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REPORT
ON THE
OPERATION
OF
DENINOO SCHOOL
FORT RESOLUTION

SUBMITTED TO
THE HON. DENNIS PATTERSON
MINISTER
OF
EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

Students at the Deninoo School in Fort Resolution staged a strike in late March of 1983. Many non-residents of Fort Resolution, both inside the government and out, learned for the first time that all was not well at the Deninoo School.

But community members had known for months. In Fort Resolution there had been growing anxiety that finally culminated in a series of three (3) community meetings (April 26, 27 and 28, 1983). While the student's strike may have provided an occasion for these meetings to take place, the strike was by no means the root cause.

Many issues were raised during these community meetings which were, incidentally, better attended than any education meetings had ever been in the recent history of Fort Resolution. One issue that surfaced and became an important focus of community dissatisfaction was the professional performance of certain staff members. Other issues included funding for cultural programs, discipline, the quality of instruction in the basics (Language and Math skills), the poor performance of Fort Resolution students when compared to students in Yellowknife or Fort Smith and the oppressive and unfriendly atmosphere prevailing in the school.

At the third of these meetings, (April 28, 1983) the Minister of Education, Mr. Dennis Patterson, met with community members to discuss what could be done about the Deninoo School situation.

During that meeting, the Minister suggested that an investigation be conducted to determine both the nature and the extent of the problems at Deninoo School, and to search for possible ways of resolving the difficulties.

It was felt that the investigators should be from outside the community for two reasons. The main actors in the education field in the community were already immersed in one or other facets of the problem. This involvement might, it was felt, effect their ability to conduct a fair and objective investigation. Another reason given for the use of outside investigators

was that ~~community members~~ have to live with each other long after the investigation is over. If sentiments or opinions were to be expressed that cast an unfavourable light on any local residence, bad feelings could result.

Accordingly the Minister asked us, as a representative from the Dene Nation (Mr. Michael Bopp) and a representative of the Department of Education, (Mr. Ken Norton) to conduct the investigation. This report is a summary of our observations and conclusions derived from that investigation.

The Process of Investigation

Our mandate was to determine the nature and extent of "problems" related to the Deninoo School, and to make recommendations for improvement. We felt that our task was not to conduct a formal research study. Rather we were to utilize our combined knowledge of northern and particularly native communities, of contemporary issues in education, and of the current political climate regarding educational transformation in the N.W.T. to help us to understand what had happened, and what could happen in and around the Deninoo School program.

It was obvious that in order to learn what had happened in the past months and years we would have to talk with people in Fort Resolution. We determined that there were certain categories of people that should be asked to share their views on the situation. These categories included the following:

- the principal of the school;
- teachers at the school;
- teaching assistants;
- other school staff;
- the area superintendent of schools;
- students and ex-students;
- parents;
- members of the local education committee;
- elders in the community;
- members of the band council;

- the Chief;
- any community members interested in education issues.

As well we met with both the staff of the Deninoo School as a group, and with the newly elected community education committee. We also met with members of the previous committee.

Our inquiry was conducted in three distinct visits to Fort Resolution (May 9, June 6-7, July 12), over a period of four working days and one evening. During the course of our investigation representatives from all the above categories met with us and discussed their views on the issues. In all cases these discussions were framed by two questions.

1. In your view, what has happened in the Deninoo School, or in the community, that has contributed to the present situation? In other words, what went wrong, and what, in your opinion, are the root causes of the problem?
2. Having considered what has "gone wrong", what do you feel should now be done (by the Government, the community, the Education Committee, the school staff, the parents, the students -- anyone involved) to improve the quality of education in Fort Resolution?

In addition to talks with a wide variety of individuals, we spent several hours on two separate occasions, observing the ongoing operations of the Deninoo School while classes were in session. We also observed young people in and about the town (during and after school hours) and we were fortunate to have been confided in by a group of older students about their feelings concerning the school.

Between each of our visits to Fort Resolution, we consulted at length about what we felt we were learning from our inquiry. We were very careful to protect the right of each of us as individuals to hold to an

independent view. Nevertheless, we found ourselves in complete agreement throughout the investigation on what we were being told and on what it meant in terms of the overall investigation, as well as on what the implication might be for educational development in Fort Resolution.

HIGHLIGHTS: COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS

While we will be offering a distillation of the comments and suggestions made to us during the investigation, it will be blended with our own observations and feelings. We feel it is also important that some of the actual statements made to us during our inquiry be reproduced without editorial comment. This will enable readers to obtain a more direct sample of the range of community views. This section will be divided into two parts. "The Problem" and "Solutions".

Part A: The Problem: Home and Community Related

1. The problem is not only a school problem. It is both a school and community problem.
2. 78 - 80% of all children in school live in homes where alcohol is abused. These children are directly affected. All children in the community are at least indirectly affected by alcohol and drug abuse.
3. Children come to school with no breakfast. They feel weak and can't pay attention by mid-morning.
4. Many children watch T.V. until it goes off. Then they come to school tired, late, or not at all. Parents need to supervise more.
5. There is a tendency in Fort Resolution for people to criticize and talk down anybody who tries to do something for the community. They lie about you and they make you feel like not doing anything for the community. I wish they would encourage instead of tear down.

6. Our children will never be able to run the town in a few years when it comes to be their turn. I'm worried about this.
7. Lack of academic skills is hurting our town. It is slowing down the local control process. We ask, who is there in Fort Resolution that can deal with the government for us? Who can lead economic development? Who can run social service programs? We look around but we don't see many who can do these things, especially among the younger up and coming generation.
8. Kids today are rougher than they were five years ago. They swear and are mean. Their parents don't control them.
9. There is a communication gap between the school, the kids and the parents. People are not working together to solve problems. A problem between a kid, his teacher and a parent should be resolved between those people. But today teachers and parents and kids are not communicating.
10. Parents send kids off to school and think their own responsibility has ended. They forget about them.
11. There is a sense in the community that school doesn't lead to anything. (Look around. A lot of guys who went to school got no jobs.)
12. Principals are running the school by government (Department of Education) standards, and they overlook the community standards.
13. Parents drink. Then they fight with each other. Then they tell their kids not to associate with the children of their "enemies". This makes a terrible school life and town life for kids.
14. Parents treat school as a babysitting service.
15. Parents are not strict enough with kids like they used to be.

16. If there was a comprehensive community development program that would be a big step in everybody's education in town. To deal with real community issues such as strengthening the family, cliques, power issues, health and education would teach us all a lot about what we, and our kids, need to learn for a better future.
17. This is such a political community that is hard to get a consensus. There is no settled idea of what the community wants the school to do.
18. If you [any outside agency such as GNWT Education] define an area of struggle [for the people of Fort Resolution] where your skills are needed most, then you have power over the process because they will need you. This is what outsiders do to establish a dependency on themselves. If the community defines the struggle the story is different.
19. Parents don't encourage their kids to learn. They just live their own life. They don't realize how much hard work it takes to raise good kids, how much effort and understanding and encouragement it takes to keep kids interested in learning and attending school. It's a lot of hard work.
20. The Outreach Program, and the sawmill create incentives for children to drop out of school by giving them jobs that last long after school starts in the Fall. It's cheap labour. The town is even lowering the legal working age. Starting a program to hire kids when they drop out is encouraging them to drop out.
21. It's really hard to talk about education with people in Fort Resolution. People aren't willing to think much about education.
22. Moral values should be taught in the home and reinforced in the school. But lots of our kids get nothing at home but a terrible example of how not to live your life. I'm a parent and I bust my ass to try to show my daughter a good example. The school can't do it for me. They're supposed to discipline kids; to reinforce

what kids learn at home. But what can they [the school] do if we don't do our job at home?

Part B: In The School

1. The school has a depressing atmosphere. No windows. Bad air. And I don't feel welcome there. You need an appointment to go in there. No wonder kids don't want to be there.
2. There's no discipline. No control.
3. There's no school spirit.
4. The textbooks are badly outdated and there are not enough of them.
5. We have absolutely no supplies.
6. Our kids are getting a much poorer quality of education than they get in Yellowknife or Hay River or Fort Smith. When our kids go out to those places to continue their schooling, they find they are way behind the other kids.
7. Older children are not disciplined in the school. They have a rough, violent attitude. I don't want my children around that.
8. Some parents come running to school to yell at the teachers if the teachers try to discipline their kids. They won't admit that their child would swear or do anything wrong.
9. The education committee is scared. If they ask for a new bus [because the other one is mechanically dangerous] and government says "no" they just accept it.
10. The education committee is only an advisory group. We can advise, but the superintendent and the government do what they want anyway. Why should we bother? It makes me feel like quitting. That's why we lost lots of good people on the education committee. We don't really have control.

11. We want what is good for our children. But people want to go two ways. Some say children need to learn traditional skills and to learn them well. This takes consistent concentration. Others say an academic road must be taken to learn to be nurses and teachers etc. Now the school is not doing either road well. Kids are angry, frustrated, and not self-fulfilled. A balance and a blending of these two ways must be found.
12. The grade system (grade 1, 2, 3, etc.) should be done away with. We need a levels (competency based) system. Now kids who perform at grade 2 level are told they are in grade 7. When they find out it isn't true they often get depressed, frustrated and then they quit.
13. School staff does not work as a team.
14. The school lowers its standards because of town politics. Local power plays are robbing our kids of high quality education.
15. What they get now at school is too low academically and not broad enough to prepare them for anything.
16. The under age twenty-five group seriously lack conceptual skills in geography, history, art, language, math, and science. They can't cope with basic adult concepts such as "aboriginal rights" or "negotiations". They don't understand what those things mean.
17. A very high staff turnover is really hurting us.
18. The teachers are not friendly. They don't mix with the community at all. Once we gave a party for them and most of them didn't even bother to show up.
19. Teachers from outside the community are always called in. Why weren't local people accepted?

20. The problem is simple. My child's got as much right as that teacher if you want to talk about rights.
21. Certain staff members are ruining the school. If they were out things would be better.
22. The staff has never met and really discussed what's been happening at the school. There's no staff teamwork.
23. Teachers aides lack training and seem to refuse to get more training even when its offered to them.
24. All staff take too much time off and kids are left without adequate instruction and supervision.
25. We have no control over who we get as principal or teachers. Our say doesn't matter.
26. We don't really know how well are kids are doing compared to, say, Yellowknife. No testing is done.
27. You used to see parents and elders involved in the school all the time. Now they feel shut out. They don't come.
28. Attendance is very low.
29. Some teachers want to go by the rules and some don't. Some grades get away with anything.
30. Some bad kids are being allowed to affect the others.
31. The school doesn't have any clear cut aims or objectives or ideals. It just goes.
32. The school is run down in every way.
33. Before they [the kids] showed me respect. But now they swear at me,

and they won't listen. If they don't want to do their work they just take off -- they take the door for several days.

Please note that the above comments and those to follow regarding solutions are more or less verbatim statements made by individuals we talked with during our investigation. They did not necessarily represent our views, and they do not, in any way, constitute recommendation. They are provided to give the reader direct unfiltered access to community views.

Suggested Solutions

Part A: Related to Home and Community

1. Parents should support the school.
2. Parents send kids to school and forget about them. More interest from parents in what's happening in the school is needed.
3. Parents have to begin to set a good example for their children. Self discipline must be a key part of this example. When the parents drink and fight and swear and lie and talk about each other, and when they don't care about what happens to their kids or anybody else in town, why should the kids be any different?
4. The community should make an effort to orient the teachers to Fort Resolution, to get to know them. New teachers should be taken around and introduced to families. An Orientation Committee would be good.
5. Teachers should live in Fort Resolution and not in Pine Point. How can we get to know them otherwise?
6. If kids know that their teacher is friends with their parents, then they might listen better because they know if they don't, the teacher will come over to the house and talk to the parents.

7. The community needs input and involvement in making decisions about the school.
8. A parents and teachers association, or a home and school discussion group of some kind would help. This would bridge the communication gap and get school staff talking and working with community members.
9. How can we describe about better education for our children when we don't know about these things? The Education committee and parents need to learn more about education.
10. The power of the education committee should be strengthened. The committee should have control of curriculum, the powers and duties of the principal, (what the principal now does the CEC should be doing), and special programs in the school.
11. A community and family life education program is needed here.
12. We must have a curriculum that meets the communities' needs and also the academic needs of the students.
13. The principal could be a good administrator from the community. He doesn't have to be a teacher. Someone who knows the community and knows the family members; someone who knows the family problems.
14. If there were a comprehensive community development program, that would be a big step to everyone's education in town.
15. The school is closed. We can't use it all summer. Open it up so the community can use it.
16. Kids should have a chance to stay with people in the bush for periods of time. Rotate different families. If they stay in town all the time they won't know anything. They won't stay in school either.

17. Community workshops would help us to learn what we could do differently in our school program.
18. Workshops for the community education committee on important education issues would help us alot. Then we could learn about what other communities are doing and how they are solving their problems.
19. The problem here is a community problem. The community has to work with the school if things are going to improve.
20. Teachers should deliver report cards to the homes like they used to.

Part B: Related to the School

1. If you improve the staff, and especially the principal, the school will improve. He (the principal) is the key.
2. Parents should play an active part in every aspect of the school program.
3. The staff needs to place a special emphasis on how to handle negative behaviour in the classroom. Academic training is not enough. Discipline is needed.
4. From grade one on we need levels, not grades; more individualized. Kids should be taught at their own levels. Not stuck into boxes they don't fit into anyway. We used to do it that way and it really worked. It was a lot more work for teachers but it really worked.
5. Grades 7, 8 and 9 are often your last chance in school. After that most people in Fort Resolution don't go on. These years should give special training in life skills and family life education. They should aim to prepare kids for life. Now they pretend to be preparing them for the high school they will never really attend. They should learn how to travel, to read road signs, to do banking, to write a letter, to budget, to buy food, etc.

6. Older kids should be helping younger ones to learn.
7. Kids who don't work pass anyway. This should change. You should have to work to go on to the next level.
8. The school used to have music, teams, intramural sports, an awards system. That provided rewards for kids for good work. We (teachers) get our pay cheque. What do they get?
9. Staff should be picked so a team could be built. The option should be given to everyone to work together to create something good here, or leave.
10. Several of the classroom assistants would make excellent teachers. They just need training that doesn't make them leave their families.
11. Caring for kids is the big element in education. Education with love. No love, no real education.
12. We (teachers) must learn from our kids. They will teach you how to reach them.
13. Teachers should get involved with the Community Education Committee. All of our meetings are open. Now they never come.
14. Teachers aides need more training. It should be compulsory. If they refuse to take more training, they should be replaced.
15. Staff unity is so important. We need to be working together for a common good. For that you need leadership.
16. Kids need to learn about the Dene ways and about the things they teach at school. English is good. Chipewyan is good too. School is good. But if kids don't go out of town in the bush they won't know anything. Both sides are good.

17. More equipment is needed for shop, athletic activities and audio-visual.
18. More student participation in decisions, especially older students where the decisions affect them.
19. We need a gym teacher who can teach us skills, not just play with us. You can get hurt otherwise.
20. The principal should be strict; nice; one who mixes in the school and the town so people get to know him. He should go over rules at the beginning of the year so we (kids) can talk about them.
21. Some (kids) feel bad cause we have personal problems; home problems. Kids who act bad or show off are feeling bad.
22. We want teachers who have:
 - good qualifications;
 - experience with kids;
 - there should be try-outs. If they don't work out after three months, get different ones. The principal too;
 - native teachers would be better if we could get them;
 - teachers should trust kids.
23. We (kids) want counsellors who are trustworthy; who keep confidentiality. Who don't talk to our parents. Sometimes our parents are the problem.
24. We want school courses in sex education, first aid and science (with good equipment).
25. We want:
 - more field trips;
 - more and better books in the library;

- a smoking area;
- the chance to finish high school in our own school;
- afternoon recess.

26. The school should be made an attractive place to be. Then kids would come and stay.

Again, please note that the above comments are those of community members, including school staff, students, parents, elders, community leaders and interested individuals with whom we spoke about the Deninoo School situation. We have attempted to present their views in an un-edited form to give readers the opportunity to see first hand what the views expressed to us were. Our problem was to combine what we heard and what we saw, with our own understanding of the processes that have been disclosed. This synthesis will constitute our conclusions and recommendations.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

1. Our first and most important conclusion is that what has happened in Fort Resolution is a breakthrough, not a catastrophe. It is obvious to any fair minded observer that the school system is not working well for native people anywhere in the Mackenzie Valley. While there are sporadic successes, the mere fact that for every one hundred (100) native children that enter school, an estimated average of five (5) children complete the normal course of study (grade 12) speaks for itself. For what ever reasons, the school system is not effectively reaching 95 out of 100 Dene and Metis children.

A clear message given to us by the people of Fort Resolution is that this situation is intolerable and that the community is prepared to do whatever must be done to change it.

We therefore conclude that the Fort Resolution education crisis provides the Minister and the Department of Education, with an

unprecedented opportunity to foster genuine educational development.

We believe that something very exciting and very positive has begun in Fort Resolution. The potential is there to foster a process of authentic collaboration between the Department of Education and the community. By "authentic collaboration" we mean partnership. We mean that the community would have to have as much power to decide on final outcomes of the process as the Department of Education. We believe that should such a process be fostered, nurtured and encouraged in Fort Resolution, the effects would be felt in all the Mackenzie Valley communities.

2. A permanent solution to the Fort Resolution educational crisis is not going to be rooted in mere administrative reshuffling and reorganizing within the present structure. There is little "the Government" can "do" about "the situation" without the help of the people of Fort Resolution.

We believe that the problems and the long range solutions lie in the community as much as in the school. We therefore conclude that a school or educational development process must be linked with a community development process.

We submit, as Appendix "A" of this document, a separate paper on the relationship between educational development and community development. The paper explains how a teaching and learning process in the school, family life development, and community development may be linked to create a truly effective education program for a community. It also explains the role of outside catalysts (Department of Education representatives, consultants, and a locally based community education coordinator).

3. Fundamental changes are needed in the teaching and learning process (not merely the administrative arrangements) both in school, and in the community. The GNWT Department of Education has relied heavily on the southern school curricula as guides for its own curriculum

materials. Most teachers are trained in southern institutions. Schools are organized and administered following a southern schooling mode which itself is modeled after a 19th century factory. This model is clearly not working in Fort Resolution. We can only conclude that an intensive search for an alternative curriculum approach that will work in Fort Resolution must be made. (See Appendix "B" for an example of what has been done elsewhere.)

4. Fort Resolution is a predominantly native community. This cultural context within which education takes place in Fort Resolution has not been adequately accounted for in the Deninoo School program. Attempts have been made by the creation of a "cultural program" or the "Chipewyan Language Program". We feel that these efforts are well intended, but are nevertheless doomed to failure in their present form.

People are seeing the teaching of culture and language as something that is distinct, separate, and even a barrier to academic instruction.

We feel that a way must be found to blend the local culture into the process of teaching and learning rather than trying to teach culture as a subject. This will require research, thought and considerable participation by parents, elders, and other community members. Still, we feel that native language, culture and values will be more effectively transmitted if the family and community context of a child's learning is integrated with the school program. We are not saying that the native culture and language have no place in the school. On the contrary, we are saying that the native culture and language must be woven into the very fabric of school life and not treated as an academic curiosity.

5. With respect to the primary mandate of the investigators, that of investigating the operation of the school, we feel that the community dissatisfaction results from educational problems which are, in

part, symptoms of broader community based problems.

These, we have identified generally as the following:

1. Poor educational administration and leadership.
2. Serious staffing problems within the school.
3. Some serious differences of opinion in the area of personal interactions and community politics within the community.
4. A lack of recognition within the education process for the multicultural and intercultural factors existing in the school and community.
5. Serious social problems of alcohol and drug abuse within the community resulting in apathy and limited interest and involvement in the children's education.
6. A lack of genuine communication between the school and community and between various agencies within the community.

We felt that to make recommendations which served only to address the obvious education problems would not, in the long run, accomplish very much. There have been difficulties within the school in Fort Resolution for many years and thus to really make any significant lasting changes, the issues of community problems and school/community liaison need to be addressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Department of Education undertake, through whatever means can be agreed upon between the community of Fort Resolution and

the Department, to foster a process of educational transformation in Fort Resolution. This process should:

- a) be linked to a community development process;
 - b) result in the development of a new approach to teaching and learning and a new curriculum for the Deninoo School;
 - c) result in an extension of the education process into the families and the community at large.
2. That an Educational Development Coordinator be hired and placed in Fort Resolution for a minimum of two years to assist the community in the process of educational development. This person would be responsible for providing a coordinating and liaison role between many of the agencies and organization within the community. The person should have training and experience in Community Development and in Curriculum Development. S/he should be familiar with northern native cultural history, and be a competent adult educator capable of facilitating a community and school development process without taking it over.
 3. That Fort Resolution be administered as a special case during these developmental years with more financial and administrative flexibility than it now enjoys as a part of the Hay River school area. This will provide the opportunity to develop a unique and appropriate alternative without being bound up in external administrative priorities.
 4. That a major thrust in the community learning objectives be to address the problem of alcohol and drug abuse in Fort Resolution. We recommend that in the short run, immediate financial and technical assistance

be given to the existing Community Alcohol and Drug Abuse Program, especially in its current work in the area of counselling of young people.

5. That the administrative goal of the above mentioned process be local control of education by the people of Fort Resolution. We attach as Appendix "A" a report entitled "Overview" which tells us of an Alberta Indian Band's experience with local control of education.

To address the concerns exposed during the investigation relating to the school, the following specific recommendations are made:

1. STAFFING

We recommend that two staff members not continue to work within the Fort Resolution school during the next school year. It was felt, without going into detail, that each of these educators were capable of providing valuable contributions to education but because of the unfavourable climate within Fort Resolution and because of their prominent position within the recent disputes, it would be difficult for either of them to be effective educators within the community educational environment.

It is recommended:

A. LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY CONCERNS

2. "that the option of assuming the responsibility of Education Society status be immediately outlined to the Local Education Committee."

The option of Society status needs to be clearly described for the group and the necessary training provided if this increased level of responsibility is required.

Whatever the L.E.A.'s decision with respect to advancing to Society status, there is a need for ongoing L.E.A. workshops to provide the L.E.A. with clear guidelines as to their areas of responsibility and jurisdiction.

The type of involvement which the L.E.A. has been requesting can only be provided under the present Education Ordinance by Society status. The new L.E.A. is an aggressive and outspoken group which appears anxious to take firm action in dealing with school issues. To be an advisory group only will not satisfy the group's aspirations and therefore it would appear the move to Society status is the way to satisfy their wishes and to provide a means for the community to have some real control over the school/community relationship.

3. "that a series of workshops for L.E.A. members and interested community residents be provided by the Department of Education to assist them in becoming aware of what educational alternatives may be considered for the community."

There is a need for the members of the L.E.A. to have the opportunity to examine for themselves various options which can be considered when the group is faced with determining with school staff directions and objectives for the school.

The model of education with which most residents of the community are familiar, that of Fort Resolution, has clearly not proved to be satisfactory. Opportunities should be provided for the L.E.A. to seek the advice of outside experts through a workshop environment and/or to send one or more members to visit other promising educational situations, either within or outside the Northwest Territories.

4. "that the L.E.A. and interested community members be involved in the planning of school programs to reflect community objectives for education."

A meeting held towards the end of the last school year to discuss and plan school programs for this year did not achieve its objectives. Many members of the community want to see programs offered which will do a number of things: i.e. achieve higher academic standings for students and thus the option for students to go on to high school; provide relevant language and cultural programs which will enable students to grow up with some sense of pride for their heritage and culture.

Many of the parents and L.E.A. members spoken to see these two objectives as being in conflict.

An involvement in overall program planning with school staff and outside program specialists will provide an opportunity for staff and community to establish program objectives and an implementation approach which each group will understand and, perhaps more readily accept.

5. "that an on-going orientation program for new and returning staff be provided at appropriate times during the school year.

The L.E.A. must take a leadership role within the community to provide for the community input to orientation programs for new and

returning staff. It appears, that in the past, many teachers did not become familiar with the community or its residents. Opportunities must be provided for new staff to be welcomed into the community and to have an opportunity to learn first hand parents' feelings and aspirations for their children and at the same time to become aware of some of the difficulties that they, as teachers in the community, may have to face.

It is clear that there are many problems within the community - many of them not school or education problems. However, the success of the school is dependent upon the staff and community coming to terms with these problems and attempting to resolve them in a positive manner rather than seeing them perpetually as a stumbling block which is somebody else's problem.

6. "that regular opportunities be provided for staff, L.E.A. members and the public to exchange opinions and ideas concerning the education of the students of Fort Resolution."

The L.E.A. and staff must work on the basis that they are on the same and not opposing teams. Many issues will arise where the principal will feel that the L.E.A.'s support is essential for him to take effective action. The staff also requires assurance that it has the L.E.A.'s support.

Similarly, the principal must be prepared to keep the L.E.A. informed with respect to school achievements and problems and be ready to involve them in suggesting solutions and ways in which the school's operation and programs can be improved and/or enriched.

7. "that the L.E.A. must be provided with every possible opportunity to fully participate in the selection of principal and teaching staff."

Considerable dissatisfaction was expressed with the way in which the principal was selected for the 1983-84 school year. It was felt that the L.E.A.'s opportunity for involvement was inadequate. It is difficult within the present funding structure for the L.E.A.'s wish to interview candidates in Fort Resolution to be satisfied. The region is not provided funds for this purpose and therefore, as in past, the best option available is the telephone interview supported by the superintendent's experience. A move to Society status would resolve this difficulty as a Society, by legislation, may recommend the selection of the principal and therefore funding would be available for interviews.

The selection of teaching staff is, because of time and distance factors, a complex task. It involves the appointment of new teacher graduates, transfers within the system, selection of new employees and placement of teachers returning from leave. Because of the need for all of these factors to be taken into consideration during the staffing process it is often difficult for individual L.E.A.'s to be involved in the details of staffing. However, it should be quite possible to provide an L.E.A. with a slate of possible teachers which they could screen, possibly contact by phone and check references during the period following southern interviews and prior to the actual staffing sessions. Interview reports from the superintendent and from the area L.E.A. representative on the interview team should be available. A staffing subcommittee of the L.E.A. should then be able to provide input to the superintendent in the final selection of teachers. However, as mentioned, the staffing process is a complex operation and to be granted this desired level of involvement requires a commitment on both the part of the superintendent to provide full and prompt information and on the part of the L.E.A. to review the materials provided and to be available to provide reaction during the critical staffing period.

8. "that the principal familiarize the L.E.A. with the school budget and seek their involvement in the establishment of priorities for its use."

The budgetary process is one concrete area in which the L.E.A. may become involved in making decisions and also in recognizing some of the constraints which are placed upon the system. This involvement will also well prepare the group for future Society level control of this aspect of the education program.

9. "that training should be provided for the Secretary-Treasurer of the L.E.A. with special emphasis placed on clearly outlining the responsibility to serve and support the L.E.A. rather than direct it."

The Secretary-Treasurer has a very difficult task to perform and it may be that an individual who wants to be a party in the discussions on school issues and who has strong views to express should not be in this sensitive position. The Secretary-Treasurer must work to carry out the wishes and directions of the L.E.A. and not become involved in any conflicts.

B. ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

10. "that the principal discuss his role as administrator/educational leader with the L.E.A. and determine in consultation with them the manner in which he will carry out his responsibilities."

Considerable concern has been expressed about the inaccessibility of the principal. Numerous parents have commented on the fact that the principal has not been available for consultation. Some L.E.A. members suggested that the principal not have teaching responsibilities and that he make himself available for meeting with parents when necessary.

Since this request has been expressed quite strongly by a number of individuals, it is recommended that this issue be given serious con-

sideration by the new principal. However, it should be pointed out that a concern expressed by students within the school and some staff was that they did not see the principal sufficiently and that he was too involved in administrative work most of the time.

There are definite values in the principal being involved in teaching at least part of the time. This may involve direct teaching, team-teaching with other staff, observing instruction, helping/training classroom assistants or providing special programs to small groups of students or individuals. It is easy for a principal to become so involved in the technical details of running a school that the more human elements are forgotten.

Whatever decision is reached, it must be clearly communicated to parents so that they know when the principal is or is not available.

11. "that appropriate means of communication be established and used regularly to maintain an information flow between the school and the parents."

The school must not be seen to operate in isolation from the community but residents must feel that the school is part of the community and this can only be achieved if they know what is happening and recognize their input is valued. This information flow may be facilitated via letter, school information/news bulletins, radio programs (teacher/student presented), home visits, Open House, and by other, perhaps more innovative ways, suited to the Fort Resolution situation. This responsibility must be shared by school staff and L.E.A.

12. "that an assessment of the materials and textbooks used in the school be conducted (following implementation of Recommendations #3, 4) by a committee composed of representatives of the school, parents and L.E.A."

It is the impression of a number of parents that the school is short of supplies and that textbooks are old and out-dated. Whether this is

true or not has not been determined. However, the fact that it is of concern should be addressed and appropriate information provided to concerned individuals.

The school is funded on the same basis as other schools within the superintendency and therefore with proper budgetting and purchasing there should be (within the limits of available funding) adequate supplies and appropriate texts for the programs being offered.

13. "that the L.E.A. become familiar with the requirements of the collective agreements covering the school's employees and develop policies, (if considered necessary) which will support the principal's responsibility to administer the collective agreements with respect to attendance and punctuality."

The issue of staff attendance and punctuality is a serious problem within the school. The level of absence from work by most staff is high. Some of this is due to involvement of staff members in other community activities (e.g. council meetings). However, although the Department of Education is supportive of staff involvement in community activities, it must be emphasized that in fairness to the students in the school the first responsibility is to the teaching assignment or other school responsibility.

14. "that an improved process for teacher evaluation be established which includes a set of evaluation criteria, provision for the involvement of the L.E.A. as well as the principal and the superintendent."

Past responsibility for this function has not been adequately fulfilled by the principal and the school has suffered as a consequence.

It would also appear that the superintendent's level of involvement in this process has also been less than adequate. Formal evaluations

were carried out on new teachers only. Continuing staff members were not always evaluated and in some instances felt that the superintendent was infrequently seen in the classroom areas. It was agreed that the superintendent visited the school on a regular basis (approximately every second week), however, most time was spent with the principal and not in the classrooms. The evaluation criteria should be established through a cooperative process which should include staff, L.E.A., and supervisory input.

There are a number of evaluative procedures which may be used. However, it is suggested that a process which includes the steps of (i) self evaluation, (ii) evaluation involving teacher and principal and (iii) evaluation involving teacher, principal, L.E.A. and superintendent.

A similar process of evaluation for the principal should be established. This should also include the involvement of the L.E.A.

C. PROGRAM ISSUES

15. "that in the development of the school program, serious consideration be given to the involvement of community residents and agencies to provide a relevant community-based curriculum."

There are needs for the present programs to involve the community to a greater degree and to be modified so that an education which is relevant to students of Fort Resolution be provided. With some initiative, it would be possible to provide relevant and practical experience to students through on-the-job training in various agencies/businesses in the community. A number of senior students could benefit from this exposure and as a result may be more prepared to remain in school rather than add to the drop-out rate. Any such program, however, must be met with serious commitment on the part of both school and the sponsoring agency to ensure that the experiences are valuable learning experiences and not just excursions outside the school.

The involvement of elders and other respected community residents can help re-establish for students a sense of pride in their heritage and reinforce traditional values.

16. "that drug and alcohol programs be extended to students through the school Health Program."

There are many students attending the school who are victims of the many social problems which exist in the community. Many students experience the consequences of alcohol and drug abuse within the home or community. These are issues which are basic to a child's well being and the best of school programs will be inadequate if attention is not placed on addressing these problems. Existing funding for counselling services should be augmented in order that sufficient suitable help may be provided.

17. "that the staff and L.E.A. cooperatively develop objectives for the school."

There have been no objectives established for the school recently and during the last school year staff members rarely had the opportunity to discuss the direction which education was taking within the school or community. This is essential if the staff and community are to be working as a team to provide a relevant education for the students in the community.

18. "that the present policy of offering Grade 9 by Correspondence only be discontinued and that Grade 9 programs be offered by one of the teaching staff to students on a regular basis."

The success rate of students following the Correspondence Course approach to Junior High programming is such that it almost guarantees failure. This is a rather dismal prospect for the culmination of nine or more years involvement in the education system.

The student:teacher ratio throughout the school is not high. Even

If the principal does not teach the ratio is approximately 14:1. This should permit teachers to dedicate a great deal of time to individual pupils throughout all grades and for a considerable amount of individualized instruction to be provided.

19. "that the level of staffing in the school not be increased."

The request was made a number of times that the size of the teaching staff should be increased. The present staff size of $7\frac{1}{2}$ teaching positions and $3\frac{1}{2}$ classroom assistants for 95 students presents a very good ratio. An increase in the size of the staff is not recommended. However, a careful study of the present allocation of staff should be undertaken to ensure the most effective use of the available personnel is made.

20. "that the Northwest Territories Classroom Assistant Training Program be implemented within the school and that the Classroom Assistants be strongly encouraged to advance their level of training."

Classroom assistants have been reluctant to seek training. Many parents feel that obtaining additional training should be expected of the assistants if each is to remain in this responsible position. Under the Collective Agreement it is not possible to require employees to up-grade their skills. However, the Training Program is a sequential program which expects that candidates will advance through the levels.

To facilitate this training at the local level it is suggested that a staff member or the Adult Educator assume the responsibility for coordinating this training program for these staff members.

21. "that an appropriate testing program be instituted in the school to provide information to both teaching staff and parents in the areas of educational, medical and social concerns."

Many parents are very concerned about the academic standing of the students within the school. Even students feel that the education they have received is inadequate and that they are at a disadvantage when attempting high school and other advanced programs.

The reasons for the poor performance (if proven) may be attributable to any number of medical, social or educational factors. To properly address these concerns it is necessary to have appropriate assessments available. In areas where such assessments have not been conducted, suitable tests should be administered and the results used to guide future program planning. Such a program should be planned and administered with the full support and possible involvement of the L.E.A. and parents.

22. "that a review of the present student promotion policy and student progress reporting procedures be conducted to ensure that both are based on sound educational philosophy and are clearly explained and meaningful to students and parents."

Many concerns have been expressed about the accuracy of assigned grade levels and the dishonesty of automatic or "social" promotions for many students. Parents have asked for honesty in reporting student progress. It is only in an atmosphere of honesty and openness that all of the factors which may influence a student's progress, or frequently lack thereof, may be objectively considered by parents and teachers.

A number of vital issues have not been addressed directly in the foregoing recommendations.

The problems of student attendance, poor discipline and the negative attitude of many students towards school and others are judged to be primarily a reflection of the state to which the school has fallen and the social climate of the community.

Little can be suggested which will, in itself, resolve these problem areas. However, the implementation of the above recommendations and the subsequent development of an acceptable community education process and environment should, it is hoped, foster an improvement in the areas such as student attendance and discipline.

Another factor which, without doubt, has influenced the deterioration of education in Fort Resolution, is the high staff turn-over rate. Over the past eight academic years, of 38 staff members who have served in the school, only 5 have remained in the school beyond a two year term and 19 have remained for one year only.

This continual change of teaching staff and principal (five changes in eight years) does not provide for continuity in programs, philosophy or policy with the school. However, this again is an area for which specific recommendations cannot be made.

An improvement in the school and community situation may encourage teachers to remain for longer periods. Even teachers who have enjoyed their teaching assignment and who have been generally well accepted by the community have admitted that teaching and living within the community has been a challenge and one which they are ready to face for only so long. Teachers ready to make a commitment to the community beyond a year or so and who are ready to work positively with the community to establish a relevant education program are essential. The existing school staff and especially the community have a major role to play in this area.

OVERVIEW

The Alexander Indian Reserve is located approximately 30 miles northeast of Edmonton and about 12 miles due west of the Town of Morinville. It comprises approximately 25 square miles of land.

A treaty signed in 1879 selected three possible sites as reservations. In 1880 the Alexander Band agreed upon one of these sites. This Reserve was situated about 25 miles from Edmonton on the Lac La Nonne Trail. The Cree name for the Reserve is Kipotakaw, which means "bushed in," or "trees crowded in together."

In 1886, a small mission church was located near the site of the present community.

The people of the Alexander Indian Reserve are of Cree descendency.

Most members of the Band are Roman Catholic and whereas traditional values are still held, little remains of traditional Cree practices. In past years, there has been a renewal of interest in Cree culture.

The current population of the Band is 700, of whom 438 are resident on the Reserve. This represents a growth of 108 people over the 1975 population of 592.

Presently, there are 202 children on the Alexander Reserve of school age. Many of these children are high school and junior high school drop-outs.

A comprehensive educational evaluation was done in 1981-82 by the Department of Indian Affairs and the Alexander Band that showed the following:

EDUCATION EVALUATION RESULTS

The children of the Alexander Indian Reserve were in serious educational trouble.

In grades 1 through 12, regardless of the school attended, there were no students from the Reserve who were working at his/her grade level on the overall. Some children were more than two grade levels below their nominal grade.

There appeared to be many reasons for this massive failure. Curriculum materials, school supplies and equipment were insufficient. Many of them were out of date, culturally irrelevant or in poor repair and did not meet the diagnosed educational needs of the children. A lack of teachers trained in cross-cultural education and a disregard of different learning styles.

It is alarming that more than 45% of the children tested had some degree of hearing impairment which would interfere with their academic progress, and that there were no programs that took this fact into account. More recent hearing testing has confirmed this high hearing impairment.

The drop-out rate in high school and junior high school was so great that only one student graduated from high school in fifteen years.

Most high school and junior high school students were abusing alcohol or drugs.

PROVINCIAL SCHOOL PROBLEM

Finally there appears to be a growing reluctance on the part of the Provincial School Board for the schools attended by students from Alexander to continue accepting the current number of students in these schools. Specifically the Camila School in the Sturgeon School Division. They refused to take some thirty Alexander students.

COMMUNITY DECISION

The lack of academic success did not bode well for the future economic and social development of the individual students or the community of Alexander.

Because of this the Alexander Indian Band decided to take control of education on the Reserve and to establish an early childhood program for nursery through grade 4 during the first year and to add a grade five in the second year. To this end it chose what appears to the community to be the most applicable and comprehensive model for primary and elementary education. It has also developed a five year education plan detailing training, long term planning, curriculum and educational philosophy. The Band feels that this decision to take control, and the development and establishment of programs based on the childrens' needs was a good one and offers the best chance for quality education for the children.

CHANGES

In the year our new school has been in operation the following things have changed:

The attendance has gone from 74% before the takeover to 95% present rate.

Vandalism has gone from \$2400. before takeover to \$25. this year.

Elders of the community did not feel welcome at the school before takeover, but since then the Elders have been in the school on a regular basis.

There was NO Cree language program before takeover and now there is one.

There was NO Cultural Centre before takeover, and now a Cultural Centre area has been constructed since school started.

The school library before takeover was 1066 volumes of which less than half were usable, since then the library has grown to over 5,000 volumes.

Before the takeover there was no regular information bulletin or newsletter in the community. Now the school publishes a bi-monthly newsletter for the community with the support of the Band Council. This increased communication has had a positive effect on the attendance and increased level of activity at community events. The newsletter began as a two page newsletter and has grown to nine pages.

Prior to takeover there was no nutrition program in the school. Now there is a 'one a day vitamin program' and snack program. Cooking and nutritional food preparation is done by all classes every week. Because of this the families of school children are beginning to change eating habits and fewer children come to school with sugar and junk food in their lunches. Parents have complained that their children are demanding more fruits and raw vegetables.

Until the educational evaluation which led to takeover there was not a regular educational and perceptual screening program for the children in the school. Now the school screens all new children at the school and sees that the children's eyes and ears are inspected regularly. This has in turn paid off by making the entire community more health conscious.

Another program that is being carried on at the school is the upgrading and training of teacher aides to become regular classroom teachers. More than regular classroom teachers because they will be able to teach process education which we feel is closer to the needs of most Native students. This program offers both college credit and on-the-job experience.

A program beginning in September is the school dropout recovery program which will be an alternative junior high, and high school program aimed at getting dropouts either back in school or providing them with a grade twelve equivalency. This program will be for nineteen students. Students from this program will do peer teaching, student teaching, and will help run the youth recreational programs after school and on the weekends.

There has been another change in the children which is hardest to define. It is a change in spirit. They seem to be happier and more alive. They are beginning to feel that they have a future and that they can make decisions and that it is o.k. to be an Indian.

THE NEW SCHOOL

The Kiphtakaw Education Centre opened in September 1982 and was the result of six years of comprehensive planning, evaluation and community consultation.

It was felt by the community for a long time that unless they changed the educational system in the community the Alexander people would cease to exist culturally and economically. Our Band felt that the words of the philosopher Whitehead could apply to us,

"In the conditions of modern life the rule is absolute, the race which does not value trained intelligence is doomed. Not all your heroism, not all your wit, not all your victories on land or at sea, can move back the finger of fate. Today we maintain ourselves. Tomorrow science will have moved forward one more step, and there will be no appeal from the judgement which will then be pronounced on the uneducated".

Indian Control of Indian Education was seen as the only way to bring Quality Education to the Community.

Quality Education meant much more than just taking over the existing education system. It meant building an education program that would release the potential of the children and the community at the same time.

The approach our Band chose to develop its school and community is a bottom up development plan in which it is the community that identifies need. It is the community that decides what programs or approaches will solve the needs and finally, when need and program have been decided upon, seeking multi-level funding to pay for those programs and approaches. This development plan has depended on evaluation and assessment by local people and professionals, to provide the information and the data necessary for good planning and decision making. Educational workshops with the whole community on education, consultation and planning has helped to insure local consensus and support for programs that the Band undertakes.

Our community and Elders see Man as both a physical and a spiritual being. This philosophical view has a direct relationship to educational and community planning because how we feel about what we do and the quality of the way we do it is as important as what we accomplish. Our school and community see being an Indian as meaning we have Indian values and that what we plan and do must incorporate those values. In the school we do not teach for instance about the Eagle only as a creature that flies, by definition a bird, but as a symbol of the spirit and an example of great vision and power. The view of Man as a spiritual creature is the bedrock of the formation of ours and our childrens personal identity, which, is what we believe education is about.

THE EDUCATION MODEL

After two years of research and observation the Anisa Model of Education was chosen as the model which could most easily be adapted to our Community and one that would not subvert or rob us of our Culture.

The Anisa Model is a blueprint for a new educational system that brings joy to learning without losing sight of the need for self-discipline and hard work. Underlying this new system is a philosophy about life and the wonders of the universe, and a theory of education that connects the two. A theory that connects the spiritual and physical nature of man so important to our community.

To ensure the coherence, depth, and comprehensiveness of the philosophical and theoretical foundations of the Model, it draws heavily on the works of the great philosopher, logician and mathematician, Alfred North Whitehead.

Anisa comes from the root word that refers to a flowering of a fragrant plant or tree: It has been used to represent the "Tree of Life," an ancient symbol which connotes the qualities of beauty, grace, nurturance, shelter, and cycles of fruition.

We find Anisa consistent with our own concepts of the Medicine Wheel and the way everything in the universe relates to everything else. It has been our traditional belief that man is not separated from the universe but a vital part of it.

The opportunity to become a competent learner is one of the greatest gifts a child can receive. It is a great gift because learning competence enables a child to take full advantage of all other opportunities life may bring. And if life seems to bring few opportunities and many problems, a competent learner need not despair because he can work through problems and knows how to create opportunities for himself and others.

How can we give this gift to our children?

To transform schools and homes into places where children will develop into competent learners requires a comprehensive plan for educational renewal. The Anisa Model is such a plan. It is a scientifically-based educational system that fosters each child's natural love of learning and helps him to become a confident and productive human being. If a child loves to learn, it stands to reason that he will be attracted to learning opportunities, and will therefore enjoy taking on responsibilities that require new learning. Problems and the challenge of finding their solutions will interest him. With this attitude toward learning he will continue to develop and grow throughout his life.

An effective and competent learner knows how to learn. Yet, how to learn is itself something that has to be learned, but it is rarely taught in schools. We have found that the traditional provincial school curriculum emphasizes what to learn, rather than how to learn; what to see or hear, not how to see and listen; what to think, rather than how to think; what to feel, but not how to feel; what to strive for, rather than how to strive. The Anisa curriculum emphasizes the "hows" of learning.

Adding the "hows" to the "whats" of the provincial traditional curriculum makes the Anisa Model comprehensive and ensures the development of the whole child, rather than just that part of him concerned with the memorization of facts. Although memorizing different kinds of information is certainly important, learning includes far more than that. In schools based on the Model, five other kinds of learning concerned with the "hows" are given high priority. The part of the curriculum designed to develop learning competence is organized around these five types.

1. Learning how to move and gain maximum control over the voluntary muscles. This form of learning is essential to many important human activities such as riding a bicycle, playing the violin, writing, or performing surgery. The expert use of tools and the operation of machinery depend on this kind of learning.
2. Learning how to perceive. Development of the senses - seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching - is important to all other forms of learning. Through proper training, children can increase their efficiency in processing information taken in through the senses and can learn to make use of it to the best advantage.
3. Learning how to think clearly. There are many kinds of thinking emphasized in the Model, especially problem-solving through the use of logical reasoning. Problem solving is given emphasis because no child can gain independence nor can he secure the best kind of employment as an adult if he cannot identify and solve problems.
4. Learning how to exercise the will. This form of learning produces self-discipline and the ability to concentrate or pay attention. It includes learning how to set goals, how to initiate action to accomplish them, and how to persevere in the face of obstacles until they are achieved. Without this kind of learning, a child cannot become a productive, self-reliant, self-directed adult.
5. Learning how to feel and respond emotionally to any situation appropriately. To become fully human, a child must learn how to love and how to be loved; how to cope with sadness and disappointment; how to manage anxiety; how to control anger or jealousy. His emotions need to be organized so that he likes the things that further his development and dislikes things that do not. For example, learning to love justice and honesty and to dislike injustice and dishonesty will enable him to be a morally responsible person who keeps out of trouble and attracts friends who will meet his social needs in a beneficial way. When emotions are organized the other way around, the child feels that injustice and dishonesty are acceptable. The stage is then set for delinquency, crime and disrespect for legitimate authority. The Anisa Model therefore does not leave the emotional and moral development of the child up to chance, but treats it as an obligation of high priority. To do otherwise is to deprive the child of a promising future and a decent life.

Complex skills such as speaking, reading, writing and mathematical reasoning, all of which are given central importance in the Anisa Model, involve the five kinds of learning mentioned above. Concentrating first on the "hows" of learning enables each child to achieve the prerequisites to these skills as soon as possible, but in his own time. In this way children who are ready for learning the skills are not held back and those not yet ready can still proceed at their own pace without being made to feel that they have failed.

In summary, we feel that the Anisa Model can serve children by providing them a comprehensive educational experience that will enable them to develop their potentialities fully and at the best speed possible.

In our school creating the conditions for success while avoiding failure is a central feature. This is done by finding out what each child knows and what he can do so that learning experiences that match his developmental needs can be provided. Children educated in this way are highly motivated to learn and do not become lazy; instead, they develop an industrious attitude towards work that insures steady employment in the future.

We are proud of our school and our community. We believe in community control of education because it is working for us.

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