



Council of Elders Identifies Priorities

Since its inception in May of this year, the Council of Elders (the first Council of its kind in Alberta) has developed an Action Plan that sets priorities for the Council for 2008 – 2009. The Action Plan supports one of the District’s priorities that deals with Aboriginal Education: ‘Ensure high levels of success for self-identified First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) students in Edmonton Catholic Schools.’

The Council, which consists of up to 10 Elder members, has met several times to compile the plan to ensure it is representative of the Aboriginal population it serves. The plan includes three Goals; the first is to provide advisement and guidance to the Edmonton Catholic School Board within the context of the Provincial model of education; the second goal is to provide traditional guidance and support to staff and students in matters pertaining to traditional teachings and cross cultural issues within the school and community and the third goal is to provide counsel and support for FNMI recruitment and staffing. Highlights of the plan include:

- Lobby government to create a stronger voice on behalf of the FNMI students in the province,
- Participate actively in the delivery of instruction by sharing language and culture from an FNMI perspective,
- Provide support to FNMI students to encourage and foster Language and Culture from an Aboriginal perspective,
- Hold traditional healing circles as an alternative to conflict resolution,
- Provide professional development opportunities for all staff to create a greater awareness of the Aboriginal culture and increase the numbers of FNMI teaching staff.

“This is an exciting time for Aboriginal education,” said Council of Elders member Betty Lafferty, an elder who has worked with the District for over four years, “If the Council nurtures Aboriginal students this will not only benefit the District’s 2,589 Aboriginal students but also future generations,” Lafferty went on to say.

“The Council of Elders provides an important link with the Aboriginal community and has helped the Board develop a deeper cultural understanding of Aboriginals,” said Board Chairperson Debbie Engel. “The Council will build on the successes we have already achieved with Aboriginal education and help to meet the needs of an increase in FNMI students; expected to be 15% of school age children by 2012,” Engel stated.

For more information call:

LORI NAGY

- Manager of Media & Public Relations
- 780 441-6189 (office)
- 780 991-6363 (cell)