integrated services, and extra curricular programs provided within the school or linked to it;
- full involvement and partnership with parents and community members;
- a dynamic mechanism for program planning, evaluation, and renewal within the school;
- the development of a safe, caring and respectful school culture and climate; and
- heightened emphasis on the responsibility of the school to develop and strengthen its community.

## 2. Responding to the Education Needs of Indian and Métis Students

As the numbers of Indian and Métis students in the public education system continue to grow, efforts to provide responsive, culturally affirming, and academically challenging programs that strengthen their opportunities to succeed become even more important. Community Schools employ Indian and Métis teachers and teacher associates whenever possible. They provide curriculum, learning materials and a learning environment that affirms the identity, culture and values of Indian and Métis peoples.



- By the year 2011, approximately one-third of the school population will be of Aboriginal ancestry (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, 1991).
- Although the number of school-aged children in the general population will decline in the years ahead, the number of Aboriginal children will almost double (Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, 1991).

## 3. Enhancing Involvement of Indian and Métis Peoples

Within Saskatchewan's public education system, opportunities are needed for Indian and Métis peoples to take a greater role in the management of their children's education. Community School Councils provide a ready opportunity to strengthen Indian and Métis involvement and to negotiate shared decision-making with boards of education.

## 4. Enhancing Parent and Community Involvement and Encouraging Shared Responsibility

Many parents and community organizations are calling for a stronger voice in education planning and decision-making. At the same time, schools are recognizing the necessity and advantages of greater parent and community involvement in strengthening their programs and achieving student success. Community Schools encourage parent, community and business partnerships which provide a broader range of supports, programs and services and foster shared responsibility for the well-being and success of students.

**For students at risk, parent involvement in the learning process has been identified as the single most important determinant of success.** Many schools face the challenge of involving parents who have traditionally not played an active role in the education of their children. An important focus in Community Schools is "capacity-building" which includes developing leadership skills and achieving full and meaningful participation of parents and community members.

III

# POLICY, VISION, GOALS, PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

## *Policy*

It is the policy of Saskatchewan Education to actively promote and support the adoption by school boards of a comprehensive, preventive, culturally affirming and community-based approach to meeting the learning needs of at risk and Indian and Metis students. The renewed Community Schools model provides the framework for incorporating a holistic range of supports and approaches, proven to be effective in the education of these students.

## *Vision, Goals, Principles and Best Practices*

The vision, goals, principles and best practices below provide a framework for creating a learning community of hope for at risk and Indian and Métis students. Within this framework each Community School will have its own unique characteristics based on the needs, priorities and resources of its community.

## *Vision*

Saskatchewan Community Schools are centres of learning and hope for their communities. They incorporate a comprehensive range of best educational practices for meeting the diverse learning needs of at risk and Indian and Métis students. They provide a responsive, inclusive, culturally affirming and academically challenging learning program and environment and are effective in addressing the challenges of the communities they serve. As hubs for a network of community organizations and activities, they use collaborative approaches to foster the development and well-being of the entire community.

## *Goals:*

The goals for Community Schools contribute to achieving the vision. They include:

1. **Student Learning and Success**
   All students have the opportunity and supports they require to achieve their potential and succeed in school and life.
2. **A High Quality Education Program**
   There is a high quality, culturally affirming and challenging education program that incorporates and enhances the components and initiatives of Core Curriculum.
3. **Shared Responsibility**
   School staff, parents, and the community share responsibility for the education and well-being of students. This is demonstrated by active parent and community involvement in education planning, problem solving and service delivery and by a shared understanding of educational and community issues and affairs.
4. **Comprehensive, Responsive Services**
   The school serves as the hub of a comprehensive, responsive, community-based system of education, health, social, justice and recreation services provided to meet the needs of the students and their families.
5. **Enhanced Participation in Public Education by Indian and Métis Peoples**
   Indian and Métis peoples actively participate in the planning and management of school programs.
6. **Community Empowerment**
   Communities surrounding the schools are stable, safe, supportive and healthy. School staff, parents and other community members are actively involved in improving the quality of life in the community.

7. **Equity and Cultural Harmony**
   The students, staff, parents and community members involved with the school respect one another, and there is equity, cultural understanding and harmony in the school and the community.
8. **Leadership in Educational Innovation**
   Community Schools are leaders in educational innovation for at risk and Indian and Métis students. They provide support and advice to other schools seeking to introduce the best practices outlined in this document.

## *Principles:*

The principles that will guide all Community School activities include:

1. **Educational Excellence**
   Education programming and services are of the highest quality. They are responsive, culturally affirming, challenging and delivered in a safe and caring school environment and encourage all students to achieve their full potential.
2. **Cooperation and Openness**
   The school staff, parents, community members, and school council are mutually supportive partners who share responsibility for the education and well-being of children. Community Schools are centres of community, open and welcoming to students, family and community members where people of all ages can learn, become involved in planning school and community programs, events and projects; and take part in recreational, social and cultural activities.
3. **Equity: Respect for Diversity and Cultural Responsiveness**
   The cultural heritage, life experience, unique potential and capabilities of each child or adult are respected. All students have the opportunity to experience success and develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to contribute meaningfully to society. The principle goes beyond equality of opportunity where everyone is treated the same, to fostering a barrier-free environment where individuals benefit equally.
4. **Preventive and Comprehensive Approaches**
   Programs and services are designed to anticipate and offer supports to students before significant problems require major intervention. The needs of children and families are addressed holistically, recognizing the interconnected nature of the problems and their solutions. As well, the needs and well-being of the students are considered in the context of the many family and community relationships which nurture them and to which they are attached.
5. **Empowerment**
   Through leadership development and collaborative processes, Community Schools strengthen the capacity of students, parents, and communities to operate cooperatively and self-sufficiently, to determine their own needs, and to plan how they will meet those needs.
6. **Accountability**
   The Community School Council, principal, school staff, board of education, parents, community, participating agencies and provincial government are collectively responsible for assessing the effectiveness and success of the program in meeting its planned objectives.

## *Strategies:*

The processes used by Community Schools to achieve their objectives include:

1. **Development of a Relevant, Responsive Learning Program**
   The principal and teachers, together with the teacher associates, community school coordinator, support staff and the Community School Council plan, implement and assess the learning program and educational approaches. The learning program and educational approaches incorporate all aspects of Core Curriculum including the Required Areas of Study, Common Essential Learnings, the Adaptive Dimension, locally determined options and a range of diverse educational supports.

2. **Collaboration and Partnerships**
   The principal and school staff forge partnerships with parents, community members, Indian and Métis organizations, and human service agencies. Partners collaborate to define education and community issues and to share resources as they work toward and evaluate the attainment of shared goals.

3. **Integrated Planning and Service Delivery**
   Community partnerships work to provide coordinated, integrated and comprehensive education, health, justice, recreation, and social services necessary to address the needs of at risk students. These services consider the needs of the student in the context of the family. They are developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, and are either delivered within or linked to the school.

4. **Community Development**
   Community development is an educational and motivational process that engages community members and organizations and empowers them to participate actively in improving the quality of their lives. Community Schools cooperate with other community groups to develop leadership, define common problems and needs, and develop community-based solutions. This will lead to the development of stable, safe and self-sufficient communities.

5. **Leadership Development and Capacity-Building**
   Community Schools encourage the full and skilled participation of all parents and other community members by developing their decision-making, organizational and group process abilities. Focused efforts are made to encourage the participation and to develop the leadership capabilities of parents and community members who traditionally have not played an active role. These include low income families and Indian and Métis peoples. The people who participate in school activities and on the Community School Council reflect the social, economic and cultural make up of the community.

6. **Staff Selection and Development**
   The selection of the principal, teachers and other staff for a Community School is critical to the success of the program. In addition to excellent teaching skills, staff must have community development skills and the ability and commitment to affirm the cultural values of the students. Ongoing professional development and inservice programs are essential to increasing the staff's knowledge, skills and awareness appropriate to the unique needs of their students and the communities they serve.

7. **Ongoing Planning, Evaluation and Renewal**
   A dynamic planning process is instituted that engages the staff, parents and community members in ongoing planning and evaluation to ensure program improvement. The process involves the development of a **Community School Plan.** Appendix A provides detailed information on how to develop the Community School Plan.

8. **Effective Use of Resources**
   The resources of the school and surrounding community are used to maximum effectiveness. These resources include the skills of the people, financial resources across the community, and school facilities.

IV

# THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL FRAMEWORK

The following illustration depicts the components within the Community School framework. Taken together, these components provide the comprehensive range of supports and approaches proven to meet the needs of at risk and Indian and Métis students.

Recognizing that every school and community is unique, with different needs, priorities, and resources, this framework provides the basis upon which schools will develop their own programs to meet their specific needs and objectives.

## EXPLANATIONOF THE ILLUSTRATION

In the Community School Framework, the student is at the centre surrounded by the four key components of the school program:

- the learning program,
- parent and community involvement,
- integrated services, and
- community development.

These components are planned and evaluated by the school staff and the Community School Council. They are supported by school effectiveness strategies that include the development of an effective staff team, creation of a supportive and affirming school culture and climate, and management of a dynamic process for ongoing renewal.

The school is the centre of its community and draws on resources and supports from the community.

## *A. The Student*

The student is the heart of the school and the centre of all activity. All parts of the Community School program focus on and respond to the needs of the students.

## *B. The Program Components*

The four components of the Community School program are:

1. The Learning Program,
2. Parent and Community Involvement,
3. Integrated Services, and
4. Community Development.

These four components work together to provide the comprehensive range of supports required for the education and well-being of at risk students. While the learning program is at the forefront of the Community School's overall program, its success depends on the effectiveness of the other three components. **Together they provide the foundation for the learning program and are critical supports both to its effectiveness and to the success of the students in the school.** The following pages include a description of each of the components and its objectives.

### 1. THE LEARNING PROGRAM

The learning program is grounded in the provincial curriculum. In addition, it offers a full range of educational supports aimed at increasing students' chances of academic and life success. Its focus is on incorporating educational practices and innovations that respect and reflect the experience, culture and socio-economic background of the students and the community surrounding the school and includes:

- early intervention programming;
- elementary and middle years academic program;
- retention, re-entry, transition to high school programming; and
- adult and community education programming.

### *Objectives*

The objectives of the learning program are to:

- create a learning environment and program that are responsive, culturally affirming and supportive for all students;
- improve the academic achievement of students, reduce age-grade discrepancies and retain students in school by ensuring that curricula is challenging, knowledge and skills-based, and responsive to the student differences;
- foster in students the skills, knowledge, values and self-confidence necessary to become competent, caring and contributing adults;
- provide services and supports that enable students to move smoothly from the preschool years into the elementary and middle years learning program and from there into high school; and,
- provide a range of useful adult and community education opportunities to respond to family and community needs.

### *Description*

#### *a. Early Intervention Programming*

Early intervention programming for three and four year-olds is an important part of the learning program of the Community School. While early intervention programs may vary from one school to another, they may include many of the following:

- language development supports,
- fine and gross motor skill development,

- immunizations and regular health check-ups,
- early childhood psychology and mental health services,
- development of social and problem solving skills and self-esteem,
- development of cognitive skills,
- nutrition and meal programs,
- transportation services,
- parent education and support,
- family literacy programming, and
- home-visiting.

In addition to the early intervention programming, the Community School may also house a day care and programs for before school, lunch hour and after school child care.

### 6. *Responsive Elementary and Middle Years Learning Program*

The delivery of the provincial curriculum is the core of the Community School's learning program. The Adaptive Dimension within Saskatchewan's Core Curriculum enables teachers to adapt both curriculum content and curriculum delivery to meet the special needs of children. Community Schools are fertile ground for the imaginative use of this opportunity. Teachers work with other staff, parents and community members to adapt instructional materials and create an environment that provides a relevant and challenging opportunities for at risk and Indian and Métis students.

**Characteristics of an Effective Learning Program**

An effective learning program in a Community School:

- includes meaningful and challenging curricula encouraging all students to achieve their full potential;
- respects and responds to the experiences, cultures, traditions, attitudes, abilities, values and learning needs of all students;
- is comprehensive and flexible;
- recognizes and reflects the nature and unique characteristics of the community surrounding the school;
- links with the community and community agencies to enrich the learning program;
- takes place in a safe and caring environment;
- is planned, orderly and makes effective use of the skills and abilities of the teacher associates and community volunteers; and,
- uses clear, unintimidating and effective evaluation procedures.

**Innovations in the learning program in Community Schools include:**

- modified and enriched curricula to take into account the social, cultural and racial differences within the student population;
- emphasis on language arts skills particularly with respect to the needs of students for whom English is a second language or a second dialect;
- student clusters based on criteria other than age-grade placement such as family connections;
- peer instruction and support activities;
- parents assisting with the learning program in the classroom or by preparing learning materials;
- scheduling the school day to adapt to the needs of the families and the school community (eg. a breakfast program, shorter lunch breaks and evening supervised homework rooms);
- Indian Languages programs;
- cross-cultural education; and
- in-house Elders.

### e. *Retention, Re-entry and Transitions to High School*

Community Schools are located in areas where much of the population is highly mobile. Families often change neighbourhoods and schools numerous times in the school year.

This mobility creates problems for students as they adjust and readjust to different schools. It also complicates the efforts of teachers to provide an effective learning program.

Community Schools must also provide support to help students move successfully from the relatively small, stable and supportive learning environment of the Community School to enter high school. This transition is often difficult and causes some students to drop out.

Examples of programs and supports provided in Community Schools to address these issues include:

- re-entry classrooms and tutorials that help to ease the transition back into school for students who have been out of school for some time;
- programs to orient graduating students to high school; and,
- work introduction and mentoring programs.

### *d. Adult and Community Education*

Adult and community education programs in Community Schools are developed based on the needs of the families and the community. This programming can include such things as: Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language or Dialect, family literacy, parenting education, self-esteem development, Indian Languages, cultural and recreation programming, and life-skills training.

Program needs are identified by the school community and coordinated and delivered from the school drawing on the strengths, resources and expertise within the community.

## 2. PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

### *Objectives*

The objectives of parent and community involvement are to:

- foster a sense of shared responsibility among parents, community members and educators for the education and well-being of students;
- enhance opportunities for student success by encouraging the active participation of parents and community members in student learning;
- provide opportunities for students to learn within their community and to bring the community into the classroom;
- encourage effective and skilled participation of parents, other community members and groups in setting school goals, introducing and enriching programs, solving problems and enhancing learning activities for students;
- facilitate increased Indian and Métis participation in the management of the public education system;
- develop interagency cooperation and community/school partnerships to access community resources and to link needed services to the school;
- provide educational opportunities, services and facilities to parents and other community members in response to needs and as an "open door" policy linking the school and the community; and,
- facilitate partnerships between parents and community members to create safe and stable communities;
- ensure full and effective use of school facilities by the community.

## *Description*

Parents, family and community members work in partnership with school staff to enhance student learning at home, in the school and in the community. Together they plan and implement school activities and programs, set school goals, identify issues and priorities, introduce program changes, access resources, set school policy and solve problems.

The Community School and the people and organizations linked to it, develop a strong and mutually supportive relationship. The community is an important **resource** for the school. Students have a variety of learning opportunities both in the community and when the community comes into the classroom. Community members share information and life experiences with students as part of the learning program.

While the board of education is responsible for the use of school facilities, in the Community School parents and community members have an increased role in the supervision of activities and take increased responsibility for the use of school facilities. Examples of the range of community uses for school facilities include:

- community meetings and events;
- "safe" rooms for children and youth in distress;
- daycare;
- Community School Council/parent office;
- community counselling and adult education activities;
- recreation, evening and summer programs;
- extended hours for the resource centre; and
- kitchen and laundry.

See appendix C for further information on parent and community involvement and partnerships in education.

# 3. INTEGRATED SERVICES

## *Objectives*

The objectives of integrated services within Community Schools are to:

- provide and/or coordinate a wide range of responsive social, health, justice and recreation services to address barriers to learning for students and increase their opportunities for success; and,
- make the most effective use of school, community, municipal and provincial resources.

## *Description*

Students who are at risk are often unable to take advantage of the learning program because of complex social, emotional, health and developmental problems which are barriers to their learning. The services and supports they need cut across the boundaries of schools, human service agencies, and different departments and levels of government. Community Schools play a key role in their communities, serving as centres for a range of health, social, counselling, justice, personal support and recreation services either linked to or available within the school.

# UNDERSTANDING INTEGRATED SCHOOL-LINKED SERVICES

| **Integrated School-Linked Services Are About:** | **Integrated School-Linked Services Are *Not* About:** |
|---|---|
| • collaboration and partnership<br>• broad-based community involvement | • single agency focus<br>• limited community involvement |
| • focussing on the student/family and addressing needs of children at risk<br>• more responsive and effective services | • focussing on maintenance of structures/systems over client needs |
| • shared leadership/ownership, planning, decision-making, resources and evaluation | • single organization leadership/responsibility |
| • community-based (bottom up) change initiative and management with support from the province | • top down provincially-mandated change and control |
| • finding ways to make better use of existing financial and human resources in the community | • new, additional resources |
| • building coordination and collaboration into **everyone's** job | • hiring additional staff who are responsible for integrating services (adding to the infrastructure) |
| • revised organizational mandates, roles and job descriptions, empowerment of field level staff. | • implementing a single mandated model |
| • finding new ways of structuring organizations and delivering services<br>• fluid and flexible structures, processes and procedures | • delivering services as always but with some small modifications aimed at enhanced coordination<br>• fixed, singular structures and processes |
| • fundamental change | • tinkering at the edges |

(Adapted from Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment, 1994b)

Services and resources that address the needs of at risk students are available from: families, school staff and programs, communities, community human service agencies, Indian and Métis organizations, municipal, provincial and federal levels of government. Among the services needed by at risk children and families which could be integrated and linked to the school are:

- **health services** - health education, mental health services, nutrition services and nutrition education, family planning, immunization and medical care;
- **social services** - personal counselling, family welfare services, day care;
- **justice services** - community policing, young offender supports, information about human rights;
- **recreation and cultural services** - sports, leisure activities, cultural activities, heritage languages;

- **employment services** - employment counselling; and,
- **self-help and adult education** - parenting education and skills upgrading.

For further information on Integrated School-Linked Services refer to:

***Working Together to Address Barriers to Learning: Integrated School-Linked Services for Children and Youth At Risk,*** Policy Framework; and

***Integrated School-Linked Services for Children and Youth at Risk: Implementation Guide.***

Copies of each of these documents are available from the Planning and Evaluation Branch of Saskatchewan Education (787-6769).

## 4. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### *Objectives:*

The objectives of community development activities in a Community Schools are to:

- assist in the development of the community surrounding the school to foster a safe, stable and healthy environment for students and their families;
- improve opportunities for success in school and fulfillment in life for at risk students through the development of nurturing and safe communities;
- encourage the active involvement of community members and agencies in improving their quality of life; and,
- foster a sense of community in the school neighbourhood by serving as a hub of community activity and development.

### *Description*

Community development is an educational and motivational process that engages and empowers people and communities to actively participate in guiding their social and economic affairs. This activity is critical in Community Schools because children and young people cannot learn and succeed in school and life if the community they return to at the end of each school day is unstable or harmful to them. The difficulties children experience at home or in the community have a direct impact on their ability to succeed in school.

Community Schools are involved in creating safe, stable and healthy communities where people actively participate in improving their quality of life. The community development role of these schools means that they initiate and participate in activities to transform the surrounding community. The Community School Council, the principal and community school coordinator lead in community development activities and identify other leaders and interested organizations.

**Some issues that a school might undertake community development activities around include:**

- safety and security for children and the community;
- improved housing;
- anti-racism initiatives;
- community justice and crime prevention;
- homelessness and street kids;
- improved facilities for child care,
- support and counselling services for victims of substance abuse or domestic violence; and,
- creating employment opportunities.

**Appendix D provides information on the community development process.**

## *School Effectiveness*

The school effectiveness component guides all the other components of the school including the learning program, the functioning of the Community School Council, and the culture and climate of the school community. The Community School Plan plays an integral part in school effectiveness, ensuring an ongoing process of renewal within the school and its programs.

### 1 COMMUNITY SCHOOL COUNCII

Each Community School has a Community School Council made up of representatives from the parents, community, staff, students and includes the principal and community school coordinator. The Council is the focus of the relationship between the school and its community and acts as the initiator, coordinator and evaluator of all aspects of community involvement. It also oversees development and implementation of the Community School Plan and the process for ongoing renewal which includes program evaluation. (See Section V for a complete description of the role of the Community School Council.)

### 2. PROCESS FOR ONGOING RENEWAL AND THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL PLAN

Within each Community School there is a dynamic and inclusive process for ongoing planning and program evaluation and improvement. This process of renewal is centred in the development and maintenance of the Community School Plan. The Plan is updated each year in a collaborative way by the Community School Council, the principal, the coordinator, the teachers and teacher associates and where possible, representatives from the student body and board of education. The Community School Plan includes:

- a statement of the vision, shared by all participants;
- a needs assessment;
- achievable objectives for the year based on needs and related to developing and implementing the components of the school program;
- an action plan including concrete activities that will serve to implement each of the objectives;
- identification of in-kind contributions, program supports and services, donations and volunteer time from the community and other sources; and,
- a monitoring and evaluation process.

**See Appendix A for Guidelines for Developing the Community School Plan.**

### 3. STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TEAM BUILDING

School effectiveness begins with the effectiveness of staff, both as individuals and in the development and coordination of staff teams. The recruitment and development of appropriate staff is critical to the success of the Community School. Selection criteria include understanding and respect for the cultural heritage and life experiences of the students and communities they will be serving. Professional development and inservice in cross-cultural understanding, community development, collaborative processes and community education are necessary for all staff members on an ongoing basis. As well, strategies are needed to ensure effective communications, problem-solving, group processes and change management skills.

### 4. SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE

Attention to the development of the school's culture and climate is critical to the effectiveness of the Community School. The school culture is enriched by incorporating the principles outlined in this policy framework and those identified by the community. These principles guide the actions of everyone involved in the school and shape its culture.

Students, educators, staff, parents and community members work to create a respectful, caring, safe environment and a welcoming and supportive school climate. The focus is on providing quality programs, collaborative processes, shared responsibility, and a strong commitment to equity and cross-cultural understanding.

Some of the issues to be addressed in enriching the school's culture and climate include:

- maintaining a focus on the child within the context of the family and community;
- fostering security in the lives of at risk children;
- emphasizing the excellence of the learning program;
- creating a safe, welcoming, stimulating, and comfortable physical setting;
- facilitating effective communication;
- ensuring cultural responsiveness in school practice;
- promoting cultural understanding within the Community School and within the community it serves; and,
- providing a collaborative or consensual approach to developing policies on such issues as discipline and evaluation.

## *D. The Community*

The community is the geographic and social context within which the school functions. It is the neighbourhood surrounding the school and includes the various agencies that provide services and contribute to the well-being of students. These agencies include churches, human service agencies, cultural and recreation groups, government departments, medical services, other education institutions, Indian and Métis organizations, service clubs, and businesses.

V

# ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities outlined below are intended to suggest what is needed from everyone involved to ensure the success of a Community School. This outline is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive. It describes expectations for roles and responsibilities that Community Schools can work toward, while providing the flexibility for variations in contributions, capacities and roles from one school to another.

Included in the roles and responsibilities is the assumption that everyone involved in the Community School will participate in the development and implementation of the Community School Plan and process for ongoing renewal, and support the principles defined in this document.

## 1. THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL COUNCIL

The Community School Council is made up of representatives of the parents, community, staff and students, as well as the principal and community school coordinator and human services personnel who work with the school. The parents and community members on the Community School Council reflect the socio-economic, and cultural makeup of the school and community.

The Council leads development and implementation of the Community School Plan. It oversees, initiates, coordinates and evaluates the Community School Program according to the Plan. Through these actions, the Council has a role in developing parent and community leadership skills through education, capacity-building and empowerment.

### Selection of the Community School Council

Everyone with a student in a Community School is a member of the Community School Council and has the right to attend meetings and participate. The objective is to get as much parent and community involvement and support as possible. Interested individuals from the community are also invited to participate.

Each Council has an executive which is either elected or appointed depending on the needs of the community. General elections are often considered the best way to elect or select members. However, in selecting the Community School Council executive it is important to recognize that elections can be unfamiliar or uncomfortable for some members of the community and can result in an executive or operational arm of the Council that is not fully representative.

The building of an effective and representative Community School Council and executive may require the principal, community school coordinator and other members of the Council to identify potential members and help those people develop the skills and confidence necessary to work effectively as Council/executive members. This additional step will help ensure that the Council is fully representative of both the school and the community.

Selection procedures for the executive may vary among Councils. In many School Councils, the representatives are chosen by their peers - parents are chosen by the parents, teachers by the teachers, students by the students - and community members are appointed by the Council. Whatever approach is used, efforts must be made to ensure that the membership reflects the makeup of the school and the community.

Student participation on the Council executive is vital. Their ideas and contributions are valuable and can provide a perspective very different from the adults on the Council. Including students as members of the

Community School Council executive recognizes them as partners and acknowledges their responsibility for their own education. In many schools, student representatives are from the senior grades and are chosen by the students.

The participation of Indian and Métis peoples in the school is key to successfully implementing the Community School model. In some school divisions an Indian and Métis Reference Committee is in place to provide guidance to the schools and board of education on issues of particular significance to the Indian and Métis community.

Membership on the Community School Council executive will include representation from:

- parents;
- students;
- teachers;
- teacher associate(s);
- human service agencies within or linked to the school; and
- the community;

as well as:

- the principal; and
- the community school coordinator.

**The primary role of the Community School Council is to provide advice.** In its advisory capacity, the Council shares responsibility for:

**Planning**

- develop and implement the annual **Community School Plan** and the process for ongoing renewal of the school including program evaluation;
- manage the Council budget with accountability to the board of education and the province;
- have input into school policies such as discipline, attendance, student evaluation and parent/school communications;
- making decisions on policy issues such as school code of conduct and student discipline;

**The Learning Program**

- participate in planning and developing relevant and innovative educational programs and services;

**Evaluation and Data Collection**

- oversee the annual evaluation and documentation of program effectiveness and provide an annual report to the board of education and Saskatchewan Education

**Parent Involvement and Community Partnerships**

- promote collaboration and effective communication among all members of the school and community;
- encourage parent and community participation and provide capacity-building opportunities such as leadership development and adult and community education;
- initiate fund-raising activities and mobilize community resources;
- oversee community use of school facilities and make recommendations concerning improvement and maintenance of building and equipment;

**Community Development**

- initiate and coordinate activities to address community issues that lead to the development of a safe and stable community;

**Integrated Services**

- identify school and community needs and work to develop responses drawing on community resources;

**Staffing**

- recommend criteria for hiring the principal, teaching staff and other workers; and
- develop criteria and participate with the principal in the hiring of the community school coordinator, teacher associates and nutrition program coordinator.

Additional roles and responsibilities, as agreed upon by the board of education and the Council, can be assigned to the Council to facilitate enhanced participation of Indian and Métis peoples within the public education system.

## 2. THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL COORDINATOR

The coordinator works closely with the principal and the Community School Council. The coordinator is a professional community worker with a background in community development, social work or education and reports to the principal. The coordinator provides leadership in integrated services, community development and parent and community involvement within the school and for other neighbouring schools.

The community school coordinator has a responsibility to:

**Community School Planning and Implementation**

- work with the principal, teachers, parents and community members as a **team** in implementing and coordinating all aspects of the Community School Program. This includes: parent and community involvement, integrated services and community development as well as the Community School Plan and process for ongoing renewal;
- assist in developing a positive, caring and supportive culture and climate in the school;

**Parent Involvement and Community Partnerships**

- develop an effective Community School Council that reflects the community and work with the Council to develop leadership skills and the capacity among members to become meaningfully involved in educational and community affairs;
- encourage community and parent involvement and develop the capacity among parents and other members of the community to participate effectively in all aspects of the Community School;
- develop, coordinate and/or deliver adult learning opportunities such as family literacy programs, parenting education, Adult Basic Education, pre-employment, and self-help courses;

**Integrated Services**

- work with the Council to identify the needs of the students and the community, and organize effective responses;
- identify and establish partnerships with human service providers and other community agencies to develop and coordinate integrated education, health, social, justice and recreation services and programs for students and their families;

**Community Development**

- initiate and participate in activities to identify community issues and undertake activities to address them;
- coordinate the involvement of the teacher associates in community activities;

**Extension Supports**

- provide support to neighbouring schools in areas such as: enhancing parent and community involvement in the school, integrated services, community development, and developing a positive, caring and supportive culture and climate in the school; and,
- interpret and promote the Community School Program to the community and facilitate communications between parents, community and the school through such communications vehicles as public speaking engagements, workshops and newsletters.

## 3. The Teacher Associates

Teacher associates are of Indian or Métis ancestry, where possible, and from the community in which the school is located. They serve as role models, particularly for Indian and Métis students and play a substantial role in enriching and enhancing the learning program. By providing information about the culture and the community, they help teachers become more aware of, and sensitive to, the cultural and socio-economic differences.

As well, teacher associates play a capacity-building role in working with parents and the community. They work to ensure that parents and community members are aware of school activities and events and encourage their active participation. They identify and develop leadership among parents and community members, promoting involvement in the Community School Council.

The teacher associate and the classroom teacher form a cooperative relationship. The teacher associate provides support in the classroom, works with individual students and assists with the teaching.

**Teacher associates have a responsibility to:**

- act as the primary liaison between parents and the learning program of the school. This involves frequent home visits and maintaining clear, up-to-date knowledge of the home situation of the students;
- encourage awareness of and participation in school and community events and activities;
- identify and encourage leadership among school and community members and promote active participation on the Community School Council;
- participate in developing the Community School Plan and the process for ongoing renewal; and,
- work directly with the teacher and with students, individually and in groups, including:
  - participating in the planning of lessons, preparing instructional materials and collecting resource material;
  - assisting in the development and delivery of instructional programs, and
  - participating in case planning and management for the provision of integrated services for students.

## 4. The Principal

The role of the principal in a Community School requires a dynamic, innovative and committed professional. The principal will have sound knowledge of effective educational strategies and programs for Indian, Métis and at risk students. The role demands leadership capability in community development processes and superior collaborative and interpersonal skills. As well, a strong commitment to the development and involvement of parents and community members in school planning, problem-solving and service delivery is required.

**The principal:**

- has overall responsibility for the learning program as well as parent and community involvement, integrated services and community development;
- participates actively on the Community School Council executive and encourages the representational participation of parents and community members, especially Indian and Métis peoples and people living in poverty. This includes identifying and developing leadership skills among parents and communities and sharing decision-making powers;
- works with the Community School Council in the development and implementation of the annual Community School Plan and the process for ongoing renewal;
- identifies and develops partnerships with community agencies and organizations, mobilizing resources and supports; and,
- promotes the school and advises the larger community about the purposes, programs and successes of the Community School.

## 5. TEACHERS

Teachers in Community Schools have a strong commitment to Indian and Métis and at-risk students and a specialized knowledge of their learning needs and life experiences. The ability to develop and adapt curricula and teaching techniques to be responsive to student needs and experiences is critical. They are innovative, flexible, cooperative, and caring in their approach to teaching.

The careful selection of the teaching staff is critical to the quality of the learning program. Teachers will be appointed by the board of education, but will be selected based on criteria that include input from the Community School Council.

Because of the relatively high proportion of Indian and Métis students in Community Schools, many make an effort to hire teachers of Indian or Métis background. In addition to their knowledge of Indian and Métis history, culture and traditions, they function as role models for all students, but particularly for Indian and Métis students.

**Teachers have a responsibility to:**

- develop a knowledge of the community within which they are working and of the educational needs of Indian, Métis and at risk students;
- develop meaningful and challenging programs within Saskatchewan's Core Curricula that respond to the needs and realities of students' lives;
- work cooperatively and collaboratively with the community school coordinator, teacher associates, parents, community members and other human service professionals to achieve excellence in the learning program and meet the needs of students;
- develop effective communications and liaison with parents and the home;
- have a commitment to ongoing professional development in the areas of enhanced parent and community partnerships, cultural responsiveness, community education and development; and,
- play an active part in the development of the Community School Plan and process for ongoing renewal.

## 6. THE NUTRITION COORDINATOR

While arrangements for this position vary from school to school depending on resources and availability of volunteer supports, this position is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school nutrition program. **The Nutrition Coordinator has a responsibility to:**

- coordinate and/or prepare healthy and nutritious breakfasts, lunches and/or snacks;
- conduct classes for parents, students and other community members on such topics as nutrition, food preparation and food buying on a budget;
- train and coordinate volunteers from among the parents and community to assist with the program; and,
- participate in developing the Community School Plan and the process for ongoing renewal.

## 7. SUPPORT STAFF

The role of the secretary, caretaker, library technician and itinerant staff such as counselors, social workers, speech pathologists in supporting Community Schools is critical.

**Support Staff have a responsibility to:**

- be an active part of the support team for the students in the school;
- develop a knowledge of the community within which they are working and of the educational needs of Indian and Métis and at risk students; and,
- participate in the development of the Community School Plan and process for ongoing renewal.

## 8. STUDENTS

Students are the heart of the Community School and the focus of its programs and services.

**Students:**

- take responsibility for their own learning and actively participate in the learning opportunities afforded by the high quality education program and by access to the broad range of activities and supports;
- provide representation on the Community School Council executive;
- provide peer support and assistance to other students in the Learning Program; and
- participate in developing the Community School Plan and process for ongoing renewal.

## 9. PARENTS

Parents play a key role as partners in the success of the Community School. Their involvement is encouraged and actively sought and is critical to achieving student success.

**Parents have a responsibility to:**

- provide the necessary nurturing and support their children need to participate effectively in school;
- be actively involved in their children's learning and participate in school programs and activities to the extent they are able; and,
- participate in the development and implementation of the Community School Plan and process for ongoing renewal.

## 10. THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Boards of education partner with the provincial government, community organizations, human service agencies, schools, families and community members in the creation of Community Schools. They provide direction and support to each of the components of the Community School.

**The board of education has a responsibility to:**

- develop and implement comprehensive employment and education equity policies (see glossary of terms for possible scope of equity policy);
- determine the amount and nature of financial and in-kind contributions to Community Schools within its jurisdiction;
- develop a strategy for the selection, orientation, ongoing professional development and in-service training of staff,
- ensure input from the Community School Council in the hiring process;
- recognize the challenging and labour intensive demands of Community Schools, and provide adequate human and other resources for their operation; and,
- coordinate annual evaluation and documentation of program impact for individual schools.

## 11. COMMUNITY AGENCIES, GROUPS AND VOLUNTEERS

Community agencies, groups and volunteers provide a variety of critical supports to the learning program and for the well-being of students and their families. They include churches, service clubs, human service agencies, municipal and provincial services, businesses, Friendship Centres, and community associations.

**Community Agencies/Volunteers:**

- participate on the Community School Council when appropriate;
- participate where appropriate in the development of the Community School Plan;
- work with the Council, principal, community school coordinator and staff in providing a range of supports to meet the needs of the students and their families;
- respect the values and rules of the school; and,
- maintain the confidentiality of student records and information.

## 12. Role of Government Departments

The provincial departments of Social Services, Health, Justice, Municipal Government (culture, recreation and housing services) have roles to play in working with Community Schools. They provide a number of the services critical to the well-being and success of students and their families. Through the Integrated School-Linked Services program, provincial services are assessed and realigned, where possible, to provide an integrated, coordinated range of supports accessible to students and their families.

## 13. Saskatchewan Education

Saskatchewan Education provides the overall vision, principles, goals and guidelines for the Community Schools Program. In partnership with boards of education, it provides funding for the Community Schools Program and is responsible for its overall management. The Department collects data and evaluative information from the Community Schools, preparing reviews and reports as needed. It maintains close links with the schools and boards of education and provides consultation and advice upon request.

**The Department will:**

- provide the overall direction for the development of Community Schools;
- manage the provincial Community Schools Program;
- provide support, consultation and information to schools and boards of education;
- share in the provision of funding for Community Schools;
- receive and analyze data from Community Schools to document their effectiveness and to ensure accountability;
- carry out research and maintain information on current trends and issues related to community education, needs of at risk and Indian and Métis students, and successful education approaches;
- promote the Community School approach and innovations of individual schools; and
- work with boards of education to implement innovative programs and approaches for at risk and Indian and Métis students within the public education system.

VI

# EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Ensuring that the approaches taken to meet the learning needs of Indian and Métis and at risk students are effective and that the resources used are employed to the best possible advantage, are pressing responsibilities. Community Schools face the challenge of demonstrating that their approach is viable and effective.

Evaluation is critical to ensuring the effectiveness and success of Community Schools. It has been built into the Community School Plan as part of the process for ongoing renewal. Through evaluation processes all involved with the school have the opportunity to review and assess the success of the Community School Plan and plan for program improvements.

## EVALUATION APPROACHES

Both **qualitative** and **quantitative** processes are useful in collecting data to assess the effectiveness of the Community School Program. Quantitative processes are based on the collection of numerical data. Qualitative information is collected through anecdotal reporting techniques and describes the experience of the participants and their perceptions of the program. When combined with the numerical data, qualitative analysis provides a more holistic and complete evaluation.

## EVALUATION RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibility for gathering information on the strengths and effectiveness of the Community Schools Program is shared by all involved.

### A. THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The Community School Council, together with the principal and coordinator, lead in the evaluation of the program. The evaluation is based on how effectively the school is meeting the objectives stated for each of the components of the program (the learning program, parent and community involvement, integrated services and community development), and the specific objectives of each school.

An evaluation report will be provided to the board of education and to Saskatchewan Education at the end of each school year. In addition, monthly statistical reports are required by the Department. Report forms are available from the Planning and Community Education Unit, Saskatchewan Education.

### B. BOARDS OF EDUCATION

Boards of education provide assistance to Community Schools in the development and implementation of their evaluation plans. The board of education receives the annual evaluation report prepared by the school.

### C. SASKATCHEWAN EDUCATION

Saskatchewan Education ensures the accountability of Community Schools at the provincial level by receiving and analyzing the statistical data and annual reports of each Community School. This information is used to prepare provincial profiles that document the effectiveness of the program. The Department provides consultation and support to Community Schools and boards of education to assist in program evaluation.

### D. COOPERATING AGENCIES AND GROUPS

As the integrated services component in a Community School develops, participating agencies may seek to evaluate their school-based or school-linked programs. Such evaluations will form an important part of the overall Community Schools evaluation report.

**Appendix B provides a detailed Evaluation Guide for Community Schools.**

# APPENDICES

A. Guidelines for Developing the Community School Plan

B. Evaluation Guide for Community Schools

C. Continuum of Parent and Community Involvement and Partnerships

D. Community Development Process

E. Glossary of Terms

F. References

A

# GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPING THE COMMUNITY SCHOOL PLAN

The Community School Plan is an important part of school effectiveness and provides the framework for the process for ongoing renewal. It is based on the vision, goals, strategies and principles outlined in this document. However, the Plan identifies and responds to the needs and issues of individual schools and their communities.

The development of an annual Community School Plan is critical to the success of the Community School for the following reasons:

- It enables Community Schools to identify local issues and needs and respond in a relevant and meaningful way.
- It involves all Community School participants and community partners in a process to determine their shared vision, commonly-determined objectives and actions. As well, it facilitates leadership development, problem solving and capacity-building within the community.
- It strengthens the efforts of Community Schools to be effective in meeting the needs of at risk and Indian and Métis students and in developing the larger community by encouraging the precise identification and articulation of shared objectives and activities.
- It provides the basis for measuring the effectiveness of the school program and direction for future planning.

## *Getting Started - Who's Involved?*

The Community School Council oversees the development, implementation and evaluation of the Plan. The Council executive will want to involve students, parents, members of the community, staff, the school division, and representatives of the service agencies linked to the school in all aspects of the planning cycle.

## *Elements of the Community School Plan*

The following elements should be included in the Plan:

- a statement of the school's vision, shared by all participants;
- an assessment of the needs of the students, the school and the community in terms of the well-being and success of the students;
- achievable objectives for the year;
- an action plan;
- identification of program supports; and,
- a monitoring and evaluation process.

## 1. VISION

The vision is a statement describing the ideal learning community that your group would like to create and the ideal achievement for students. The vision is stated as though it has already been accomplished. There are many processes that can be used in developing a shared vision, however the key ingredient is to involve everyone who will be affected by it.

While your vision may become more refined as you progress through the planning process, it is a good idea to record a draft vision early on. Once you have established the vision for your school, make it visible and well-known to students, parents, community members, staff and other service providers.

### *Vision Statement:*

To get started, why not refer to the vision for all Community Schools provided on page 9.

***Vision for _____ Community School:***

## 2. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

A needs assessment is a critical step in any planning process because it helps you plan programs based on people's actual needs rather than guessing their needs. Be sure to involve students, parents, community members, staff and service providers in planning and implementing the needs assessment.

A needs assessment has three basic steps:

- identification of needs;
- identification of services, resources and strengths to address needs; and,
- analysis of gaps and overlaps.

### *Needs Identification*

In identifying needs you may be able to draw upon work that has already been done, such as needs assessments completed by your board of education, the district health board or other community agencies. While this may not provide the specific information you require, it may help you by providing a broader perspective.

To collect the information, you will need to decide:

- who to talk to;
- how to collect the information (questionnaire, workshops, interviews, etc.); and,
- who will collect the information.

Once you have your plan for the needs assessment in place, collect the information and then list and assign priority to the needs. You may wish to use the following chart to record needs and assign priority to them.

## COMMUNITY SCHOOL PLAN:

***Needs and Priority***

| PRIORITY | NEEDS |
|---|---|
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Date: _____

## *Identification of Services, Resources and Strengths*

Take an inventory of the existing resources and strengths in your school, school division and community. The inventory may include people, time, skills, services, supports, money and knowledge. Focus on specific needs and seek resources to match those needs. In identifying and reviewing the services, resources and strengths, consider the measurable features including:

- service agency mandate, beliefs and philosophy;
- the type and variety of service;
- target population and age range;
- geographic location of service;
- accessibility of service;
- service fees and funding options;
- consistency of service with cultural values of service users;
- service times, hours of operation and calendar year;
- transportation issues for users of the service;
- length of time until the child or family can begin to use the service;
- availability of currently existing integrated programs; and,
- staff qualifications.

(Adapted from Swan & Morgan, 1993)

## *Analysis of Gaps and Overlaps*

**(Note: This step may not be necessary depending on your students' needs.)**

This analysis involves matching existing resources, services and strengths with identified needs, then determining how to fill the gaps and how to address the overlaps. Sometimes a service, resource or strength may exist in the community but may not be sufficient to meet the need. In other cases, the service, resource or strength may be unavailable or unaccessible. The challenge in addressing the gaps will be to reallocate resources or find new resources to meet the needs.

*A Gaps and Overlaps analysis form is provided on the following page to assist you in completing this step.*

## COMMUNITY SCHOOL PLAN:

***Gaps and Overlaps Analysis Tool***

| Needs (from needs assessment) ↓ | School, School Division and Community Services and Resources <⟶> | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | |
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| | | | | | | | |

Date: _____

## 3. OBJECTIVES

Objectives should be achievable and measurable. They will be based what you plan to achieve in meeting the need you have identified and are related to developing and implementing the four components of the school program:

- the learning program,
- parent and community involvement,
- integrated services; and,
- community development.

Broad objectives for each of these components are included in the policy framework, pages 13 to 20. You may wish to establish specific objectives for each of these as they relate to your school.

## 4. ACTION PLAN

The action plan will include concrete activities for each of the four components (the learning program, parent and community involvement, integrated services and community development) that will serve to implement the objectives. Identify the planned actions, who will take responsibility for those actions and the timeline for the activity.

## 5. PROGRAM SUPPORTS

Program supports may include Community School funding, services, donations, fund-raising, in-kind contributions, and volunteer time from the community and other sources.

## 6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCESS

Devise a process to monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of your community school plan. Appendix B provides indepth information on evaluation.

The following forms will assist you in creating the action plan for your school. The first form will help you determine activities that support the needs and objectives that have been identified. The second will assign responsibility, set timelines and allocate services, resources and strengths to support the accomplishment of the action plan.

## COMMUNITY SCHOOL PLAN:

*Action Plan - Part 1*

| Needs | Objectives | Pro am Activities to Achieve Objectives |
|---|---|---|
| 1. The Learning Program | | |
| 2. Parent and Community Involvement | | |
| 3. Community Development | | |
| 4. Integrated Services | | |

Date: _____

## COMMUNITY SCHOOL PLAN:

*Action Plan - Part 2*

| Program Activities to Support the Action Plan | Services, Resources and Strengths | Responsiblilty | Timeline |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The Learning Program | | | |
| 2. Parent and Community Involvement | | | |
| 3. Community Development | | | |
| 4. Integrated Services | | | |

Date: _____

B

# EVALUATION GUIDE FOR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The following Evaluation Guide is based upon the goals, principles, and strategies outlined in this document and is intended to guide the Community School Council in developing its own evaluation plan.

## PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

The purposes for evaluating individual Community School programs are:

- to demonstrate accountability and effectiveness of the overall approach; and
- to identify strengths and weaknesses in the Community School program in order to support program improvement and renewal.

Evaluation is conducted by the people who are actually involved in the development and implementation of the Community School program. The program participants control evaluation design and process, and interpret the results. Because of the direct involvement of the program participants, the evaluation provides information based on the needs of the students, parents, community and the school.

During the evaluation process, these people are engaged in constant reflection and critical discussion that addresses questions they have about their work. This enables them to identify:

- what issues they have in common;
- how things worked or didn't work; and,
- why and how improvements can be made.

The greatest advantage of including an evaluation process as part of program development and delivery is that it can provide much of the information required to make decisions and solve problems. For example, the evaluation can be designed to collect information about what factors inside and outside of the school are affecting the success of the program. The Council can then take steps to ensure the negative factors are reduced and the positive factors reinforced.

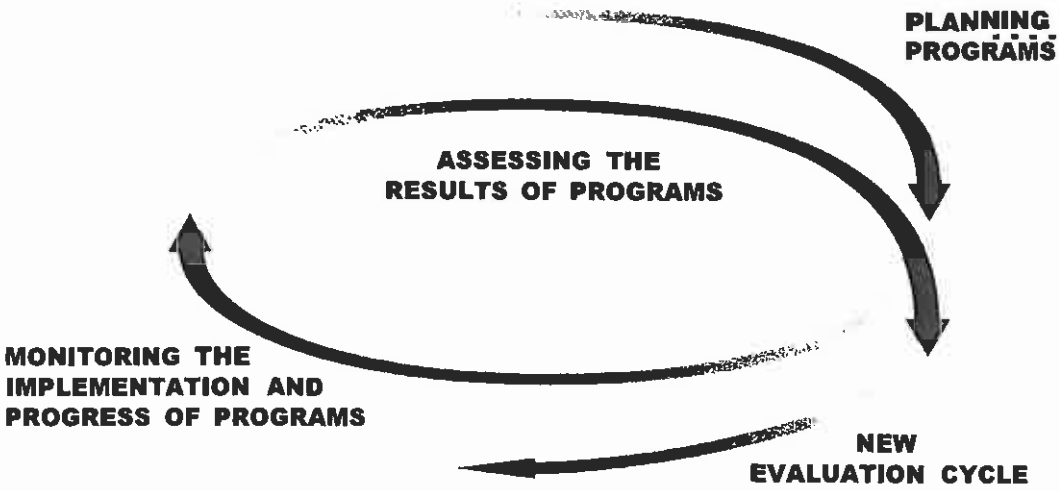
Evaluation results help the Council determine what to do next. The evaluation process is another important part of the Community School program development and delivery. Because it is ongoing, it is best described as an evaluation cycle.

### *The Evaluation Cycle*

Evaluation is an on-going activity that includes ways to make use of the information from the evaluation while it is being conducted, and also at the end. Continuous feedback of assessment information to all those involved communicates what is happening and what is being learned.

The evaluation process lags slightly behind all phases of program development, from planning through to implementation. All of the information obtained throughout one evaluation cycle is fed into the next round of program planning and a new evaluation cycle begins. Figure 1 illustrates the evaluation cycle.

*Figure 1: Evaluation Cycle*




## *Planning Programs*

Beginning the evaluation process early in the development of the Community School program makes it possible to revise plans prior to implementation, if necessary.

## *Monitoring Program Implementation*

This stage of the evaluation focuses on the operation of the program. Information that is gathered is used to address any gaps or problems that may be revealed or make slight program modifications as implementation proceeds. Issues or needs may surface that have not been identified during program planning.

## *Assessing the Results of Programs*

This is the stage that typically receives the most attention. At this point the results of program delivery are documented and measured according to stated goals and objectives or desired standards. In addition to the outcomes you expect, there may also be unintended outcomes which may be as important as the intended ones. Unintended outcomes should be carefully watched for, recorded and considered during the evaluation.

## *New Evaluation Cycle*

All of the information obtained through the evaluation process is eventually used to make decisions about how the Community School might be improved or readjusted to the changing needs of the students, school and the community. In this way, evaluation helps set the course for the process of ongoing renewal. As program development moves into its next cycle, the evaluation process follows right behind.

## *Ethical Considerations*

Throughout the evaluation, there are several ethical guidelines to follow in order that the individual or collective rights of the participants, or 'study subjects' are respected and ensured. These include the right to:

- be informed of the precise nature of the evaluation, so that informed consent may be given or withheld;
- know of the risks and benefits;
- privacy and confidentiality;
- accurate and respectful description of cultural heritage and customs; and
- discreet use of information on the lives and aspirations of members of cultural groups.

## *The Process of Evaluation*

The following steps of an evaluation process helps ensure that the evaluation yields useful and informative results:

1. DEFINE THE SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION
2. DESIGN THE EVALUATION
3. WRITE THE EVALUATION PLAN
4. CONDUCT THE EVALUATION
5. PROCESS THE INFORMATION
6. USE THE RESULTS

A more detailed description of the steps in the evaluation process follows.

## 1. Define the Scope of the Evaluation

The Community School Council is responsible for overseeing the evaluation and documentation of program effectiveness. As part of the development of the overall Community School Plan, the Council begins organizing the evaluation effort by deciding the parameters of the evaluation study.

Caution should be taken when setting the scope because evaluation can be a time-consuming process. If there are too many areas or issues incorporated into the evaluation it could become impossible to manage.

In addition to time constraints, availability of other resources (eg. staff and funds) are taken into consideration when setting priorities for what will be evaluated. Initially, the Council might also want to limit the scope of the evaluation simply because the first evaluation will be a learning experience for all involved.

While scope must be determined in the beginning in order to get started, it is also difficult to anticipate how much can be accomplished in advance. **It is recommended that the scope of the evaluation be reassessed throughout its development to ensure it is appropriate.**

Defining the scope of the evaluation involves the following seven steps:

- Setting goals and objectives
- Identifying audiences
- Determining issues
- Locating and assigning resources
- Finalizing and assigning priorities to goals and objectives
- Setting standards

### *Setting Goals and Objectives*

Evaluations are often conducted for several different purposes. These reasons for the evaluation are expressed in the evaluation plan as goals and objectives.

Because the evaluation describes and measures the impact of the Community School program, the goals and objectives for the evaluation will relate to the goals and objectives of the program.

Although the evaluation goals will be determined from the program goals they will not be the same. On the following chart, an example is given, using one of the program goals, to illustrate how a program goal differs from an evaluation goal.

| ***PROGRAM GOAL*** | ***EVALUATION GOAL*** |
|---|---|
| To offer a high quality education program. | To assess the education program in terms of its adequacy, appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency and indirect effects. |

In addition to the basic goals for the program (outlined on pages 9-10) you may want to include others that you identify for your own Community School.

Similarly, evaluation objectives are chosen by relating them to the objectives of the program. So, continuing with the example of a program goal on the previous page, program and evaluation objectives could be identified as in the following example:

| ***PROGRAM OBJECTIVE:*** | ***EVALUATION OBJECTIVE*** |
|---|---|
| To include curriculum elements that address the personal and social development of the students. | To assess the effects of the personal and social curriculum elements on the students. |

Narrowing the evaluation to the most meaningful and important goals and objectives involves a number of other considerations. The Council needs to ask:

- WHO has questions they want answered?
- WHAT information do they want?
- WHAT will they do with the information?

### *Identifying and Consulting Audiences*

Audiences for the evaluation are the individuals or groups who are either directly involved in the program or who will have an interest in the information that will be generated from the evaluation. Identifying the audiences answers the WHO question and is the next step in defining the scope of the evaluation. Some suggested audiences might be:

- the Community School staff, students and Council;
- the Board of Education;
- members of the community; and
- community agencies and groups that are providing a range of supports to the learning program.

### *Determining Issues*

When the audiences for the evaluation are known, the next step in determining scope is to consult with representatives from each audience group to get their points of view about what are the most important or critical issues to be addressed. These people will help the Council determine what specific information is wanted from the evaluation for each group.

When exploring issues to be evaluated, it is important to ensure that all aspects of the program are considered. In the evaluation of Community Schools, it is meaningful to consider not only the program elements and services provided but also the growth and development of the community, program, staff and students.

Figure 2 will help identify issues by reviewing all aspects of the program. Along the top and the side of the chart are the two major aspects of the program; its components and its environment. The program components and environments need to considered in combination because they are always interacting; they cannot be examined in isolation. It is also important to note that the issues identified from looking at these combinations will differ depending upon whether or not the evaluation is occurring during the planning, monitoring or outcome phases of program development.

To illustrate how issues can be identified, refer to Figure 2 below. Contained within the box in the upper left hand corner is **parent and community involvement** and **school effectiveness.** In the planning part of the evaluation cycle, one of your audiences might have an issue that addresses the question - What ways for involving parents and the community to enhance the effectiveness of the Community School have not been identified? For another example, the box to the immediate right holds the combination of **integrated services** and **school effectiveness.** Issues can be identified from this combination as well. Looking at these combinations ensures that a complete list of the evaluation issues are being defined after careful consideration of all the possible angles from which to examine the program.

*Figure 2: **Identifying all the Possible Issues for Evaluation***

| | PROGRAM COMPONENTS | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **PROGRAM ENVIRONMENT** | **Parent and Community Involvement** | **Integrated Services** | **Community Development** | **Learning Program** |
| **School Effectiveness** | | | | |
| **Staff Team** | | | | |
| Community **School Council** | | | | |
| **Process for Ongoing Renewal** | | | | |
| **School Culture and Climate** | | | | |

Once the issues have been identified from the stakeholder consultation process they are then priorized in order of importance. Answering YES to the following questions may help you in selecting the most appropriate issues:

1. Is there an adequate level of agreement about the questions to be asked?
2. Is the information required to answer the questions available and accessible?
3. Are the questions clear and answerable?
4. Are the questions of central importance to the program evaluation?
5. Will the answers to the questions provide sufficient information to assess the evaluation objectives?

The Community School Council should periodically reconsider the issues to be addressed because issues may change or lose importance as the evaluation progresses, and it may be necessary to revise the focus or scope of the evaluation.

### *Locating and Assigning Resources*

Before embarking on the evaluation, the Council should decide what resources are likely to be available for the evaluation. Specific responsibilities will be assigned to certain people on the evaluation team for conducting the evaluation. Decisions will have to be made about how the evaluation will be managed and who will be responsible for each aspect.

An estimation of cost for supplies, time expenditures and human resources is needed. Evaluation costs are not often very high.

### *Finalizing and Assigning Priorities to Goals and Objectives*

Once the final list of priority issues has been drawn and resources have been designated, the basis for finalizing the objectives for the evaluation are set. You may find that some issues will have surfaced that do not fit within the objectives the Council had originally set. Or, after reviewing the resources you have available to conduct the evaluation, some of the original objectives will simply not be feasible to include.

This is a good time to reassess your goals and objectives to determine if they should be altered in light of the questions your stakeholders think are important to explore in the evaluation, and whether you have the time, resources and skills to adequately address them all. In cases where there are many priority areas, the Council may have to opt for an evaluation approach where different program areas are reviewed one by one; a rotational approach to evaluation.

### *Setting Standards*

In order to make an assessment of whether or not the Community School program is making an impact, the Council has to be clear about what the program is attempting to achieve. Statements are written that describe the intended or desired performance standards of the program. An example of a standard to use as a measure of attaining a program goal is given in the following chart.

| *PROGRAM GOAL* | *STANDARD* |
|---|---|
| Increased participation in management by Indian and Métis people. | Indian and Métis people are to be represented across all occupational ranks of the school staff. |

### *Developing a Work Sehedule*

A logical next step is to develop a practical schedule for carrying out the evaluation. Each task to be completed for the evaluation is listed along with a completion date, resources required and personnel who are assigned to the responsibility.

## 2. DESIGN THE EVALUATION

Once you have drawn clear parameters for the evaluation, the next major part involves putting together a design that maps out the strategy for the actual conduct of the evaluation.

There are essentially three steps to development in the evaluation design:

- Choosing evaluation questions
- Identifying the sources of information
- Selecting the tools to collect the information

By working through these steps the purposes for the evaluation can be linked to its intended use.

### *Choosing Evaluation Questions*

The objectives that are selected for the evaluation serve as the basis for formulating questions. For example, an objective related to the goal of leadership in educational innovation could be "What has been done to ensure that instructional delivery strategies are compatible with students learning styles and have been incorporated into the learning program?". And, from this objective, a number of questions listed below could be generated:

1. What specifically has been introduced to the instructional design of the learning program to accommodate student learning styles?
2. To what extent are the students exhibiting improvements as a response to accommodating their learning styles in the delivery of instruction?
3. Is the selection of instructional delivery strategies the most appropriate choice out of all the possible alternatives?

Because the list of possible questions to address in an evaluation could be very large, decisions about which questions to be included are essential.

## *Identifying Sources of Information*

There are many appropriate data sources to choose from when evaluating the Community School program.

| *Some are printed:* | *Some are human:* | *Some are documentary:* |
|---|---|---|
| • learning program curriculum | • students | • test results |
| • texts | • teachers | · records |
| • teacher resources | • administrators | · meeting minutes |
| • student materials | • parents | • policy statements |
| • the Community School Plan | • community groups | • financial statements |
| • previous studies or evaluations | • trustees | · staff work reports, time sheets |
| | • government officials | |

## *Selecting the Tools to Collect Information*

Evaluations should use a variety of methods to investigate and gather information. There are three major methods of data collection:

### 1. RECORDING SYSTEMS

The most inexpensive source of information is the documentation and records that you already have on hand. As much as possible, it is very useful to develop a method of recording and feeding back information as an integral part of the Community School plan. Then when it comes time to assemble information for the evaluation, much of it will already be there.

### 2. SURVEYS

Surveys as a data collection method consist of interviews and questionnaires and are used to generate the following types of data:

- statistical data;
- feelings and opinions;
- interpretations and analyses of experiences;
- factual accounts of experiences.

### 3. OBSERVATION

Observations can generate information ranging from individual and group functioning through to the degree of integration of services. Observation methods require viewing an activity or condition and recording what is observed in a systematic way. These methods can be conducted in several ways and the methods selected depend on the purpose of the observation and what is being observed.

When deciding which data gathering technique to use it is helpful to consider:

- Design of the data collection tools - will the tool collect data that is useful and appropriate for making future decisions?
- Type of data - does the approach collect both objective and subjective data? Should it?
- Reporting upon the data collected - does the technique provide for easy interpretation and reporting?
- Personnel - does the method require large numbers of staff!
- Cost implications - do costs relate efficiently to benefits received?

The evaluation must be useful to the Community School and be relevant to the program goals and decision-making needs. Simple and non-threatening evaluative techniques ensure that individual sensitivities and needs are respected.

## 3. Write the Evaluation Plan

Formalizing the evaluation plan on paper provides something concrete to refer to along the way. It also ensures that everyone involved in the development of the evaluation is in agreement about its direction and process. The following suggested outline for the evaluation plan can be incorporated into the larger Community School Plan outlined in Appendix A:

- A brief description of the evaluation process
- The purpose for the evaluation
- A description of information collection and handling procedures
- A timeline
- A description of how the information will be used
- A budget

Once the evaluation plan is finalized by the Council, you might consider it helpful to pass it on to your school division central office and/or Saskatchewan Education to obtain feedback. There may be parts of your evaluation plan that you are uncertain about and either the school division or the Department could provide useful advice.

## 4. Conduct the Evaluation

When the plan is in place, the evaluation can begin. Space does not permit providing a comprehensive guide to conducting a program evaluation here. For further information on conducting a program evaluation please refer to:

- *Saskatchewan School-Based Program Evaluation Resource Book (1989)* available from the Saskatchewan Book Bureau;
- *A Program Evaluation Resource Book For Health Districts* (1995) produced by Saskatchewan Health;
- *Integrated School-Linked Services for Children and Youth at Risk: Implementation Guide* (1994) produced by Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment;

- *Saskatchewan's Prevention and Support Grants: A Guide to Evaluation,* produced by Saskatchewan's Action Plan for Children Steering Committee.

## 5. Process the Information

In general, the type of data analysis conducted is directly linked to the concerns of audiences, the type and quality of the results and the audiences' ability to understand summary information. Many evaluation studies require only descriptive information, presented in a convenient, useable and understandable format. Good data analysis will provide descriptions of the Community School program, highlighting those aspects relevant to particular issues or audiences.

Data analysis needs to be done throughout the evaluation process, not just at the end. It will need to be discussed by those on the Community Council, staff, and students. This is how the evaluation can be of most use in improving the program. It may also be necessary to adjust the focus of the evaluation if the original design isn't providing the information desired. New questions or issues may come to light that were not anticipated initially.

There are many ways to analyze evaluation data. The choice of analytical technique depends upon the types of information that have been gathered and their intended use, as well as the resources that are available for the analysis. Again, it is beyond the scope of this manual to provide the detail to guide analysis of survey results. Please consult the references listed on the previous page for more information.

## 6. Use the Evaluation Results

Evaluation is valuable only when it provides useful results which lead to decisions and actions. This final part of the evaluation involves:

- **Reflection**
- **Writing the Evaluation Report**
- **Acting on the Results**

### *Reflection*

At this point, the summarized data are reviewed with the intention of developing some generalized conclusions about the meaning. Decisions are made about how well the Community School is meeting both the objectives it set out for the program and the standards of program performance. It is a process of really taking stock of what has been accomplished.

Although it is a time-consuming procedure, this step of reviewing all the information and arriving at the conclusions and implications is the essence of the evaluation process. It is critical, then, to carry this out systematically, issue by issue. A draft of the conclusions can be circulated among the various audiences for reaction and modification.

During this step, the evaluation team spends some time in assessing the evaluation process itself, reflecting upon the effectiveness of the planning, organizing and information collection procedures. Conclusions about these and recommendations for change are noted for the next evaluation cycle.

### *Writing the Evaluation Report*

Results can be used to publicize the work your evaluation team has done, address specific issues that have come out of the evaluation, and to educate and orient new members to the Community School Council. It is important that results are presented in a user-friendly fashion so that they are easily understood by parents and the community at large.

The following outline illustrates one way of structuring an evaluation report:

I **Introduction**
II **Objectives of the Evaluation**
III **Methods and Procedures**
IV **Results**
V **Interpretation, Conclusions and Recommendations**
**(Appendices)**

The *Introduction* explains the purposes for conducting the evaluation and provides some background material to support the importance of the study. *Objectives of the Evaluation* illustrate what the evaluation is hoping to achieve. The manner in which the evaluation was conducted is specified in the *Methods and Procedures* section. In other words, this is the section where the design of the study is described. In the *Results* section, information is presented that ties the evaluation findings to the evaluation objectives. In Section V, all of the *interpretation* from reflections on the results can be freely expressed along with any *recommendations* or *conclusions* arrived at by the Council. The Appendices contain a copy of the data collection tools used in the study, detailed data and any other information that the Council feels is pertinent to the study.

A copy of the report should go to the school division central office and to Saskatchewan Education.

### *Acting on the Results*

The Community School Council can use the evaluation results to define more clearly what it wants to do, whom they want as partners, and why it should be done. These results essentially feed into the next program planning stage.

Evaluation will help the group to set clear, realistic objectives for future work. As well, the Council can use the information in the report to look at relationships that are useful (or not), and structures and processes and products that could be strengthened, eliminated, or changed.

# C CONTINUUM OF PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

| | MEETING BASIC NEEDS | DEVELOPING OPENNESS / TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION | SUPPORTING LEARNING AT HOME AND IN COMMUNITY | PARTICIPATING IN VOLUNTEER AND ADVISORY ROLES | BUILDING COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS | PARTICIPATING IN DECISION MAKING AND GOVERNANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Examples of Activities and Programs** | *At home...*<br>• safe, caring home environment<br>• adequate food, clothing, rest and shelter<br><br>*In school/community...*<br>• nutrition programs<br>• clothing exchanges<br>• "safe rooms"<br>• parenting education<br>• community kitchens | *At home...*<br>• advise teacher of students likes and dislikes<br>• attend meetings and events<br><br>*In school/community...*<br>welcoming school environment<br>parent, student, teacher conferences<br>school newsletters<br>home visits<br>surveys of parent opinion<br>community use of facilities | *At home...*<br>• interest in and encouragement for children's learning<br>creation of a study environment<br>reading to children<br><br>*In school/community...*<br>• mentoring<br>• community development activities for safe, stable communities<br><br>*In the school...*<br>family literacy programs<br>parent/family involvement encouraged in assignments<br>learning contracts between parents, teachers and students | attending/assisting with school events<br>fund raising<br>volunteering: classroom, field trip, library, lunchroom, etc.<br>room for volunteers/parents<br>storytelling/guest speakers<br>tutoring and students<br>newsletter coordination<br>leading 4-H, drama, photography, etc. clubs<br>parent centres<br>providing advice on school issues/programs<br>deciding on policy issues such as school code of conduct, student discipline, etc. | financial and "in kind" contributions<br>• business partnerships & sponsorships<br>integrated services<br>• community development<br>youth community service/work experience<br>• in-school daycare<br>early intervention preschool | • planning, problem solving<br>• making decisions about:<br>- budget<br>- program adaptations<br>- priorities<br>- criteria for staff and/or staffing<br>- school facilities<br>• training in leadership and decision making skills<br>• program assessment<br>• shared management of project, program or school<br>• partnerships with Indian and Métis peoples |
| **Structure** | self-help groups<br>school council * | • school/community liaison program<br>• school/community council | • school/community council<br>• school/community liaison program | • volunteer programs<br>• school/community council<br>• school/community liaison program | • advisory committees<br>• interagency committees<br>• school/community council | school/community councils<br>district board of trustees<br>decentralization of authority<br>co-management board<br>agreement schools<br>associate schools<br>board of education |

➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ Increased collaboration with educators, shared responsibility for education, and participation in decision making ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤ ➤

* School Council is used as the term for a parent/community council connected to the school. These councils may be called by many names including: parent council, Home and School Association, parent/teacher association, Local School Advisory Committee, School/Community Association, etc. It should also be understood that the range of responsibilities for such a group may vary widely from planning and coordination of volunteer programs through advisory capacities and initiating collaborative partnerships to shared decision-making and shared management responsibilities

D

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Community development is the process through which community members and organizations become empowered and improve their own lives. It provides a structure through which they can develop the skills and attitudes necessary for increasing levels of responsibility on school councils and in other organizations.

Specifically, community development is an educational and motivating *process* that engages community members and organizations and empowers them to participate actively in improving the quality of their lives. The key elements in a community development process include:

1. **Realization of the Issue/Needs Identification** - This sometimes occurs spontaneously, as when a group of people get together over coffee and discover that they all share a common concern. It sometimes occurs in more structured ways through community surveys or through discussions at a series of community meetings to define the problem or challenge.
2. **Community Readiness** - This involves assessing the readiness of the community for development.
3. **Community Animation** - Animation is required at the local level to:
   - identify and involve key people and groups who should be involved;
   - create the environment for informed decision-making by the community including research into the cause of the problem and possible solutions.
4. **Achieving Consensus** - Consensus is achieved on the framing of the issue/problem and the desired solution/action.
5. **Action Planning and Resource Mobilization** - This includes identifying resources (people, money and facilities), establishing a time frame and developing a plan to achieve the mutually agreed upon goal. Resource mobilization includes getting community and government agencies working together collaboratively, recruiting volunteers and fund raising in the community.
6. **Local Involvement/Inclusive Process** - Community groups are involved in goal setting, strategic planning and implementation which requires bringing together interested contributors and nurturing local leadership.
7. **Capacity Building** - Community skills are developed and fostered to generate and support local development. Attention is paid to group dynamics and leadership development.
8. **Enabling Environment** - Supports must be created and barriers removed to encourage community initiatives. This means ensuring that structures and systems such as rules, policies and incentives are in place to support taking initiative.
9. **Partnerships and Networking** - This means a shared commitment to pursue agreed-upon goals jointly and in a coordinated manner. Networking is the building of partnerships with other communities and permits the mobilization of resources.
10. **Action, Evaluation and Ongoing Development** (Continuous Renewal).

E

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### *At Risk*

"Children are at risk if they are likely to fail - either in school or in life" (Frymier and Gansneder, 1989). "A student defined as 'at risk' is one who because of social, economic, physical, or academic problems may not graduate from high school in the traditional manner" (Moskowitz, 1989 in Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, 1993).

### *Collaboration*

Collaboration among different people and organizations is the most sophisticated level of a cooperative/partnership relationship. It is a more intensive and jointly planned effort by people or organizations over a mutual concern that results in a mutually desired outcome. It is a relationship in which the parties share common goals, mutual commitments, resources, decision-making, and evaluation responsibilities. It involves a common goal with a clearly articulated and shared commitment that is within the scope of the general goals of the collaborating agencies (Swan and Morgan, 1993).

### *Community*

A group of people bound together through mutual interest and sense of shared destiny. The "boundaries" can be geographical (a neighbourhood, town, city or region> or non-geographical (such as an ethnic or interest group, school, or workplace). Communities are self-defining. For Community Schools, the community usually includes the geographic area surrounding the school and human service agencies and community groups that are involved with the school. In many cases these agencies and groups may be located outside the immediate geographic area.

### *Community Animation*

A process that encourages and fosters coordinated activity among community members.

### *Community Development*

A learning process where the group dynamic develops to the extent that people are comfortable and confident in the value and worth of their contribution. The group becomes 'animated' at the point where they are motivated or inspired to create new ideas and discover how to steer their social an economic affairs in new directions.

### *Cooperation*

Cooperation is a process of working together informally to achieve the day-to-day goals of the group(s) or organization(s). It represents a superficial level of agency interaction. People/agencies are aware of one another and interact to provide general information, support, or referrals.

### *Culture*

The complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, laws, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man and woman as a member of society (adapted from the Report of the Saskatchewan Arts Strategy Task Force).

### *Cultural Services*

Services provided by either government or non-government agencies that:

- increase self-esteem, self worth, and confidence in individuals from various groups;
- develop people in a holistic way: mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually;
- teach a way of life so people of diverse cultures can understand and respect each other: and,
- increase the linkage and resource sharing with other cultural organizations.

### *Early Intervention*

The necessary mental, physical, social and emotional supports that are developed and put in place for young children at risk to prevent or lessen the need for more intrusive intervention later on.

### *Education Equity*

All students have the opportunity to experience success and to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to contribute meaningfully to society. The principle goes beyond equality of opportunity where everyone is treated the same, to fostering a barrier-free environment where individuals benefit equally. The scope of equity can include, but is not limited to:

- Indian and Métis students and adults of both genders, persons with disabilities and visible minorities;
- employment equity;
- curriculum and instruction materials;
- instructional and assessment practices;
- cross cultural education;
- equity in access and benefit;
- school environment;
- student development;
- the school and the community;
- monitoring; and
- leadership development/organizational change and development.

### *Employment Equity*

A comprehensive planning process adopted by an employer to:

- identify and eliminate discrimination in employment procedures and policies;
- remedy the effects of past discrimination;
- ensure appropriate representation of designated groups throughout an employer's workforce (Employment and Immigration Canada, Employment Systems Review).

### *Empowerment*

Strengthening the participation of an individual, group or community in decision-making and control of resources.

### *Equity*

Equity recognizes the value of differences. It also recognizes that not everyone benefits equally from being offered the same opportunities. Equity provides for different treatment where the same treatment will provide unequal effects for members of disadvantaged groups (Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment, 199410).

### *Family*

Families have many forms and it is the family relationships that are critical to a child's well-being. A family can be defined as any combination of two or more persons bound together by ties of mutual consent, birth and/or adoption/placement and who, together, assume responsibility for variant combinations of some of the following: physical maintenance and care of group members; addition of new members through procreation or adoption; socialization of children; social control of members; production, consumption, and distribution of goods and services; and affective nurturance (Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment, 1994b).

### *Indian*

Includes all Indian people and is not necessarily limited to those who fall within the strict meaning of the federal government's Indian Act. Many persons may consider themselves to be of Indian ancestry, but federal definitions limit the number of persons able to claim legal status as an Indian (adapted from Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment, 1994b).

### *Human Services*

Education, health, mental health, social, justice, recreation, culture, and housing services that are provided within or outside of school by community or government agencies that contribute to the well-being of students and their families.

### *Integrated Services*

Integrated Services use collaborative processes to planning to develop new ways of delivering services that are more coordinated, comprehensive, and responsive in addressing the complex and diverse needs of students and families at risk.

### *Integration*

Defining and dealing with the whole rather than the parts. It means ensuring consistency of principles, goals, objectives, strategies, and actions, and combining products or services into a whole (Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment, 1994b).

### *Métis*

Refers to those who descended from the historic Métis community in Western Canada or to persons of Indian and Métis ancestry who identify themselves as M&is.

### *Participation*

The people involved in or impacted by an issue or initiative have a share in the planning and the outcome (Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment, 1994b).

### *Partnership*

Partnership means a shared commitment to pursue agreed-upon goals jointly and in a coordinated manner. Joint planning and shared decision-making are characteristics of an effective partnership (Government of Saskatchewan, 1994a).

### *Planning*

A process by which direction, goals, strategies, targets, and actions are set (Saskatchewan Education, Training and Employment, 1994b).

### *Policy*

A definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions. A policy is a set of strategies designed to achieve a desired state of affairs (specific objectives). It is a concrete expression of values, which involves the distribution of resources and power. A policy has three key components: objectives, strategies, and outcomes.

### *Poverty*

According to Statistics Canada, the after tax low-income cut-offs are measured as the point at which poor families devote an above-average proportion (56%) of their limited income to the basic necessities of food, clothing, and shelter. (Statistics Canada, 1993).

### *Prevention*

Prevention refers to the avoidance of disadvantage, illness, injury, disability, neglect, and abuse and their consequences.

F

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