

## **Sākewew High School**

Jurisdiction: Saskatchewan

Contact: Ted Amendt

Level: K – 12

Theme: Organisational/structural

### Description of Practice:

In 2002, an Aboriginal high school, Sākewew, was created in the city of North Battleford. This high school serves grades 9-12 Aboriginal students from the community. The high school was created through a partnership process. Working in partnership with First Nations and Métis peoples has led to successful graduation rates for Aboriginal students attending Sākewew High School.

### Background:

Demographic trends indicate a need to escalate efforts to improve the conditions of education for Aboriginal students. To date, the anticipated outcomes for First Nations and Métis children and young people in the provincial K-12 education system have not been fully realized. Overall, 48 percent of Aboriginal people have less than high school education versus 30.8% of the non-Aboriginal population. First Nations and Métis students continue to be over-represented among those not succeeding in or completing school. To ensure Saskatchewan's future sustainability, the provincial education system must address this challenge and create an education system that meets the needs of First Nations and Métis students.

In response to this, Saskatchewan Learning actively promotes and engages in partnerships with First Nations and Métis peoples at all levels of the education system. Sākewew is an example of how partnerships can be created to respond to the unique needs of First Nations and Métis students.

### Development:

In January 2001, Battlefords Tribal Council (BTC) entered into discussions with officials of the Battlefords School Division and North West Catholic School Division to explore the possibility of establishing a high school that would better meet the needs of First Nations students. A feasibility study was undertaken and a partnership was formed between all three parties. Both Saskatchewan Learning and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) have been supported of this partnership. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in January 2002. The school opened its doors to students in September 2002.

Evidence:

Sākwew has on average 200 students attending. The students are supported by a wide variety of services provided by partners including mental health, justice, health, addiction counselors, etc. The staff note that after four years of operation, the partnership between BTC, Living Sky School Division (formerly Battlefords School Division), and North West Catholic School division is still active and strong. In June 2005 67 Aboriginal students graduated. The high school continues to offer strong cultural programming to meet the diverse needs of First Nations students. The staff continues to identify attendance as an area for improvement.

In year one the school graduated 13 students, year two 24 graduates, and in year three 67 graduates.

Adaptability:

The creation of partnerships with First Nations and Métis peoples and school divisions facilitates opportunities for shared decision-making. Based upon mutually agreed principles, these partnerships will lead to a shared vision of education which appropriately includes Aboriginal peoples and achieves successful outcomes for First Nations and Métis students. Partnerships continue to represent formalization of relationships between the provincial school system and Aboriginal peoples and are designed to maximize student benefit and achievement.

Further Information:

Ted Amendt

Superintendent, First Nations and Métis Education,  
Saskatchewan Learning  
[tamendt@sasked.gov.sk.ca](mailto:tamendt@sasked.gov.sk.ca) (306) 933-7630