

# Table of Contents

<b>Prayers</b> .....	<b>ii</b>	<b>Code of Ethics</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>World Views</b> .....	<b>iii</b>	The Sacred Tree	
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>2</b>	<b>National Aboriginal Day</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>	<b>Greeting and Thanking Traditional Visitors</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>Guiding the Way</b> .....	<b>4</b>	Why Involve Elders and/or Senators?	
Bruce MacPherson, Director of Education		Elder and Senator Protocol	
Mary Anne Alton, Director of Education		Senator Protocol	
Committee Chair, FNMI Advisory Committee		Seeking an Elder and/or Senator	
<b>Ensuring Success for Schools</b> .....	<b>5</b>	<b>Traditional Wisdom</b> .....	<b>38</b>
<b>Terminology</b> .....	<b>6</b>	Circle Traditions and Teachings	
<b>Canada’s First Nations, Métis and Inuit. 11</b>		Ojibway Medicine Wheel	
First Nations, Métis and Inuit in Ontario		Plains Cree Medicine Wheel	
Sharing of Knowledge		Medicines (Four Sacred Plants)	
Anishinaabe		Seven Gifts of the Grandfathers	
Ojii-cree Anishiniimowin		FNMI Traditions and Celebrations	
Muskegowuk		Traditional Feasts	
Métis		Contemporary Feasts	
Inuit		The Pow-Wow	
<b>Residential Schools</b> .....	<b>19</b>	Sweat Lodge Ceremony	
What are Residential Schools?		Rendezvous	
History		Métis Jigging	
Impacts		<b>Creating a Welcoming Learning</b> <b>Environment</b> .....	<b>44</b>
Situations		Parent/Guardian Involvement	
Effects		Sample Activities	
Today		Office/Front Foyer/Student Services Office	
Talking Shadows on the Wall by Sylvia O’Meara		Library	
What can you do?		Cafeteria/Other Bulletin Boards	
Text of Prime Minister’s Apology		<b>FNMI Advisory Committee</b> .....	<b>47</b>
<b>About Treaties</b> .....	<b>25</b>	<b>Weblinks</b> .....	<b>48</b>
What is a Treaty?		<b>FNMI Community Agency Contacts</b> .....	<b>51</b>
Treaty Rights		<b>First Nation Communities of Ontario</b> .....	<b>52</b>
Historical Indian Treaties Map		<b>Métis Community Council Map</b> .....	<b>53</b>
Timelines and Treaties			
<b>Best Practices: Including First Nations, Métis and Inuit in the Curriculum</b> .....	<b>29</b>		

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Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, currency, and reliability of the content. Neither our two Boards nor Lakehead Public Schools accept responsibility for such errors or omissions.

It is the hope that this will be a living document subject to revisions and updates as such are needed. As new ways to more clearly convey First Nation, Métis, and Inuit information and issues to staff arise, the bi-board First Nation, Métis, Inuit Advisory Committee will consider what needs to be updated in the guide posted on our Board websites at [www.bgcdsb.org](http://www.bgcdsb.org) and at [www.bwdsb.on.ca](http://www.bwdsb.on.ca).

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This document was submitted to the bi-board First Nation, Métis, Inuit Advisory Committee for review and input.



## Introduction

This handbook entitled “Guiding the Way: First Nations, Métis and Inuit, A Guide for Staff” is prepared for Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board and Bluewater District School Board staff and administrators. The information presented in this handbook is based on research, consultation and literature. The objective is to introduce the culture and traditions of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit, especially those living in our twin counties of Bruce and Grey.

According to the report “Ontario's New Approach to Aboriginal Affairs” (2005), First Nation, Métis and Inuit youth is the fastest-growing segment of the Canadian population. In Ontario, more than 50 per cent of the First Nation, Métis and Inuit population (on-and off-reserve) is under the age of 27. In our districts, both the public and Catholic school boards are implementing voluntary self-identification so that we can determine how to best meet the needs of the First Nation, Métis and Inuit students in our classes. Moreover, we are committed to improve the education of all students so that when they leave our schools they will have a solid education about First Nations, Métis and Inuit in our region, province and across Canada. With this realization, First Nation, Métis, Inuit and Ontario leaders are committing resources to improve education outcomes for First Nation, Métis, Inuit children and youth. First Nation, Métis and Inuit education is a key priority for the Ontario Ministry of Education for all students, staff and education administrators in Ontario. This staff guide is one of many projects directly funded through the Aboriginal Education Office of the Ontario Ministry of Education. Factors that can contribute to First Nation, Métis and Inuit student success are teaching strategies tailored to First Nation, Métis and Inuit learner needs, curriculum for all students with First Nation, Métis and Inuit perspectives, sound counseling and support services, a school environment that will make everyone feel welcome and parental engagement. Our district is committed to improving education through a solid understanding of First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures, histories and perspectives in our region, province and across Canada, which will allow sensitivity to specific First Nation, Métis and Inuit education needs.

Both Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board and Bluewater District School Board are committed to improving and supporting First Nation, Métis and Inuit student success by focusing on three priorities:

- 1) High Level of Student Achievement
- 2) Reduce Gaps in Student Achievement and
- 3) High Levels of Public Confidence.

These goals are consistent with the Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Policy Framework. This handbook entitled “Guiding the Way: First Nations, Métis and Inuit, A Guide for Staff” hopes to contribute to achieving these priorities by providing background information to staff and administrators on First Nation, Métis and Inuit heritage and traditions, cultural teachings, celebrations, treaties, terminology, best practices and community linkages to First Nation, Métis and Inuit community agencies. This knowledge will create First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultural awareness in Bruce and Grey Counties’ schools that will assist in delivering quality education, build a supportive school climate, meet the specific education needs for First Nation, Métis and Inuit students and nurture relationships between Bruce-Grey Catholic District and Bluewater District School Boards’ staff and administrators and First Nation, Métis and Inuit parents, guardians and families.

## **Guiding the Way: First Nations, Métis and Inuit A Guide for Staff**

**As we learn and understand more fully, we must remember:**

- 1 One cannot generalize a group of people; there were and are culturally diverse groups of First Nation, Métis and Inuit across Canada and specifically in Ontario.
- 2 First Nation, Métis and Inuit (like all others) have a diversity of belief systems.
- 3 First Nation, Métis and Inuit lived in independent, self-governing societies before the formation of Canada.
- 4 The spiritual beliefs of many First Nation, Métis and Inuit are based on a relationship to nature. They considered the physical and spiritual worlds to be inseparable.
- 5 In most First Nation, Métis and Inuit cultures, the well-being and survival of the group significantly influence all decisions. Sharing and cooperation are significant values. Wealth was not generally measured in terms of possessions. It meant good health, good relationships, and spiritual and mental well-being.
- 6 First Nation, Métis and Inuit today live quite differently than they did in the past.
- 7 There was considerable movement of people over time for many reasons. It is important to understand the reasons for this migration to appreciate the diversity among Canada's First Nation, Métis and Inuit.

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## Ensuring Success for Schools

First Nation, Métis and Inuit students need to learn in a setting that acknowledges respect for their histories, cultures and traditions, and recognizes their diverse needs, values, cultures and identities. They need challenges that equip them to succeed. Although the schools studied by David Bell (2004) focused on success with First Nation, Métis and Inuit students, they exemplify what effective schools do. The findings and recommendations are made based on ten studies completed across Canada:

Hold high expectations for First Nation, Métis and Inuit student achievement while recognizing the existence of their special needs and providing multiple layers of support.

Make a particular effort to ensure that students are aware of the importance of acquiring proficiency in literacy, mathematics, science, and technology to enhance their future prospects, and that instruction and programs provided have a particular focus on developing these core competencies.

Use diverse measurement tools to monitor student progress and program effectiveness, including normed and provincial assessments, and employ the aggregate data produced in developing annual improvement plans.

Employ teachers and school leaders with the expertise and personal qualities that have been shown to be most effective with First Nation, Métis and Inuit learners and the appropriate resources and community liaison personnel to provide holistic support.

Recognize the importance of First Nation, Métis and Inuit language and culture by offering specific programs/classes, including inclusion of First Nation, Métis and Inuit perspectives in regular curriculum and hosting special events and celebrations.

Work to establish learning climates that are culturally friendly to First Nation, Métis and Inuit students by encouraging all staff to learn about local culture and traditions, to feature prominent displays of culturally relevant items, and to invite local elders and community people to share their knowledge in classes.

Encourage open door policies and work to make families feel welcome, recognizing that staff may need to “go the extra mile” in reaching out to those whose personal educational experience has been negative.

Foster strong community ownership of and partnerships in school programs.



### Resource

Bell, David (2004). *Sharing Our Success: Ten Case Studies in Aboriginal Schooling*. Kelowna: Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education. [www.saeec.ca](http://www.saeec.ca)



## Terminology

The following list can be used to clarify terminology in a respectful manner and to help address student questions appropriately. An understanding of the following terms will be helpful in implementing the curriculum and in relations with the First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities.

<b>Aboriginal Peoples</b>	A term defined in the Constitution Act of 1982, and which refers to all indigenous peoples in Canada, including Indians, Métis people, and Inuit people. People prefer to use their own names in their languages.
<b>Aboriginal Rights</b>	Rights held by Aboriginal peoples of Canada, also based on ancestors' long-standing use and occupancy of territories. The rights to hunt, trap and fish are examples of Aboriginal rights. Aboriginal rights vary depending on the customs, practices, and traditions that have been formed as part of their distinctive cultures.
<b>Aboriginal Self-government</b>	Governments designed, established, and administered by First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples under the Canadian Constitution through a process of negotiation with Canada and, where applicable, the provincial government.
<b>Aboriginal Land Title</b>	A legal term that recognizes First Nation, Métis and Inuit stewardship of land. This "ownership" is not the same as public property holding, and for most Aboriginal land titles the ownership is the Creator's with people having responsibility to conduct activities in accord with the ecology of the land.
<b>Adaptation</b>	The action of accommodating changes, taking the best from different cultural traditions.
<b>Anishinaabe or Anishinabek</b>	Singular and plural form of the word—is a self-description often used by the Odawa, Ojibwe and Algonquian peoples. The term means "first" or "original" peoples and is sometimes defined as "good humans" or "good people" who are on the right path given to them by the Creator. This term is the preferred name for our local communities rather than "First Nation" or "Aboriginal".
<b>Anishinaabe Creation Story</b>	the foundational story of the creation of man by Gitchi-Manitou, the Great Spirit.
<b>Anishinaabemowin</b>	Ojibwe language spoken by the Anishinaabe of which there are many different dialects. No standard writing system covers all dialects.
<b>Assimilation</b>	Occurs, or is attempted, when a majority or stronger group seeks to completely absorb a minority.
<b>Band</b>	A body of Indians for whose collective use and benefit lands have been reserved or money is held by the Crown, or declared to be a band for the purposes of the Indian Act. Each band has its own governing band council, usually consisting of one chief and several councillors. Community members choose the chief and councillors by election, or sometimes through custom. The members of a band generally share common values, traditions and practices rooted in their ancestral heritage. Today, many bands prefer to be known as First Nations.

<b>Bill C-31</b>	The pre-legislation name of the 1985 Act to Amend the Indian Act. This act eliminated certain discriminatory provisions of the Indian Act, including the section that resulted in Indian women losing their Indian status when they married non-status men. Bill C-31 enabled people affected by the discriminatory provisions of the old Indian Act to apply to have their Indian status and membership restored.
<b>Constitution Act (1982)</b>	1) Recognizes and affirms Aboriginal and treaty rights of Aboriginal peoples of Canada. 2) In the Act, "Aboriginal peoples of Canada" includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada. 3) For greater certainty, in subsection 1) "treaty rights" includes rights that now exist by way of land claims agreements or may be so acquired. 4) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the Aboriginal land treaty rights referred to in subsection 1 are guaranteed equally to male and female persons. The Constitution Act provides general protection but does not define or set out particular Aboriginal rights. The courts have established tests for proving Aboriginal rights.
<b>Custom</b>	A traditional practice. For example, First Nations peoples sometimes marry or adopt children according to custom, rather than under Canadian family law. Band councils chosen "by custom" are elected or selected by traditional means, rather than by the election rules contained in the Indian Act.
<b>Duluth Declaration</b>	On September 23, 1995 in Duluth, Minnesota at an international conference, Chief Richard Kahgee asserted that his peoples' traditional rights to fisheries had never been relinquished and therefore no negotiations were warranted. On October 4 Kahgee officially signed the Duluth Declaration, which is a claim to the "waters in their entirety, which includes the fisheries, lands and minerals, above and below the waters, including the lake bed" around the peninsula "to the median point in the water between the Saugeen Nation territory...and all other international territory." (Koenig, Edwin C.)
<b>First Nations People</b>	A term that came into common usage in the 1970s to replace the word "Indian," which some people found offensive. Although the term First Nation is widely used, no legal definition of it exists. Among its uses, the term "First Nations peoples" refers to the Indian peoples in Canada, both status and non-status. Some Indian peoples have also adopted the term "First Nation" to replace the word "band" in the name of their community.
<b>Enfranchised Indian</b>	Historically, a person who has lost the right to status and band membership, and who has, as a citizen of Canada, the right to vote, attend university, and join the military.
<b>Elder</b>	A man or woman whose wisdom about spirituality, culture, and life is recognized and affirmed by the community. Not all elders are old.
<b>Haudenosaunee</b>	The "People of the Long House" came together as the Iroquois League or Six Nations consisting of the Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Tuscarora nations.

<b>Indian</b>	An historical government term referring to the original inhabitants of North and South America and still used to define some Aboriginal peoples under the Indian Act. "Indian" has generally been replaced by "Aboriginal peoples," as defined in the Constitution Act of 1982.
<b>Indigenous Peoples</b>	A term used in international forum, in particular the United Nations, to describe the diversity of Indigenous peoples around the world and within recognized nation states.
<b>Inuit</b>	<p>A distinct Aboriginal people, the Inuit generally live in northern Canada (Nunavut, Northwest Territories, northern Quebec and northern Labrador.)</p> <p>The word "Inuit" means "the people" in Inuktitut, the Inuit language, and is the term by which Inuit refer to themselves. The singular of Inuit is Inuk.</p> <p>Avoid using the term "Inuit people" as the use of "people" is redundant. The term "Eskimo," applied to Inuit by European explorers, is no longer used in Canada.</p>
<b>Inuktitut</b>	Language of the Inuit of Nunavut, one of the eleven official languages of the Northwest Territories.
<b>Land Claims</b>	In 1973, the federal government recognized two broad classes of claims – comprehensive and specific. Comprehensive claims are based on the assessment that there may be continuing Aboriginal rights to lands and natural resources. These kinds of claims come up in those parts of Canada where Aboriginal title has not previously been dealt with by treaty and other legal means. The claims are called "comprehensive" because of their wide scope which includes such things as land title, fishing and trapping rights, and financial compensation. Specific claims deal with specific grievances that First Nations may have regarding the fulfillment of treaties. Specific claims also cover grievances relating to the administration of First Nations lands and assets under the Indian Act.
<b>Métis</b>	A person, who self-identifies as Métis, is of historic Métis Nation ancestry, is distinct from other Aboriginal peoples, and is accepted by the Métis Nation. To be a member of Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO), one does not have to have his or her ancestral ties directly to Ontario – he or she does however need to demonstrate ties to a historic Métis community in North America. Only MNO citizens who can demonstrate ties to historic Métis communities in Ontario have harvesting rights there. The Métis have a unique, mixed First Nation and European ancestry and culture.
<b>Métis Harvesting</b>	Organized under the auspices of the Captains of the Hunt, it is the means of taking, catching or gathering for reasonable personal use in Ontario of renewable resources by Métis Nation of Ontario citizens. Harvesting includes plants, fish, wildlife and firewood, taken for heating, food, and medicinal, social or ceremonial purposes and includes donations, gifts and exchange with Aboriginal persons.
<b>Métis Community</b>	A group of Métis people who live in the same geographic area. A community may include more than one settlement, town or village in an area.

<b>Métis Nation</b>	The organization of Métis communities and families, often political, but also aims to address social and economic needs.
<b>Michif</b>	Traditional language of the Métis. In Ontario it is a blend of English, French, Algonquin, Anishinaabe, and Cree.
<b>Oral History</b>	Teachings, cultures, language that are conveyed without a written language. In the Courts it is considered equivalent evidence taken from the spoken words of people who have knowledge of past events and traditions. Oral history is often recorded and transcribed. It is used in history books and to document claims, but it is also the basis of many Aboriginal traditions.
<b>Powley Decision</b>	In 2003, the Supreme Court of Canada upheld lower courts (Ontario) judgments in the Métis harvesting rights case, R. v. Powley. The Supreme Court recognized that the Aboriginal rights of the Métis exist in Canada.
<b>Reserve</b>	A tract of land, the legal title to which is held by the Crown, set apart for use and benefit of an Indian band.
<b>Resiliency</b>	The capacity of people to continue to thrive within difficult circumstances.
<b>Resistance</b>	The action of actively resisting assimilation. Often this is overt but can also be hidden and is embedded in Aboriginal societies today.
<b>Scrip</b>	Historically used after 1870 in Manitoba and in western Canada, a special certificate or warrant issued by the Department of Interior which entitled the bearer to receive Western homestead lands without specifying the actual parcel of land involved. For Canada, these grants were meant to extinguish Métis title to all the territories of western Canada, to enable the federal government to be unencumbered by prior rights of use to new settlers. Land grants were seen as the cheapest way of extinguishing the Métis title in western Canada by the government. Scrip was never attempted in Ontario.
<b>Senator</b>	Métis Senators are elected and are an important part of both the political leadership and social history of the Métis Nation.
<b>Treaty</b>	Treaties are constitutionally formal agreements (today known as land claim settlements and referred to as “Numbered Treaties”) between the Crown (Government of Canada) First Nations, and in some cases Métis peoples which define obligations and promises and rights (see Timeline of Treaties for years of establishment). For Canada, the purpose was to encourage peaceful relations between First Nations and non-Aboriginal peoples and to clear title to the land in readiness for settlement and industrial development.
<b>Tribal Council</b>	A regional group of First Nations members that delivers common services to a group of First Nations. Services can include Health, Education, Technical Services, Social Services, and Financial Services.



## Resources

Aboriginal Voices in the Curriculum, 2006. A Guide to Teaching Aboriginal Studies in the K-8 Classroom. Toronto: Toronto District School Board.

Shared Learnings: Integrating BC Aboriginal Content K-10

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada/Affaires indiennes et du Nord Canada, Terminology on [www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ap/index-eng.asp](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/ap/index-eng.asp)

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The Constitution Act (1982); Part II: Rights of Aboriginal Peoples of Canada; Department of Justice Canada;  
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<http://www.metisnation.ca/rights/index.html>;  
<http://www.albertametis.com/MetisRights.aspx>

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