

## **Building Student Success with Aboriginal Parents Fund**

Jurisdiction: Manitoba

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Level: K – 12

Theme: Community-based practices

### Description of Practice:

In May 2004, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth Minister Peter Bjornson committed \$400,000 for three years to increase the involvement of Aboriginal parents in education. The fund will help reach parents and provide the tools to help Manitoba Aboriginal students to complete their education and gain the skills necessary to pursue future career goals.

### Background:

The initiative will increase the level of involvement of Aboriginal parents in the education process and significantly increase the range of opportunities available to their children. The funding assists schools to develop partnerships and programs with parents and the community which will contribute to the educational success of Aboriginal students.

### Development:

Thirty-eight projects have been funded for up to \$15,000 per year. A maximum of 10% of the budget is also available for professional development. School divisions submit multi-year (three year) proposals and funding is spread throughout the province. Three staff, one full time and two part-time, provide consultation to all the 38 site locations. The Building Student Success with Aboriginal Parents (BSSAP) initiative is targeted at Aboriginal parent engagement initiatives that are clearly and directly focused on increasing Aboriginal student success in school. The past three years of the fund produced initiatives that were developed locally, based on effective practices.

The BSSAP Initiative continues for the 2007-2008 school year. Funding to existing BSSAP sites will be determined based on submission of a brief proposed project plan outlining continuation of the existing/ongoing project, or a description of a new project plan, and a brief budget using the format for financial reporting related to the BSSAP.

The 2007-08 funding includes an increase of \$100,000. Projects can now request a maximum amount of \$20,000. The fund will also expand to include four new schools selected from the Community Schools Partnership Initiative so as to facilitate complementary effort.

The BSSAP initiative has hosted and funded a Gathering each fall for the past three years. This event brings together parents of Aboriginal students with school representatives who are implementing BSSAP projects to learn and share ideas and experiences that will enhance Aboriginal parent involvement in education. In 2007 projects sites will be expected to support this gathering by allocating some of their BSSAP funding for that purpose.

### Evidence:

The 38 demonstration projects across the province engage Aboriginal parents/families in the educational life of their children. The activities include: engaging parents through various strategies, meeting with project teams two times during the year, gathering and understanding data and survey results, regional workshops with community focus, assessment of consultation with Aboriginal parents, video taping of projects, nurturing the development of education in improved behaviours and improved learning.

Adaptability:

Several BSSAP practices could be applied in other settings: conciliation between school and home, child support guidelines developed by parents and teacher, parent plans, improved engagement and community relations, and best practices being shared at yearly gatherings.

Further information:

At the Fall 2006 BSSAP gathering, the "Aboriginal Parent Guide" was launched by the Minister of Education Peter Bjornson.

A BSSAP Video is being produced highlighting some selected project sites in various areas of the province that has experienced successes in their initiatives to involve parents in education.

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