

Consultation Practices: A Learning Alberta and Building and Educating Tomorrow's Workforce.

Jurisdiction: Alberta

Contact: Bruce McDonald

Level: Post-Secondary

Theme: Government or board policies

Description of Practice:

The Alberta Ministry of Advanced Education and Technology, together with other provincial ministries, has engaged in a series of recent consultations with First Nation and Métis stakeholders to discuss ways to work together to improve Aboriginal participation in post-secondary learning opportunities and the labour force. These consultations have contributed to the development and public release of two major policy documents namely: *A Learning Alberta: Final Report of the Steering Committee* and *Building and Educating Tomorrow's Workforce*.

Background:

A Learning Alberta

In February 2005, Advanced Education began to engage in an ongoing conversation with key advanced education stakeholders including First Nation and Métis organizations through a number of regional consultations as part of *A Learning Alberta*, a 20 year strategic plan to shape the future of advanced education in the province. The Minister then asked representatives from a wide range of learning perspectives to serve on a Steering Committee tasked with identifying a new vision and policy direction for Alberta's advanced education system.

From the regional consultations, the Steering Committee developed a draft policy framework that was presented to a Minister's Forum held November 1-2, 2005. As a result of discussion at the Forum three priority areas were identified and three sub-committees were created to build upon the comprehensive review of the province's advanced learning system. An Aboriginal Learning Sub-Committee was created to focus on the learning needs of Aboriginal learners.

The paper, *A Learning Alberta, Setting the Direction: Partnerships in Action: First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learning Access and Success*, was produced and fed into production of the Steering Committee's Final Report which was released in May 2006. The Final Report and Sub-Committee Reports and Recommendations can be found on the department's website at <http://www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/learningalberta/>. Over the past year and a half, over 3000 Albertans have provided their thoughts and input on the future of Alberta's advanced learning system.

Building and Educating Tomorrow's Workforce

After extensive consultation, led by Alberta Human Resources and Employment and Advanced Education, the Alberta government has released its long-term labour force development strategy: *Building and Educating Tomorrow's Workforce*.

The 10-year draft strategy is designed to meet Alberta's current and future labour needs. It will ensure individuals and businesses are able to compete within an increasingly global and knowledge-based economy. The strategy focuses on:

- improving the supply of appropriately skilled workers;
- developing highly skilled, educated and innovative people that reach their full potential; and
- fostering work environments that can take advantage of innovation and technology.

Specific consultations were held with First Nation and Métis stakeholders and a number of actions identified in the document are aimed at improving Aboriginal labour force participation. The document can be found at

http://www.hre.gov.ab.ca/documents/WIA/WIA-BETW_strategy.pdf.

Development:

The Government of Alberta continues to consider the recommendations identified in the Steering Committee's Final Report. Advanced Education and Technology emphasis moving forward will be less focused on discussions around jurisdiction/responsibility and more directed towards taking action in collaboration with key stakeholders in the advanced education system. The Ministry will continue to develop a partnership framework with First Nations, Métis and Inuit stakeholders based on the principles of trust, openness, respect and quality. The aim is to create more access and success within the full spectrum of advanced learning opportunities for First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. The partnerships will focus more on initiatives aimed at improving learner success through enhanced access, quality programs and adequate learner supports.

Evidence:

Consultations with First Nation and Métis stakeholders have led to a better knowledge and understanding of issues by both government and Aboriginal leaders.

Adaptability:

Consultation events and practices, including a Minister's Forum, can be easily adapted by other jurisdictions.

Further information:

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