



ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
Lighting the Way ~ Rejoicing in Our Journey

MINUTES

FIRST NATION, METIS, INUIT COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, June 18, 2012 at 12:30 p.m.
Holy Family Annex

- Chair: Dr. Frank Leddy, Superintendent of Education
- Representatives: Beverley Bressette, Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation
Summer Sands-MacBeth, Walpole Island First Nation
- Trustees: Michelle Parks
John VanHeck
- Present: Gerri Brown, Principal – Ursuline College Chatham
Colleen Cogghe, Teacher – St. Elizabeth Catholic School
Chris Kehoe, Principal – St. Elizabeth Catholic School
Greg Malette, Teacher – Ursuline College
Margaret Palmer-McCann, Chaplain – Ursuline College
Caroline VanRoestel-Seward, Board Aboriginal Lead
- Students: Tahj Cadotte, Student – Ursuline College
Diego DeSilva, Student – St. Elizabeth Catholic School
Marcus Miskokomon-Huff, Student – Ursuline College
Seth Myers, Student – Ursuline College
Kristen Poole, Student – St. Elizabeth Catholic School
Nora Soney, Student – St. Elizabeth Catholic School
- Regrets: Steve DeGurse, Principal – St. John Fisher Catholic School
- Recording Secretary: Brenda Courey

1. Opening Prayer - All

Frank Leddy, chair of the meeting, welcomed and thanked those in attendance. He opened the meeting with prayer.

2. *Approval of Minutes*

Motion: (Gerri Brown, John VanHeck) That the Minutes for the First Nation, Métis, Inuit Communities Committee Meeting of Tuesday, February 7, 2012 be approved as presented. Carried.

3. *Approval of Agenda*

Motion: (Margaret Palmer-McCann, Michelle Parks) That the Agenda for the First Nation, Métis, Inuit Communities Committee Meeting of Monday, June 11, 2012 be approved as presented. Carried.

4. *Report from St. Elizabeth Staff and Students*

The students discussed various activities that took place at St. Elizabeth as part of Aboriginal Awareness Week. Students noted how spiritual the experience was. The activities included:

- Stories of life experiences in the Sharing Circle
- Students learned about herbs used by Ojibway such as sweet grass and tobacco
- The meaning of the eagle feather
- The importance of the medicine wheel
- Shared songs
- Craft-making workshop
- Drum-making with a tobacco dance
- Feast to celebrate the birth of the drum

5. *Report from Ursuline College Staff and Students*

Staff and students from UCC shared many events that have been taking place at the school. Recently they participated in a fry bread workshop. They also had a smudging demonstration. John Snake came to the school and assisted the students in making dream catchers and taught them its significance. Drums were purchased for the school from an artist in Sarnia representing the 7 Grandfather teachings. Students met with David Bouchard following his school visit presentation.

Students attended a leadership retreat at Muskoka Woods. They participated in canoeing, rock climbing, zip line, and high ropes. They noted comradery within their group at school, and the confidence building as part of the Miskinahk group.

Overall, the students noted the trust that has been developed within their group and with their advisors.

6. *Reports from the First Nation Communities*

Walpole Island First Nation representative Summer Sands-McBeth had nothing to report at this time.

Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation representative Beverley Bressette thanked the committee for their efforts in providing support for our students.

7. *Report from the Board*

Dr. Leddy thanked Caroline and Margaret for their efforts in making these projects happen.

David Bouchard, Métis educator and author visited 7 of our schools. A parent night was also hosted at Holy Family School for Walpole Island First Nation parents. David discussed the importance of reading. Many of his books have been purchased and placed in our schools.

Shannon Thunderbird of the Coast Tsimshian First Nation in British Columbia presented at 8 of our schools in the Sarnia area. Her message to students about acceptance and bullying was demonstrated through songs, stories and hand drums.

Caroline shared a few board documents with the committee. The FNMI Education Policy Framework Implementation Board Questionnaire highlighted the projects that have been funded for the past 3 years. The Interim Report Back to the Ministry provided details on the projects for 2011/2012. Surveys were conducted in 3 elementary schools and at UCC for FNMI student feedback regarding the projects and whether or not there is greater awareness of FNMI culture. UCC students reported back on their experiences with leadership camp and if they feel accepted in their school community.

8. *Direction and Focus for Next Year*

Discussion took place regarding the direction and focus for next year. It was determined there should be a focus on environment. Other possibilities included:

- Crafts workshops for teachers (by an FNMI teacher in Blenheim)
- Science, historical, cultural aspects of environment
- Bus trip to Education Environment Centre in Moraviantown (Delaware)
- Walpole Heritage Centre visits
- Sarnia area speakers who could visit schools on environment issues
- Métis Cultural Kits for each school

Additional suggestions included:

- More about local histories of local bands – limited amount of written resources for teachers to use
- Teaching about Cultures in Crisis – response to Residential schools; good fit for Religion courses and also fits into diversity expectations of many other courses

The committee talked about the direction for next year's meetings. It was decided there should be 3 meetings instead of 2 and the format should remain similar to this year. Results from the student surveys should be shared at the next meeting.

9. *Next Year's Meeting Dates*

The fall date is to be determined. April 9, 2013 and June 11, 2013 were agreed upon by the committee.

Motion: (John VanHeck, Michelle Parks) That the First Nation, Métis, Inuit Communities Committee Meeting of Monday, June 18, 2012 adjourn. Carried.