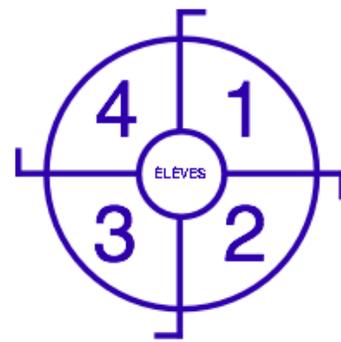
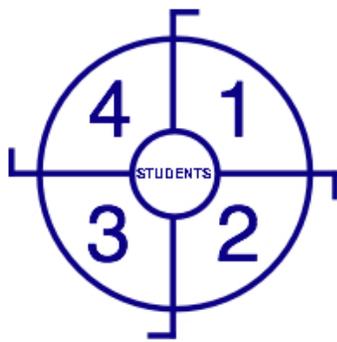


Educational Review: 2007-08



Étude sur l'éducation : 2007-2008

Progress Report-2, March 2008

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING AHEAD

The aim of this report is to provide stakeholders of the Cree School Board [CSB] with a brief account of our progress to date and what can be expected in the months ahead. From its conception, the Educational Review was designed to serve two complementary purposes:

- **accountability**, to permit the Board to *answer* to its stakeholders for the trust they have placed in it for the education of their children, youth and adults; and
- **improvement**, to support the development of programs and service delivery in order to make its schools and centres more effective places for teaching and learning.

This dual purpose has not changed but our mandate has been modified. As we stated to many of you during the collection of data, the Educational Review was intended to provide a synthesis of all ongoing planning and evaluation initiatives including the Strategic Planning Exercise, the Organizational Review, as well as the workshops on school board governance and parenting. We were recently informed by the Director General that he had decided that our report should not contain any analysis or synthesis of these other initiatives.

A change in mandate

In this progress report we will provide a brief summary of the following:

- what have we done so far;
- what is happening now;
- what the report will look like; and
- some lessons we have learned to date.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR?

In our earlier progress report (December 2007),¹ we provided an overview of the completion of Step 1 - Planning & Preparation - and the near-completion of Step 2 - Data Collection. This step did not end in early December as planned; in fact, we were still collecting data at the beginning of March. Despite winter's best efforts to prevent our collecting data from all schools and centres, we completed our tour of all communities with visits to Waswanipi in January and Waskaganish in February. We also managed to obtain various data about student results that had eluded us before Christmas.

In brief, we have fulfilled our commitment to make this Review as participatory as possible. As summarized below, the collection of data involved almost 900 stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, other school and centre staff, elders and other community members, school, centre and board administrators, and other board staff. For the most part, people were both candid and constructive in their input. We encountered a high level of good will and hope for the future, mingled with scepticism based on past experience. Typically, an interview or focus group would end with a participant asking:

Data collected from 900 stakeholders

Is this evaluation going to be any different than past ones - the ones that did not lead to any real change?

Neither this progress report nor even our final report can provide an answer to this question. That will only come with the development and implementation of the **Board Action Plan** following the conclusion of this Review.

Input from Stakeholders:	
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 49 focus groups with 406 students and former students; questionnaires from 95 adult students; 1 focus group with 2 post-secondary students;
School/Centre Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ questionnaires from 212 teachers and 41 other staff in schools and 30 teachers and other staff in centres; 6 focus groups with 51 teachers;
School/Centre Admin	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ interviews with 8 principals, 11 vice-principals and 8 CEAs; ▪ interviews with Director of SRVTC, 6 centre consultants
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 open forums on community radio; 6 open meetings of school committees; 6 focus groups with 46 elders; 3 interviews with the educational representative on the Band Council;
School Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ interviews with the chairperson of the Board, 5 commissioners, the director general, the secretary general, 5 directors (including the Supervisor of Schools), 11 coordinators (including the Assistant Supervisor of Schools); questionnaires from 4 education consultants; questionnaires from 17 other Board staff;
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ interviews with Grand Chief of the Crees, 3 representatives of the Cree Regional Authority, the former Assistant Deputy Minister of Education, the ministry representative on the Management Negotiating Committee for the Cree School Board, the President of the Northern Quebec Teaching Association; and the Board's legal counsel.

¹ All our reports and other information about this Review are available on the Educational Review webpage on the Board website: http://www.cscree.qc.ca/Edreview/ed_review.htm.

WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW?

We are now analyzing the data we have collected. This involves both **quantitative** data - bits of information that can be counted and **qualitative** data - bits of information that come in words.

On the quantitative side, we have tabulated data about student results to answer one of the key questions of this Review:

- What results do schools and centres expect for their students and how effective are they in achieving them?

Most of our data are qualitative in nature, namely, what you - the stakeholders of the CSB - had to tell us. In order to ensure that we did not miss any of this vital input, interviews and focus groups were audio taped and transcribed - word-for-word. Much of our time in this phase is therefore absorbed in pouring over the hundred's of pages of feedback we received. In so doing we will be answering other key questions posed by this Review, such as:

- How successful are schools and centres in providing quality services to their students?
- How successful is the school board in providing support for learning through its structures, systems and policies for the governance and management of education?

WHAT ABOUT THE REPORT?

Because of the extension of the period for collecting data and the amount of data we have amassed, we are somewhat behind schedule. At this point, we hope to present our report to the Council in the first week of June. An outline of the report is shown below. The report will then be distributed to communities and posted on the Board website. Contrary to what we expected, we have been informed by the Director General that no community visits will take place before the end of the current school year. The Board will announce at a later date when and how it intends to proceed with the further communication of our report.

1 Introduction & Overview	Describes why the Review was undertaken, the context for the Review, how it was designed and the methodology used to complete it.
2 Mission & Context	Provides a summary of the findings and analysis pertaining to the mission and context of the Board.
3 Educating Youth in the CSB	Provides a summary of the findings and analysis pertaining to the education of youth in the nine schools of the Board.
4 Educating Adults in the CSB	Provides a summary of the findings and analysis pertaining to the education of adults in the ten continuing education and vocational centres of the Board.
5 Post-Secondary Educational Services	Provides a summary of the findings and analysis pertaining to the provision of services to students in post-secondary institutions outside the Board.
6 School Board Support for Learning	Provides a summary of the findings and analysis pertaining to the provision of services by the various departments of the Board.
7 From Findings to Action	Provides a summary of all findings, the conclusions reached by the analysis of these findings and the recommendations for future action.
Appendices:	A: Evaluation Ethics; B: Evaluation Design & Methodology; C: Supplementary Data; D: Extracts from key Documents (published separately)
Instruments	Evaluation Instruments (published separately)

WHAT LESSONS HAVE WE LEARNED?

One of the important functions of any evaluation is to provide feedback to stakeholders on the lessons learned from the exercise. We have learned many lessons to date and will undoubtedly learn others before this Review has been completed. Understanding and communicating these lessons is an important part of the improvement purpose of this Review. In fact, there is not much point to the other purpose - accounting for performance - if we do not learn how to improve performance. We therefore thought it would be appropriate to conclude this brief report by sharing some of these lessons with you, namely, the importance of:

- promoting Cree **values**;
- staying focused on student **results**;
- being held **accountable** for performance; and
- building **capacity** for improved performance.

<p>Guided by Values</p>	<p>The values of any organization should provide guidance when considering various options. In an organization like the CSB, Cree values provide these guiding beacons. As stated several years ago by then Grand Chief Ted Moses: "The worth of Cree values and principles is not limited only to the pursuit of a traditional way of life. Being a genuine Cree is not just being a hunter and trapper. You can be a proud and genuine Cree and also be a teacher, a doctor or a judge."</p>
<p>Focused on Results</p>	<p>Individual schools and centres and the school board as a whole contribute to their communities in many ways but they have only one overriding purpose: to help students receive and benefit from the education to which they are entitled. The CSB has a slogan on some of its posters - Students first - but many people have told us that the Board seems more interested in employment for adults than learning for children. Students in the CSB will never achieve success until they truly come first in the actions taken by all members of the CSB school community.</p>
<p>Being Accountable</p>	<p>Creating a high-performance organization begins with everyone being accountable - and being held accountable - for the contribution they are supposed to be making toward student success. This notion of accountability is not a bureaucratic one, where managers are accountable for some formal task. This notion starts with students being accountable for their own learning and parents, teachers, school/centre/board administrators, professionals and support staff - everyone - expected to play their part, with consequences for those who do not.</p>
<p>Building Capacity</p>	<p>People cannot be expected to be held accountable unless they have the capacity for meeting the expectations of their role - be it a student, a parent, a teacher, an administrator or another staff member. For people, capacity means having the tools to do the job and the skills to use them. For an organization such as a school board, this includes structures, policies and systems that help students succeed. Among other changes, this means less time traveling, less time in meetings and more productive time on the job.</p>