



Rainbow Spirit Research Project

Backgrounder and Survey Results

The Rainbow Spirit Project provides Aboriginal education to over 300 Aboriginal students in an integrated setting. In addition, there are approximately 3,200 Aboriginal students in the Edmonton Catholic School District.

The Rainbow Spirit Project began in September of 2001 as a pilot project and is offered in the following Edmonton Catholic Schools:

- Annunciation Elementary
- St. Elizabeth Seton Elementary/Junior High
- St. Alphonsus Elementary/Junior High
- St. Joseph High
- St. Francis Xavier High

The Rainbow Spirit Project schools provide:

- Aboriginal, on-site teacher and community liaisons
- Enhanced cultural programming
- Staff education and professional development
- Innovation curricular adaptation and integration
- Identification of appropriate educational resources
- Career and leadership development
- Transition programming and support

Exciting Provincial Achievement Test Results

Elementary/Junior High School

In the second year of the pilot project, the percentage of Aboriginal students in pilot project schools achieving 'Acceptable Standard' on Provincial Achievement Tests increased dramatically:

Grade 3

- **78.9%** of students achieved the Acceptable Standard in English Language Arts (compared to 26% in 2001/2002)
- **85%** of students achieved the Acceptable Standard in Mathematics (compared to 42% in 2001/2002)

Grade 6

- **70.6%** of students achieved the Acceptable Standard in English Language Arts (compared to 35.3% in 2001/2002)
- **70.6%** of students achieved the Acceptable Standard in Science (compared to 47% in 2001/2002)
- **63.2%** of students achieved the Acceptable Standard in Social Studies (compared to 35.3% in 2001/2002)

Grade 9

- **77%** of students achieved the Acceptable Standard in English Language Arts (compared to 50% in 2001/2002)

High School

- More Aboriginal students were enrolled in high school courses in 2002/2003 for both the pilot project schools as well as the six other schools.
- Pilot project student enrollment increased in the 10, 20, 30 streams in all core subject areas except social studies

Survey Findings

At the end of the 2002 -03 school year, a survey was compiled and administered to approximately 3,000 Aboriginal and Non - Aboriginal students in the pilot project schools as well as six schools that are not in the project. Here are the results of the survey:

Pilot School Teachers

- 82% were satisfied with teacher in-servicing
- 80% were satisfied with the **increased student personal support** provided
- 77% were satisfied with the **teaching strategies** and curricular support provided through the Rainbow Spirit Project

- More than one-third of pilot school teachers identified that they had initiated **changes in their teaching methods and class content** as a direct result of the project.

Aboriginal Parents (Pilot Schools)

- 100% of parents surveyed felt it was **beneficial to have Aboriginal staff** in their child's school
- 91% satisfied with the integration of Aboriginal culture and views into the curriculum
- 97% felt **welcome** in their child's school
- 96% were **satisfied with the learning environment** at their child's school
- 90% were satisfied with opportunities to be involved in decisions affecting their children.
- 92% satisfied with cultural programs and activities
- 91% were satisfied with Parent -teacher interviews
- More than one half of parents had **participated in school events**
- More than one quarter of parents reported they **volunteered** at their child's school during the past year

Overall, 90% of parents were satisfied with the quality of education their child/ern received.

Summary

To better meet the needs of all Aboriginal students in the Edmonton Catholic School District, the practices currently employed by the Rainbow Spirit Project pilot schools will be implemented district-wide.

“Our world is changing. Let us put our minds together. Take the promising of two worlds and make a better life for our children. “
– Sitting Bull, Sioux Chief