



16 First Nation Trustees: Leading in Two Worlds

ENCOURAGING FIRST NATION, MÉTIS AND INUIT PARENT, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Research demonstrates the positive impact of engaging parents and families in their children's learning activities and shows that when parents are involved with their children's education, student achievement increases and schools experience overall improvement. These are outcomes which are at the heart of the goals and vision of the province and of every school board in Ontario.

ROLES FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT (PARENTS, OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS AND/ OR GUARDIANS

Three categories of involvement:

- Parents as first educators in the home
- Parents as central partners with the school
- Parents as advocates and key decisions-makers for all children and youth

Attaining a vision of First Nation, Métis and Inuit education built on a foundation that incorporates a holistic approach to First Nation, Métis and Inuit languages, cultures histories, traditions and perspectives, along with high expectations requires a meaningful connection between home and school. It is important that boards and schools create a welcoming environment to foster First Nation, Métis and Inuit family and community engagement and active participation in their child's education.

GOALS AND BENEFITS

- Continuing efforts to strengthen the involvement of First Nation, Métis and Inuit parents, communities, and organizational partners
- Creating home environments that are conducive to learning
- Influencing children's positive attitudes towards learning and school
- Making schools more effective, and
- Creating benefits for parents, families and communities

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

Parents, families and Elders do not always feel welcome in schools. Parents and families may be unsure about how to provide support at home or how to help their children with their schoolwork. Time and resources may also be challenging factors.

**OVERCOMING
CHALLENGES**
continued

To overcome such challenges, schools, communities and school boards can implement a range of strategies, such as:

Strategy	Example
Offering a variety of opportunities to build relationships	Hold family portrait evenings, feast celebrations, family nights
Helping to create safe and supportive home environments	Invite parents to school events about cyber bullying
Creating and nurturing effective two-way communication strategies	Communication books or regular face-to-face meetings. Use text communication rather than phone
Ensuring welcoming events for families	Invite parents and Elders to come in to the school for a First Nation, Métis and Inuit story-telling event
Helping parents learn about how to help their children with school work	Engaging evening events about ways to support literacy or math
Inviting and supporting parents as key partners in decision-making	Position on parent council and/or committee for a member of First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities
Integrating school and community agencies to most effectively support students and families	After-school programming