

BATC Education

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Newsletter #3

This newsletter is part of our communications strategy to keep you informed of what is happening with Battlefords Agency Tribal Chiefs Education (BATC Education). In addition, we do have a website established (<http://www.batc.ca>) and will post jobs, BATC Education Board minutes and detailed information up-dates under the education tab.

This issue features some of our personnel informing you about their activities rather than having me relate what they are doing. Pat Bugler, Enhancement Coach, Literacy Consultant, Lynn Semchuk, Barry Werth, Superintendent and Project Manager, Celia Deschambeault, Cree Language and Culture Coordinator,

By the time you read this it will be well into the New Year and BATC Education will be starting to look at budgets for the 2011/12 fiscal year that goes from April 1st, 2011, to March 31st of 2012. Many of the projects started last year will continue into next year with the addition of a stronger focus on mathematics.

Barry Werth, Superintendent and Program Manager:

This has been a busy year organizing and implementing the first of this three year First Nations Student Success Program (FNSS Program). Although much material and equipment has been purchased our priority has been to provide teacher training emphasizing the best practice and methodology. We believe that skilled teachers using the best programs is key to approaching and then reaching comparable student achievement levels in all subject areas. This will not happen quickly but we aim to show sufficient success so that funding for this three year program can be extended for future years. This year Literacy training (reading and writing) has been the principal focus and next year mathematics will be the priority. At the end of this fiscal year (March 31) the new money from FNSS will have been used to provide for each of our schools to total the following:

- Literacy and math texts and materials, teacher training and support - \$500,000
- Computers ,servers, software, data management systems, service and support - \$250,000
- Guidance Counselor services - \$100,000

A substantial increase in funding has been applied for in Year Two to provide for additional student support and remediation opportunities and for Culture-Elders input into the schools.

Lynn Semchuk, Literacy Consultant:

Lynn Semchuk, our Literacy Consultant along with our Educational Psychometrician, Erin Johnston, have tested a sample group from each grade (1-6) at each of our five schools using the Gray's Oral Reading Test. The results give us information of the student's reading fluency and comprehension. These tests provide excellent information for unit and lesson planning, reading interventions, and gaps in reading. Student success can now be monitored and measured. All the data is being compiled and presented to the teachers.

Many new culturally based books have been purchased and distributed to the schools. Great literature supports both the PWIM and Animated Literacy programs which have been our focus this year. Our teachers have had monthly professional development with our reading specialist, Marilyn Hrycauk. Her expertise in the PWIM (Picture Word Induction Model) has been inspirational, educational and challenging. Lynn has also attended the English Language Arts Curriculum Meeting in Saskatoon. It was wonderful to see that we are implementing the same inquiry learning methods (PWIM) that the province is advocating.

Lynn attended the Animated Literacy Conference in Edmonton with author Jim Stone. This program is an excellent brain –based learning approach to reading. Our students love the actions and songs. There is tons of excitement and joy in the classrooms while students are developing their reading skills.

Patrick Bugler - Enhancement Coach:

The first few months with BATC Education have been enjoyable. Teacher supervision and evaluation is a major part of my position with BATC. Principals have been involved in three days of professional development on the topic of teacher supervision and evaluation. The focus of our efforts has been to include the Principals in the supervisory process, as these individuals are in the schools every day. It is important that our focus of supervision deals with teacher support and student achievement and learning.

Many of the BATC teachers have stated that they have not had a formal evaluation done in the time they have spent with their school. The purpose of these evaluations is to assist not only individual teachers, but to help direct BATC Education in the needs of the teachers to provide the best instruction possible for the students of BATC schools. Our member schools have a total of 58 teachers, 24 of which have been earmarked for a formal evaluation process.

The major focus of our technology initiative for BATC Education is to utilize computerized data management and to incorporate technology into the daily educational activities of teachers and students. The OpenAdmin school data management software is in the process of being implemented to track demographics, attendance, academics and behaviour for all BATC students. The SMARTBoard technology allows students and teachers to participate in interactive activities. BATC Education will have three people certified to deliver beginner/intermediate training to new teachers and teachers looking to use the SMARTBoards more extensively in their planning.

In Assessment for Learning, last year's focus was on Writing. BATC students did not fare well in the assessment. However, the results enabled us to direct our professional development on the improvement of writing conventions for BATC students. Each year, the Ministry of Education completes a different area in Assessment for Learning, with the area being Mathematics and Reading. Assessment for Learning activities will occur in Spring of 2011.

Celia Deschambeault, Cree Language and Culture Coordinator:

Tansi! A lot of work has been done in the area of Cree Language and Culture. I have had several meetings with the Cree Language Teachers regarding curriculum development and we have created an outline or year plan of what topics the Cree Language Teachers will be teaching. There have been a fair number of resources distributed to each school which will benefit the Cree and Culture programs. I am also developing materials as requested by the teachers. An Elders Program manual is under development and is near completion. In order to move in the right direction an Elder's Gathering has been planned and set for January 27th and 28th. The focus of this gathering is Plains Cree education and I am anticipating valuable information will be shared that will set the direction of BATC Cree Language and Culture. A culture day camp is currently being planned for all BATC schools in March. Tēniki

BATC Education Staff:

BATC Education has hired new staff to help provide the services and program support within our five schools. In addition to the staff listed in Newsletter 2 the following staff have been hired by BATC Education:

Literacy and Math Mentor	Ceciellia Swiftwolfe (full-time)(Moosomin);
Literacy and Math Mentor	Lynetta Whitecap (full-time)(Saulteaux);
Literacy and Math Mentor	Lorna Night (full-time)(Saulteaux);
Literacy and Math Mentor	Curtis Ledoux (full-time)(Ahtahkakoop);
Literacy and Math Mentor	Roxanne Montenuue (full-time)(Ahtahkakoop);
Literacy and Math Mentor	Arletta Ahenakew (full-time)(Ahtahkakoop);
Literacy and Math Mentor	Dianne Peekeekoot (full-time)(Ahtahkakoop);
Education Assistant Trainee	Becky Ahenakew (temporary full-time)(Ahtahkakoop);
Education Assistant Trainee	Teala Ahenakew (temporary full-time)(Ahtahkakoop);
Education Assistant Trainee	Blair Gopher (temporary full-time)(Saulteaux);
Education Assistant Trainee	Jeremiah Gopher (temporary full-time)(Saulteaux);
Education Assistant Trainee	Connie Swiftwolfe (temporary full-time)(Moosomin);
Education Assistant Trainee	Celeste Gopher (temporary full-time)(Saulteaux);
Education Assistant Trainee	Nadia Kahpeaysewat (temporary full-time)(Moosomin);
Education Assistant Trainee	Nicole Wuttunee (temporary full-time)(Red Pheasant);
Education Assistant Trainee	Anita Pahsahnunk (temporary full-time)(Red Pheasant);

The Education Assistant Trainee positions for our schools receive funding through the First Nations and Inuit Employment Strategy Skills Link Program (FNIYES). These positions will be in place until March 31, 2011. The trainees are trained as Educational Associates and receive both training and job experience through the schools. Training consists of three courses from Credenda (distance learning from Prince Albert) in their Educational Assistant Certificate program.

End Note:

The education of our children is extremely important. The Elders have told us that the students today not only need their language and culture but must also be able to function in today's world. BATC Education is committed to this vision and will work very hard to enhance the programs already established and to build additional supports for student success. We welcome and encourage parent and grandparent involvement in the education of their children. Students do much better in school when they know those around them value and support their education. Please make time to visit the school and attend the meetings designed to enhance the children's education. I wish you all the best in the New Year.

Stuart Keys, Director of Education