



Understanding My Child's School

Understanding
My Child's School
Part 1: Current Landscape



Workshop Facilitator Guide

This workshop facilitator guide provides content and process for working with parents and family members to support student success within a school and/or district setting.

The goals of the workshop are:

1. To raise awareness and promote understanding among parents of their responsibility to be involved and engaged in their child's education and school;
2. To raise awareness, promote understanding and encourage parents to be meaningfully involved at all levels of the education system;
3. To raise awareness and promote understanding among parents about structures, policies, procedures, culture and avenues of influence in Alberta schools.

Acknowledgements

**Professional Development Workshop Materials
Support by the Alberta School Councils'
Association in collaboration with Alberta Education
and ARPD**

For further information about workshop materials, contact the Alberta Education, FNMI Services Branch at 780.415.9300, Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium at 780.444.2497 or info@erlc.ca or Alberta School Councils' Association 780.454.9867.

This professional development package was produced under the leadership of the Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium (ERLC) and the Alberta School Councils' Association.

The materials were reviewed by Alberta Education, FNMI Branch and Edmonton Regional Learning Consortium consultants.

The **Workshop Facilitator Resource** for *Understanding My Child's School* is organized into three sections:

1. Before the Workshop
2. Workshop Goals and Overview Chart
3. PowerPoint slides with facilitator notes and suggested activities.

A variety of strategies can be selected to create workshops that facilitate different time requirements and needs. The Overview Chart that follows provides a description of each strategy, the time suggested for each and the workshop goals the strategy aligns with. The suggested times are estimates only. **Adapt and adopt the workshop materials - activities, discussion questions, video clips, handouts and slides - to best meet the cultural context, needs and interests of those with whom you are working.**

This workshop facilitator guide provides a number of discussion starters and activities. The discussion starters and activities are designed to be implemented according to your purpose, and may be delivered in a number of different workshop settings. The discussion starters and activities can be combined within a variety of time formats: from four (4) 90-minute sessions to one full day, depending on the audience and needs.

In most cases, it is strongly suggested that a full day session (7 hours) would be optimal.

Before the Workshop

Questions to ask before preparing for the workshop:

Use this as a reference to prepare for the learning opportunity:

1. Who is the audience? Which First Nations will be represented?
 - What are their roles? What are their attitudes about this topic, this presentation, and/or the work environment in general? What experiences, knowledge, skills and potential contributions do they bring to this event?
2. Are there contextual outcomes (purposes) for the workshop you should be aware of?
 - What will be seen, heard or felt by the end of the presentation?
3. What's most important?
 - Of all the possible outcomes, which are most critical? What types of outcomes are most desired – knowledge, skills or attitudes?
4. What resources will you have to work with?
 - How much time is available? What needs to be communicated to whom prior to the event? What background knowledge do participants have about this topic? What are their levels of expertise?
5. What other FNMI-related workshops and/or professional learning opportunities has the group been involved with?

Logistics considerations:

1. Follow proper protocol to seek out (male/female) Elders/presenters from the local community to assist you in the delivery of the workshop. The role of the Elder(s) may include beginning and ending the session with prayer, providing advice and guidance, and sharing traditional knowledge and wisdom throughout the session.
2. How much time will you have?
 - Could any surprises affect the amount of actual presentation time? How long will you have for lunch and for breaks? Who will provide the refreshments?
3. What physical set-up is required?
 - Name tags, table tents, room arrangements, snack arrangements, audiovisual equipment, internet/wifi connection and instructional materials.
4. What travel and transportation details should you check?
 - How do you get to the site and how long will it take you to get there? Can you get in the room 45 minutes before the event?

Facilitators must work closely with the school/community contact person to develop a workshop plan to suit the needs of the participants. There are more activities than time available, most likely, so you may wish to pick and choose between them to meet the particular needs of each group. **Ideally this workshop should be offered in one full (7 hours) day**, but can also be successfully implemented in four (4) 90-minute sessions.

Workshop materials

- Participant handouts/booklets if applicable (digital/downloadable if applicable)
- PowerPoint slides
- Screen
- Flipchart Paper
- Sticky Notes or index cards
- Felt Pens
- Highlighters
- Masking Tape or Sticky Tac
- Data Projector with laptop or desktop computer connected and internet connection & speakers
- Name tags/table tents

On-site requirements

- Choose a comfortable setting with tables and chairs that are arranged for dialogue and discussion rather than a room that is set up "lecture style".
- If you have asked participants to bring their laptops, ensure that a robust wifi connection is available.
- Ensure that presenters/elders are well looked after and that they have a place in the room to set up anything they might need.

Workshop Goals and Overview

- This workshop planning guide contains a variety of learning opportunities and is intended to be adapted based on participant and community needs.
- If there are more activities than can be done in one session, as the facilitator you should choose activities/processes based on participants' experience, time available and specifically expressed needs.

Workshop Goals

1. To raise awareness and promote understanding among parents of their responsibility to be involved and engaged in their child's education and school;
2. To raise awareness, promote understanding and encourage parents to be meaningfully involved at all levels of the education system, including school council;
3. To raise awareness and promote understanding among parents about structures, policies, procedures, culture and avenues of influence in Alberta schools.

Overview Chart

| Theme | Activity | Suggested Time | Related Goal |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Part 1: Current Landscape | | | |
| ➤ | Getting Started Participant introduction (Activity); Collaborative Framework relevance; workshop goals and themes | 15 Minutes | 1,2,3 |
| ➤ | Context Acknowledgement of current statistics, previous and existing influence, Inspiring Education vision and existing pieces in the Education system | 25 Minutes | 3 |
| ➤ | Parental Perspective Safe, respectful identification of what is not known; potential sources of knowledge, "How Do I?" (Activity) | 50 Minutes | 1,2 |
| | Break | | |
| Part 2: Rights and Responsibilities | | | |
| ➤ | Empowerment Pathways Exploration of circles of influence, empowerment options, being a person of positive influence (Activity) | 45 Minutes | 1,2,3 |
| ➤ | Parental Responsibilities Investigation into local communication protocol, new Education Act, "What I CAN Do!" (Activity) | 45 Minutes | 1,2,3 |
| | Break | | |
| Part 3: Opportunities | | | |
| ➤ | Parental Voices Exploration of options available for parents' voices to be heard related to their child's education (Activity) | 20 Minutes | 1,2,3 |
| ➤ | Collaborative Framework Exploration of the factors that contribute to FNMI Student Success based on communication with the field. | 30 Minutes | 1,2 |
| | Break | | |
| Part 4: Building the Future | | | |
| ➤ | Parent Perspective Revisited Review activity from Part 1: Parental Perspective to link new understandings obtained throughout the workshop; address unanswered "How Do I?" (Activity) | 70 Minutes | 1,2,3 |
| ➤ | Future Vision Establishment of common & personal visions for what can exist for education (Activity) | 15 Minutes | 1,2,3 |
| ➤ | Conclusions and Closing Ensure workshop goals were met, acknowledge those who assisted/supported, and complete evaluations | 5 Minutes | 1,2,3 |

Facilitator's Notes

Part 1: Current Landscape

Suggested Time:
90 Minutes/Part 1

Activities:

- ✓ Participant Introductions
- ✓ How Do I...?

Materials Needed for Part 1

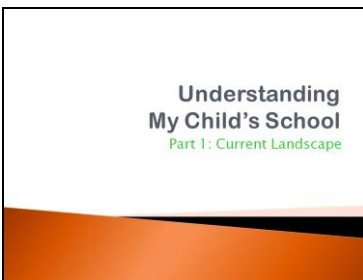
- ✓ Projector and Screen
- ✓ Access to Internet
- ✓ Flipchart paper (preferably the sticky ones. If not, masking tape or sticky tac will be needed)
- ✓ Felt pens
- ✓ Large (min 5" x 3") stickies (25 per participant) or recipe cards and masking tape/sticky tac

Handout:

- ☐ PowerPoint summary with notes lines

Slide:

Part 1: Current Landscape



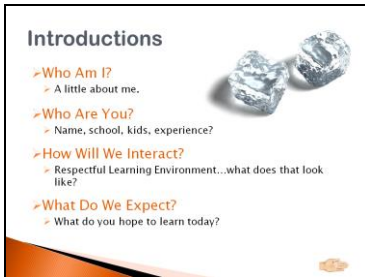
Facilitator's Notes

Suggested Time:
15 Minutes/4 Slides

Activity:
✓ Participant Introductions

Handout:
□ PowerPoint summary with notes lines

Slide:
Introduction



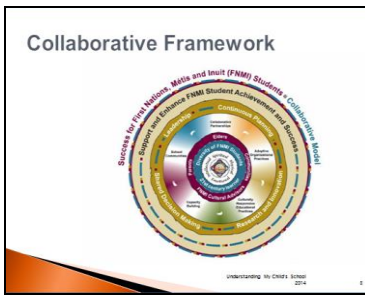
Current Landscape-Getting Started (4 Slides)

Introductions

- Introduce yourself and provide some “credibility” background
 - ❖ Ensure all participants have the handouts – slides with the hand in the bottom right hand corner are ones that reference handouts: for this slide it’s the ppt summary with lines for notes.
- Discover who you are working with
 - ❖ Small group/single School Council: ask each person to introduce themselves, state # & grades of children
 - ❖ Larger group: show of hands re: role (parent, teacher, principal, trustee, admin, elder); range of experience as an adult at schools (newbie, 1 – 5 yrs, 5 – 10 yrs, over 10 yrs, etc)
- Encourage participants to contribute to establishing the “rules” – how do they think we should all behave?
 - ❖ These basic ground rules should be identified in one way or the other, if not, ensure they are mentioned:
 - ✓ Confidentiality (share experiences without names and specifics)
 - ✓ Listen Actively (no side-bar conversations)
 - ✓ Share if comfortable (experience of others is often the best teacher)
 - ✓ Respect others’ opinions and views (perception is reality)
 - ✓ Take responsibility (Participate! You only get out what you put in)
 - ✓ Have fun (learning is best accomplished in a safe and relaxed atmosphere)
- Seek input related to learning hopes and expectations of session (write down on flipchart, or your own notes)
 - ❖ Small group/single School Council: ask each participant individually
 - ❖ Larger group: solicit one or two responses from key participants, then ask if anyone has anything to add

Facilitator's Notes

Slide:
Collaborative Framework

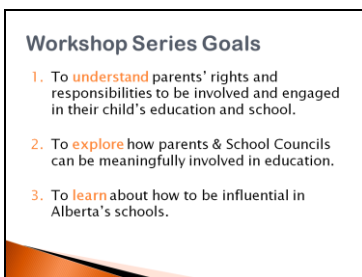


Current Landscape-Getting Started Collaborative Framework

- Over the past few years, Alberta Education has worked with First Nation, Métis and Inuit parents and communities across the province to develop a Collaborative Framework model that supports school authorities to engage FNMI families and communities in the planning and implementation of strategies focused on improving their children's success in school.
- The [FNMI Families, Parents and Communities: Supporting Engagement](#) initiative resulted from the work on Collaborative Frameworks.
- There is a common vision for strengthening learning and educational success for FNMI learners in Alberta.
- The Conceptual Collaborative Framework Model is a collaborative partnership that supports a range of education-related issues including families, parents and community engagement.
- FNMI families, parents, and communities (FPC) are key partners who will help develop outcomes and strategies to improve their children's success in school.
- This workshop is one of several which have been created specifically to further this important work.

Facilitator's Notes

Slide:
Workshop Series Goals



Current Landscape-Getting Started Workshop Series Goals

- Go through each workshop goal and provide time for participants to read them over from the slide.
- Reiterate to participants that this is a 'new learner' workshop series. It is not expected that participants have a solid knowledge of the education system in Alberta, or even what the practices and processes are in their child's school.
- This is a workshop (series) designed to help parents understand how their rights' and responsibilities can be exercised in the system of education in Alberta, how they can be involved in supporting their children in school, and how they can effect positive change at each level.

Facilitator's Notes

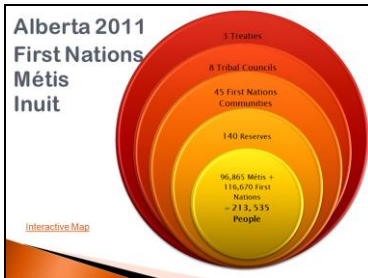
Slide:
Themes



Facilitator's Notes

Suggested Time:
25 Minutes/4 Slides

Slide:
First Nations Métis Inuit



Current Landscape-Getting Started

Themes

- Read through themes with participants.
- Relate any “expectations” to the relevant theme, if possible.
- Point out that the workshop series will include activities that will involve individual, partner and group work.
- For full day workshops, mention that a health break will be provided in the morning and afternoon, as well as a lunch break.
- **Note:** We will refer to the themes periodically throughout the workshop to ensure participants understand how the workshop is progressing.

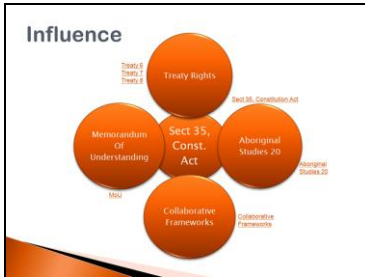
Current Landscape-Context (4 Slides)

First Nations Métis Inuit

- This overview is intended to encourage individuals to see themselves as part of a larger community.
- This information is the most recent from the Canada census in 2011
 - ❖ First Nations and Métis peoples total over 213,000 in Alberta (Stats Can did not provide numbers for the Inuit population in Alberta)
 - ❖ Many of these people live on one of 140 Reserves or 8 Settlements, each one being quite unique
 - ❖ There are 45 First Nations, in addition to the Métis peoples represented in Alberta.
 - ❖ 8 Tribal Councils comprised of regional groups of First Nations members, deliver common services to groups of First Nations.
 - ❖ In Alberta, Individuals, Tribal Councils, Communities and Governments are guided by Treaty 6, Treaty 7 or Treaty 8.
- If possible, provide some details specific to your audience, relative to the previous information. i.e:
 - ❖ A part of Treaty 8, the Athabasca Tribal Council represents the interests of five First Nations of North Eastern Alberta. The Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, Chipewyan Prairie First Nation, Fort McKay First Nation, Fort McMurray No. 468 First Nation, and Mikisew Cree First Nation are comprised of more than 5,000 Cree and Dene people.
- To display an interactive map of the FNMI communities across Alberta, click on the link in the slide, or open:
<http://www.aboriginal.alberta.ca/930.cfm>

Facilitator's Notes

Slide:
Successes



Current Landscape-Context

Successes

- Discuss the graphic
- In our world today, these things are present and promote everyone's understanding of aboriginal rights and culture
- *Facilitator to have a working knowledge of each of these 'pieces' of context.*
 - ❖ Sect 35, Constitutional Act link: <http://bit.ly/18JsYFG>
 - ❖ Treaty Rights links:
 - ✓ Treaty 6: <http://bit.ly/1aH7qtN>
 - ✓ Treaty 7: <http://bit.ly/18e67YO>
 - ✓ Treaty 8: <http://bit.ly/1gdsikE>
 - ❖ Aboriginal Studies 20 link: <http://bit.ly/1cfJvCN>
 - ❖ Collaborative Frameworks link:
 - ❖ MoU link: <http://bit.ly/196cuMm>
- Briefly outline what each 'piece' means to aboriginal rights and the promotion of awareness, knowledge and understanding...and working together for students (children).
- Highlight Collaborative Frameworks...where this workshop comes into being, and the efforts of the provincial gov't and education partners to encourage greater First Nation, Metis and Inuit parent (elder, grandparent, aunt, uncle – all who care for children), engagement **and involvement that is meaningful to them**, in the education system.
- Largely as a result of the diligent efforts of many who have walked these paths before us, education in Alberta is on the cusp of positive transformation.

Facilitator's Notes

Slide:
Inspiring Education



Current Landscape-Context

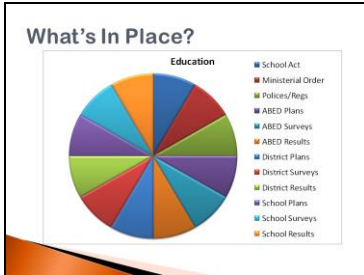
Inspiring Education

- A catalyst for change across the province
- A shift in collective thinking for all Albertans
- 6 Elements intended to provide direction & resources which will better support Alberta students
- Desired outcomes include:
 - ❖ Engaged Thinkers (who are)
 - ❖ Ethical Citizens (with an)
 - ❖ Entrepreneurial Spirit. (The 3E's of Inspiring Ed)

Facilitator's Notes

Slide:

What's In Place?



Current Landscape-Context

What's In Place?

- All of the pieces that are already in place in the Education system in Alberta have contributed to the success of our students to date.
- These pieces inform the work of our teachers, principals, school boards, Alberta Education and the government.
- Surveys and results at all levels (school, district and province) provide valuable insight into how well, or not, our students are learning.
- Each level develops plans specific to their respective community of students to either continue their good work, or make changes intended to better support achievement and success.
- Policies, regulations, ministerial orders and the School Act help to guide this work, voicing the desires of Albertans and intending that students all across Alberta have the same access to the same quality education, with the same expectations of success.
- With all of these in place, sometimes it's difficult for parents to know exactly who to talk to, or what to look for, or where to go, when they have a concern or a question about their child's education.
- Sometimes those of us who work within the "system" aren't sure either. That's one of the reasons we bring people together...to learn from others, and to share the knowledge we do have with those seeking the same.
- In order to effectively do that, though, we need to determine what our questions are to figure out who might help us find the answer.
- We need to figure out what we **don't** know.

Facilitator's Notes

Suggested Time:

50 Minutes/1 Slide

Activity:

✓ How Do I...?

Slide:

What Don't We Know?



Current Landscape-Parental Perspective (1 Slide)

What Don't We Know?

NOTE: In advance of the workshop, the Instructor, in consultation with the Host for local context, will prepare flipchart papers with themes of "who has the answer" (one per flipchart sheet) and post on walls around the room. Suggested themes may include:

- ❖ Teacher, School office staff or Principal
- ❖ Trustee/School Board
- ❖ Superintendent/Central Office staff
- ❖ Community Partner (Elders, Chief and counselors and FNMI education directors etc.)
- ❖ Another parent in the school
- ❖ School Council
- ❖ Alberta School Councils' Association or Community Agency/Association

Individual: 5 minutes

- Using the large stickies or recipe cards, ask each participant to complete the "How do I...?" question related to aspects of their child's school or education.

- Use one sticky or recipe card per question.
- Examples :
 - ❖ How do I help my child do homework?
 - ❖ How do I find out how my child is doing?
 - ❖ How do I let the teacher know I am concerned about my child?
 - ❖ How do I encourage my child to attend school?
 - ❖ How do I express my disagreement with how rules are enforced at the school?
- Ask participants to mark their stickies with an “identifier” that will enable them to retrieve their questions at the end of the workshop series.

Partner: 10 minutes

- Ask participants to find a partner, and share their questions with each other. Participants are encouraged to NOT provide answers to each other, but just to listen and perhaps ask questions of clarification (“Do you mean...?”)
- Ask participants to write down additional questions that may arise from their sharing; again one per sticky or recipe card.

Table group: 15 minutes

- Ask participants to repeat the process with everyone at their table. Again, no answers to be provided and additional questions to be written down.
- Ask a spokesperson from each table to summarize their most common question, or theme of questions, for the whole group.

Whole group: 20 minutes

- Ask participants to take a few minutes to sort their questions into “who has the answer?” themes identifying the individual or group they think (they don’t have to “know”) may be best able to help them answer their question.
- Once sorted, ask participants to attach them to the appropriate flipchart paper.
- Allow participants an opportunity to view the questions posted on each flipchart paper.
- Recognize and validate the importance of asking these types of questions. At the end of the workshop series, these questions will be revisited, intending that most or all have been answered. Thank participants for their active involvement in this exercise and encourage them to continue to think of questions throughout the day/workshop series. Write them on stickies and place them on the appropriate flipchart paper.

Facilitator’s Notes

Suggested Time

15 Minutes

Slide: Health Break



Facilitator's Notes

Suggested Time:
90 Minutes/Part 2

Activities:

- ✓ Positive Influence
- ✓ What I CAN Do...

Materials Needed for Part 2

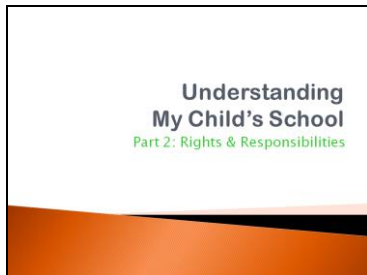
- ✓ Projector & Screen

Handouts:

- ☐ Pathways of Empowerment
- ☐ District or School Communication Protocol (not included with module: Instructor/Host to prepare)
- ☐ Sample Communication Protocol
- ☐ New Education Act Section 32: Parent Responsibilities
- ☐ What I CAN Do...

Slide:

Part 2: Education Delivery



Part 2: Rights and Responsibilities

Facilitator's Notes

Suggested Time:
45 Minutes/6 Slides

Slide:

Themes

| Themes | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Current Landscape <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Getting Started➤ Context➤ Parental Perspective | 3. Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Parental Voices➤ School Councils |
| 2. Rights & Responsibilities <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Pathways of Empowerment➤ Parental Responsibilities | 4. Building the Future <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Parent Perspective Revisited➤ Future Vision➤ Conclusions & Closing |

Rights and Responsibilities – Empowerment Pathways (6 Slides)

Themes

- Part one of the workshop series outlined the workshop goals, explored our current landscape and helped to identify the questions that participants had related to supporting their child's education.
- If needed, review the goals of the workshop series (slide 4)
- In this next section, participants will get a general picture of how educational decisions are made, and who gets to make them. We will explore some of the ways that parents can have a positive effect on education, for their child, the children in their school, their community or Alberta.
- Participants will also learn the rights and responsibilities parents have with respect to their own child's education.

- **Note:** We will refer to the themes periodically throughout the workshop to ensure participants understand how the workshop is progressing.

Facilitator's Notes

Slide:
Common Organizational Power Flow



Rights and Responsibilities – Empowerment Pathways Common Organizational Power Flow

- We are all accustomed to this type of organization. A corporate example: The President of a very popular coffee and snack company believes that customers are having to wait too long in line ups to get their morning coffee. He (or she) has an idea of how to fix this problem. Depending on the corporate structure and atmosphere, the idea is either shared and discussed at the “upper level” (board of directors, senior vice-presidents etc), or is simply “dictated” by the top person to be implemented without discussion. Impact ON the idea is minimal, or non-existent, from the customer’s perspective. However, the impact OF the idea is most largely felt by the customer....either the idea is very positive (express “coffee only” lines), negative (increase the price of coffee so fewer people will buy it) or nothing changes.
- This “top down” mentality of what is needed and how the need should be met has been in existence for a long time in our society, in almost every sector...including education.
- Decisions were made by someone, somewhere at the top. We at the bottom, just had to live with them...or fail miserably as a result, as directed by teachers, principals, superintendents, boards of trustees and the Ministry of Education.
- The good news is....this is beginning to change. Remember Inspiring Education from the previous section?

Facilitator's Notes

Slide:
Inspiring Education



Rights and Responsibilities – Empowerment Pathways Inspiring Education

- A catalyst for change across the province
- A shift in collective thinking for all Albertans
- 6 Elements intended to provide direction & resources which will better support Alberta students
- Desired outcomes include:
 - ❖ Engaged Thinkers (who are)
 - ❖ Ethical Citizens (with an)
 - ❖ Entrepreneurial Spirit. (The 3E’s of Inspiring Ed)
- This concept didn’t come from “the top down”. It’s the result of a different way to discover, address and respond to the education needs of Alberta’s students.
- Alberta’s citizens were given the opportunity to state what they thought was important in education. The gov’t then had to compile all of the “wants”, organize it into something that could be infused throughout all levels of education, translate those into something everyone would understand, and then involve all of us to figure out how to deliver it to ensure the best possible

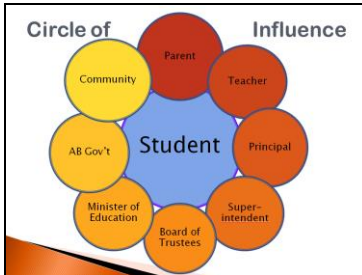
outcome for our students.

- So instead of looking like that pyramid we just saw on the previous slide, it looked, and continues to look, more like this: (next slide)

Facilitator's Notes

Slide:

Circle of Influence



Rights and Responsibilities – Empowerment Pathways

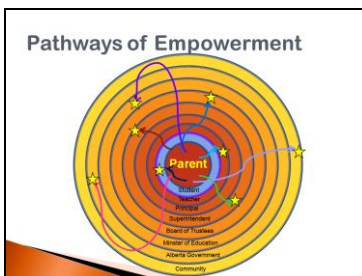
Circle of Influence

- Diagram is intended to show the relationship of all those supporting student learning.
- “The educational best interest of the child is the paramount consideration in making decisions about a child’s education.” (Ministerial Order # 001/2013 Education Minister Jeff Johnson)
- The student is central, and all those supporting the student work together to fulfill the educational needs.
- The focused attention and efforts of all, combined with the intentional meaningful communication that should occur in every direction, will result in the best possible educational outcomes for each student.
- It’s very important to understand that with this model, the path of influence is not unidirectional. It does not start with one, and travel sequentially to the next one. It travels in all directions, at all times, if the right processes and participants are in place. Each participant, regardless of their title, has an obligation to fully apply this model, and dialogue with, and learn from, every other participant.
- Parents are a key participant, and unfortunately one that has been underutilized and underrepresented in the past.
- Fortunately, that’s changing as more and more parents learn of their paths of empowerment, and understand and exercise their rights when it comes to the education of their children.

Facilitator's Notes

Slide:

Pathways of Empowerment



Rights and Responsibilities – Empowerment Pathways

Pathways of Empowerment

- Each partner in our education community, from teachers to trustees to employees of Alberta Ed and the elected leaders of our province, wants to meet the educational needs of the children in our province. We all want every student to be successful.
- Parents are crucial partners and sources of information in identifying those needs. Parents are also required to help define “successful”.
- When supporting student success, a parent has many paths from which to choose that can empower them to be influential.
- As in many areas of life, these paths are rarely straight, or narrow. Some may be isolated; some may criss-cross with others; some may be fairly direct; others may result in having to backtrack, start over or loop around.
- Creating and maintaining positive relationships is fundamental to being a person of positive influence.
- The most important relationship, therefore influence, you can

have, of course, is with your own child(ren). Some obvious examples may be:

- ❖ Being present and helpful in the morning as your child prepares to get to school
- ❖ Offering the time after school for your child to tell you of their day
- ❖ Providing a suitable place and time in your home for your child to study, do homework or read
- ❖ Ensuring your child's health and wellbeing needs (nutrition, sleep, exercise, hygiene, etc) are met consistently
- All of these are part of the message to your child that you value their education, believe it's important for them to be successful and that you are willing to support them.
- Beyond being involved in your own home, there are many paths for you to consider, and perhaps explore:
 - ❖ In the school, building relationships with teachers and others
 - ❖ At a public school board meeting, as an observer or even providing input
 - ❖ Within the jurisdiction, providing feedback, being an informed voter, or maybe even a trustee candidate
 - ❖ In the community, as a volunteer or a mentor
- The options, really, are almost endless. The choices of how to apply your influence, are entirely up to you.

Facilitator's Notes

Activity:

- ✓ Positive Influence

Handout:

- ☐ Pathways of Empowerment

Slide:

Pathways of Empowerment



Rights and Responsibilities – Empowerment Pathways Pathways of Empowerment (2)

Refer participants to Handout: Pathways of Empowerment

- At their tables, ask participants to share stories of when they were a Person of Positive Influence relating to a child's education (might be their own child, but should be the children in a school or community).
- Have them include in their stories, who they had the positive relationship with that was moved to change by their influence.
- Encourage participants to think of one or two ways that they could begin to become, or could continue to be, a Person of Positive Influence with each of the Education partners on the handout, and write a few notes in the appropriate circle.
- If time permits, have one or two people from each table share some of their ideas of how they can become a Person of Positive Influence with the whole group.
- Suggest that this sheet be kept handy as often ideas will come to us after our mind has had a while to think about other things.

Facilitator's Notes

Suggested Time:

45 Minutes/4 slides

Handout:

- ☐ Communication Protocol
/Sample Communication Protocol

Slide:

Communication Protocol



Rights and Responsibilities–Parental Responsibilities(4 Slides)

Communication Protocol

NOTE: In advance of the workshop, Instructor will have located and highlighted the school or district “communication protocol”. If none available, use provided Handout: Sample Communication Protocol.

- It's not unusual for parents to sometimes feel that they don't have a “role” in their child's education, or that their “role” is made more difficult by numerous unknown, invisible or silent rules, regulations and protocols.
- One of the protocols common to most schools & districts in Alberta, is a Communication Protocol.
- Provide a brief explanation as to why a Communication Protocol is important: i.e.: it ensures that the parties involved in a concern or conflict are aware of the situation; it provides an opportunity for solutions to be discovered by those closest to the situation; it builds a positive relationship as pathways of communication are opened or expanded.

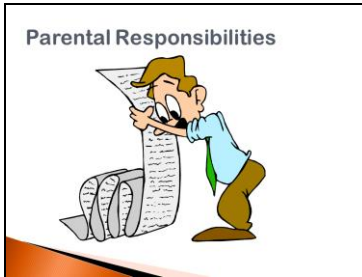
Refer participants to relevant Handout: District or Sample Communication Protocol (or both if desired)

- Ask participants to discuss in partners, one experience they have had in addressing a concern about their child at the school.
 - ❖ Were the steps they took to address their concern similar to the ones outlined in the Handout?
 - ❖ Was their experience positive or negative?
 - ❖ Did it end in a positive resolution?
 - ❖ Were they aware of the communication expectations of the school or district?
 - ❖ Looking back, what one thing could they have done differently that may have resulted in a more positive outcome?
- If comfortable to do so, ask participants to write down on a sticky a “suggestion for improvement” for their school, coming from that experience. Indicate where participants can leave their sticky for the Instructor to collect. “Suggestion Stickies” will be given to the Host at the end of the workshop series.

Facilitator's Notes

Slide:

Parental Responsibilities



Rights and Responsibilities – Parental Responsibilities

Parental Responsibilities

- Since the beginning of time, our communities have recognized that those blessed with bringing children into this world, and/or raising them, have responsibilities to those children. This is not new, or surprising.
- What is new, and to some surprising, is that our partners in education have officially recognized, in legislation, parents' responsibilities with respect to the education of their children.
- Although most of us have always believed this, it's often been difficult for parents to exercise those rights, because it wasn't "written anywhere" that they were expected, or allowed, to.

Facilitator's Notes

Handout:

☐ Education Act

Slide:

The new Education Act



Rights and Responsibilities – Parental Responsibilities

The new Education Act (coming into effect likely September 2015)

- The new Education Act recognizes a parent's rights and responsibilities with respect to being actively supportive of and engaged in, their child's education.
- Ask participants to refer to Handout – Sect 32 of the new Education Act.
- Point out that Parent Responsibilities is a new section in this Act.
- Allow participants time to read each point themselves.
- Ask participants to discuss with others at their table what they believe each point might mean at a group level. I.e:
 - ❖ Programs of choice
 - ❖ Assist with homework
 - ❖ Attend parent-teacher events, return teacher phone calls
 - ❖ Attend school events (concerts, plays etc)

Facilitator's Notes

Activity:

- ✓ What I CAN Do...

Handout:

- What I CAN Do...

Slide:

What I CAN Do...



Rights and Responsibilities – Parental Responsibilities

What I CAN Do....

- Ask participants to refer to Handout: What I CAN Do...
- Reflecting on the points contained within the Parent Responsibilities clause of the new Education Act, ask participants to take a few moments to consider what these responsibilities might mean to them personally, and what they might be able to do to meet these expectations.
- Encourage participants to keep this worksheet handy for future reference.
- Thank participants for their hard work and attention through this section, and their willingness to share their experiences and thoughts.
- The next part of the workshop (after lunch or next date) will explore how elected leaders at the District (Board) and school (School Council) level help to direct, support and enhance education for all students and work to find ways for parents to be a part of their child's education.

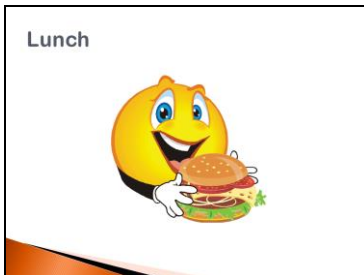
Facilitator's Notes

Suggested Time:

60 Minutes

Slide:

Lunch



Facilitator's Notes

Suggested Time:
90 Minutes/Part 3

Activities:

- ✓ Parental Voice Heard
- ✓ Any Matter
- ✓ Advise/Decide/Lobby/
Reframe

Materials Needed for Part 3:

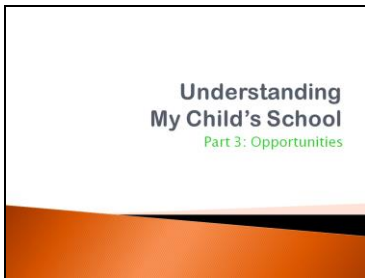
- ✓ Projector and Screen

Handouts:

- ☐ School Act and School
Councils Regulation
- ☐ SC Decide / Advise /Lobby
or Reframe?

Slide:

Part 3: Opportunities



Facilitator's Notes

Suggested Time:
20 Minutes/2 slides

Slide:

Themes



Part 3: Opportunities

Opportunities – Parental Voices (2 Slides)

Themes

- Briefly review with participants the progress made in the first two sections of the workshop.
- This next section will focus on how parental voices can influence their school environment, either individually or through the recognized vehicle of School Councils.
- **Note:** We will refer to the themes periodically throughout the workshop to ensure participants understand how the workshop is progressing.

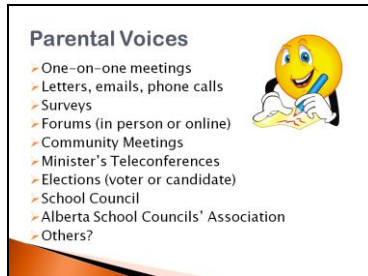
Facilitator's Notes

Activity:

- ✓ Parental Voice Heard

Slide:

Parental Voices



Opportunities – Parental Voices

Parental Voices

- Often parents aren't aware of the many ways that their voices can be heard with respect to their child's education.
- Many of the ways are geared towards individual parents, while others are designed to represent groups of parents with similar thoughts.
 - ❖ One-on-one meetings, with teachers, principals, community leaders may be what parents think of first when it comes to how to have their voices heard, however many other opportunities exist, and are sometimes equally as effective.
 - ❖ Sending a letter or an email, or making a call, to a person of influence will often result in additional opportunities for communication.
 - ❖ Surveys issued by the school, the school council, the district, Alberta Education or the community have been known to influence many changes in education.
 - ❖ Discussion forums, whether in person or on-line, are often used to hear many individual voices at one time.
 - ❖ Community meetings allow individuals to hear other voices in their community, and to determine if they want to add their own voice. Inspiring Education and the Collaborative Frameworks creators used many community meetings to encourage and hear many parental voices.
 - ❖ Recently, the Minister of Education has hosted teleconferences as a way of hearing what parents are thinking about the education of their students.
 - ❖ Participating in elections, both local and provincial, and either as a voter or a candidate, enables individuals to use their voice to support other voices, or to ask for the support of other voices.
 - ❖ School councils, which will be covered in detail right away, are a way for many parental voices to be strong together.
 - ❖ The Alberta School Councils' Association represents the voices of hundreds of school councils, thereby thousands of parents, from all across Alberta, collectively.
- Ask participants to think of other ways that parental voices could be heard in their education community. Allow time for discussion at tables, if needed, then ask one person from each table to share one new idea their group discussed.

Facilitator's Notes

Suggested Time:

70 Minutes/4 Slides

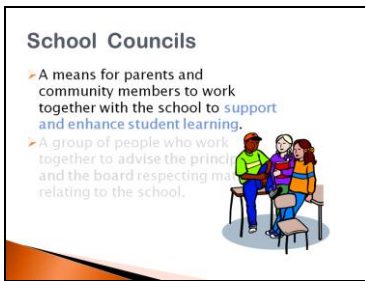
Slide:

School Council

Opportunities – School Council (4 Slides)

School Council

- Actively participating as part of a School Council enables parents to feel they are part of a family working together to support and enhance student achievement.
- History:
 - ❖ In 1995, one significant change to the School Act was the official recognition by the government of the value of parental



- ❖ involvement already at work within the education system.
- ❖ Intention: a structured group, mandated in legislation would have the ability to create multiple and varied opportunities for increased parental and community involvement
- Terminology:
 - ❖ It is very common to hear the term “Parent Council” or “PAC” floating around schools. If you use these terms, that’s okay....many people don’t know that these terms haven’t been recognized officially for many, many years. Consider these points:
 - ❖ Official name: School Council. Not “parent committee, advisory committee, parent advisory council or committee”...notice...the word “parent” isn’t in the official name that has been in existence now for almost 20 years. Nor is the word “committee”.
 - ❖ Why “School Council”? “School” implying that those who help to make up the membership may be more than parents; and “council” implying a group of people getting together for consultation, deliberation and advice.
- Today, and into the future, try really hard to use the term “School Council” when talking about just that...the group of people (parents, staff, community members) who gather together to discuss, and advise upon, matters relating to the school with a goal to support and enhance student learning.
- Currently, FNMI parents are not well represented on most school councils. In some communities, there are Aboriginal Parent Advisory Committees.

Facilitator's Notes

Slide:

What is a School Council 2



Opportunities – School Council

What is a School Council 2

- Paraphrased from the School Act, Section 22 (4) (a)
- A School Council is intended to be a vehicle to support meaningful parental involvement in decisions that affect their school and its operations.
- A School Council provides the venue for all parents of students in the school as well as community members, to reflect the wishes of the broader community for the education of its students and to actively participate in giving advice and support to the principal in the operations of the school.
- The actual decision-making authority of the School Council is limited to
 - ❖ Setting policies to govern School Council activities at the school level, as described in the *School Act*,
 - ❖ Planning support activities that align with School Council's purpose and
 - ❖ Choosing which advice to provide the principal and board on areas that relate specifically to them.

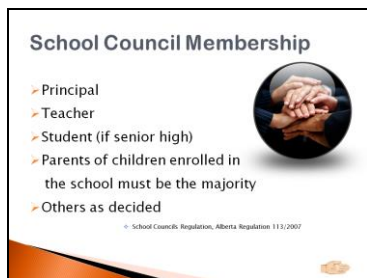
Facilitator's Notes

Handout:

- ☐ School Act & School Councils Regulations

Slide:

School Council Membership



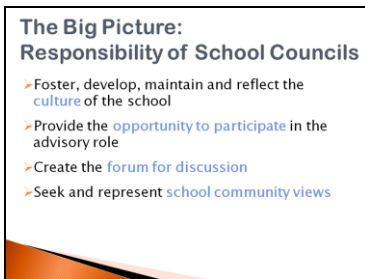
Opportunities – School Council

School Council Membership

- Ask participants to refer to Handout – School Act and SC Regulation – Regulations clause 8.
- Minimum requirements for School Council Membership.
- Offer some suggestions of "others as decided" (religious rep, cultural rep, business rep, community rep).
- Reinforce who needs to be the majority (parents) regardless of structure/definition of membership. Reasoning: other educational groups (teachers, administrators, trustees etc) have their own methods and ways of providing their perspectives regarding education: in the school, in the district and provincially.
- School Councils are the only legislated path for parents to provide the parental perspective, therefore must be represented by a majority of parents.
- Are FNMI parents represented in school councils?
- Are there voices heard in school systems?

Facilitator's Notes

Slide:
The Big Picture



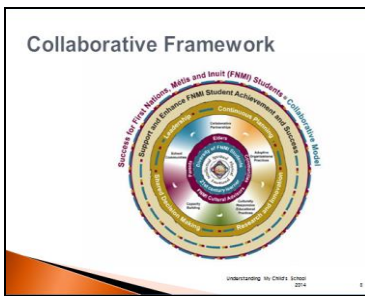
Opportunities – School Council

The Big Picture

- When considering that School Councils are intended to be representative of the parent voice (recall conversation in “members”), they have a duty to consider these overarching philosophies behind how that can be accomplished.
- Discuss each point, providing examples relevant to the audience

Facilitator's Notes

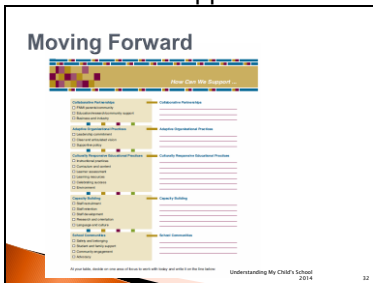
Slide:
Collaborative Framework



- The Collaborative Framework serves as a guide to strengthen collaborative processes between school authorities, parents, communities and other stakeholders, as they work together to improve the educational outcomes of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students.
- Depending on the groups background with the school will determine how you will process this section. Posing a question to encourage dialogue around factors that support their students' success would confirm components of the collaborative framework.
- After an opportunity for dialogue you may wish to take them to the interactive tool and resources available. These materials are also supportive for continued learning following the session.

<http://education.alberta.ca/admin/fnmi/collaborativeframework.aspx>

Slide:
Moving Forward
How can We Support...



- Moving Forward is a resource developed by Alberta Education to support implementation of strategies and approaches that facilitate First Nations, Métis and Inuit student success. Reviewing the handout – how we can support may align with your groups needs.
- Your role as a parent is an important factor that will support success for students. Examples from other schools districts include short videos at the Collaborative Framework site <http://education.alberta.ca/admin/fnmi/collaborativeframework/themes/school-communities.aspx>

Suggested Time:
30 Minutes

Slide:
Health Break



Facilitator's Notes

Suggested Time:
90 Minutes/Part 4

Activities:

- ✓ Flipchart "How Do I...?"
- ✓ Ideal World Dreamsheets

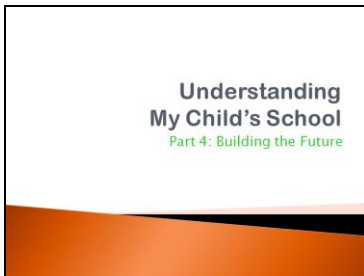
Materials Needed for Part 4:

- ✓ Projector and Screen
- ✓ Flipchart papers from part 1, complete with stickies or recipe cards containing "How Do I...?" questions.
- ✓ Felt pens

Handouts:

- ☐ Ideal World Dreamsheets
- ☐ Evaluation Form

Slide:
Building the Future



Part 4: Building the Future

Facilitator's Notes

Suggested Time:
70 Minutes/3 Slides

Slide:
Themes



Building the Future – Parent Perspective Revisited (3 Slides) Themes

- Acknowledge to participants the amount of learning that has taken place since the beginning of the workshop series.
- In this final section, the “How Do I...?” questions will be revisited, to see how many have been answered, and to determine which ones may still require some research to find the answers.
- We will also have the opportunity to think and dream big...to make plans for the future and to begin to take those steps towards the ideal world of parental engagement and supporting FNMI student achievement.

Facilitator's Notes

Activity:
✓ Flipchart papers from part 1, complete with stickies or recipe cards containing “How Do I...?” questions.

Slide:
What Do We Know



Building the Future – Parent Perspective Revisited What Do We Know

Large Group: 25 minutes

- Ask participants to find their “How do I...?” question stickies (or recipe cards) on the “who has the answer” flipchart papers, and see if they would change where any are placed. If so, encourage them to make the change.
- Allow several minutes for this activity, and to enable all participants to see where the stickies/cards end up.
- If there is a missing “who” theme, seek consensus from the group to create a new one, and place it on the wall.
- Ask participants to move any of their own stickies/cards they believe belong on the new “who” flipchart paper.
- Facilitate necessary conversations about where a particular sticky or card might fit best.
- Ask participants to retrieve their own stickies or cards, after having made a notation of some sort on the sticky or card to indicate “who has the answer”.

Table Group: 25 minutes

- Ask participants to share with others at their tables what they have learned related to **one** of their “How do I...?” questions. Encourage the “Talking Stick Strategy”:
 - ❖ In turn, each person will choose one of their questions and the answer, but not comment on it – The First Turn
 - ❖ Group members comment in round-robin order about the question (with no cross-talk)
 - ❖ The initiating person then shares his or her thinking about the question and answer, and gets – The Last Turn

Partners: 15 minutes

- Ask participants to take turns discussing with their partner what they have learned related to one or two (if time permits) of their other “How do I...?” questions and answers.
- Encourage partners to provide suggestions about answers, or

where to find the answers, if asked. (sharing knowledge)

Individuals: 5 minutes

- Ask participants to review the rest of their 'How do I...?' questions, looking to ensure they either now have the answer, or they know where to go to get the answer.

Facilitator's Notes

Slide:

Unanswered
"How Do I...?"



Building the Future – Parent Perspective Revisited

Unanswered "How Do I...?"

- Ask participants to indicate by a show of hands, if they have any unanswered "How do I...?" questions.
- For as many as time (10 minutes?) permits, if the participant is willing, ask them to share the question with the larger group.
- Ask the larger group what they think the answer may be, or where to find it. **OR** as the Instructor, provide the answer for the participant.
- For unanswered questions that do not get addressed, ask participants to write their name and contact information on the back of the sticky/card, and leave them for the Instructor/Host at the end of the session. The Instructor/Host will do the necessary research and provide it to the participant within a few days.

Facilitator's Notes

Suggested Time:

15 Minutes/1 Slide

Activity:

✓ Brainstorming

Handout:

☐ Ideal World Dreamsheets

Slide:

Future Vision



Building the Future – Future Vision (1 Slide)

Future Vision

- Ask participants to refer to their Handout: Ideal World Dreamsheets

Brainstorming Activity – Table (5 minutes)

- Encourage everyone to write down at least 1 idea they have that would enable them, or perhaps other parents in their school, to participate meaningfully. Share these ideas with others at the table.
- Here are some general ideas to help start the thought processes. A specific (but simple) example is provided on the handout.
 - ❖ In a perfect world there is a shared vision of parents' place in the school – collaborative framework philosophy is all adults respectfully working together to support students. (Takes a whole village to raise a child)
 - ❖ Parents are part of the fabric of the school – parents are welcomed, listened to, contributing – part of a team that exists to support student success, no matter how success is defined.
 - ❖ The parent is the child's first and ongoing educator – a parent has a responsibility to support their child, and an important role in the school and system.
 - ❖ The principal of the school creates an environment that welcomes parents and their 'voice'; others in the school

honour and respect parent contributions.

- ❖ Parents feel welcome and that they have a 'place' in the workings of the school – a place at the table (could be school council table); parents respect educators roles and are inspired to work alongside professionals to assist with student learning.
- All parents share the responsibility for student success through their involvement – whether it's making sure a child has breakfast, or gets on the school bus – to serving on the school council and advising the principal on policy in the school and at the school board level.

Facilitator's Notes

Suggested Time:
5 Minutes/ 3 Slides

Slide: Conclusions


Conclusion – Closing (3 Slides)

Conclusions

- Referring back to the goals of the workshop, do the participants agree that the information provided has helped them with respect to these points?
- Allow for questions if anything remains unclear or unanswered.

Conclusions

1. **Understand** parents' rights and responsibilities to be involved and engaged in their child's education and school.
2. **Explored** how parents & School Councils can be meaningfully involved in education.
3. **Learned** how to be influential in Alberta's schools.

A photograph of two parrots, likely African Grey parrots, perched on a branch. The parrot in the foreground is looking directly at the camera with a clear, intelligent expression. The second parrot is slightly behind and to the side, also looking towards the camera. They have grey bodies and white faces with a distinctive red patch around the eye.

Slide:
Moving Forward

[illegible]

Concluding comments around supporting First Nations Metis and Inuit parents and understanding of schools.

- Supporting student success is the outcome we all hope to achieve by moving forward in the ways we deem most appropriate. Your involvement with your child's school is an important component of our work together to ensure for this success.

Facilitator's Notes

Activities:

- ✓ Evaluations

Evaluations and More Info!

| | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.800.661.3470 | First Nations, Metis and Inuit Services 9th Floor, 10044—108 Street Edmonton, Alberta 780.415.9300 |
| 780.454.9867 | |
| parents@albertaschoolcouncils.ca | http://education.alberta.ca/admin/fnmi/collaborativeframework.aspx |
| www.albertaschoolcouncils.ca | |

Understanding My Child's School 2014

Conclusion – Closing

Thank you and Evaluations

- Thank the group for the invitation to present.
- Workshop evaluations **Session evaluations will be forwarded by regional consortium.**
- Additional workshops specific to schools councils can be arranged by calling Alberta School Council Association.

